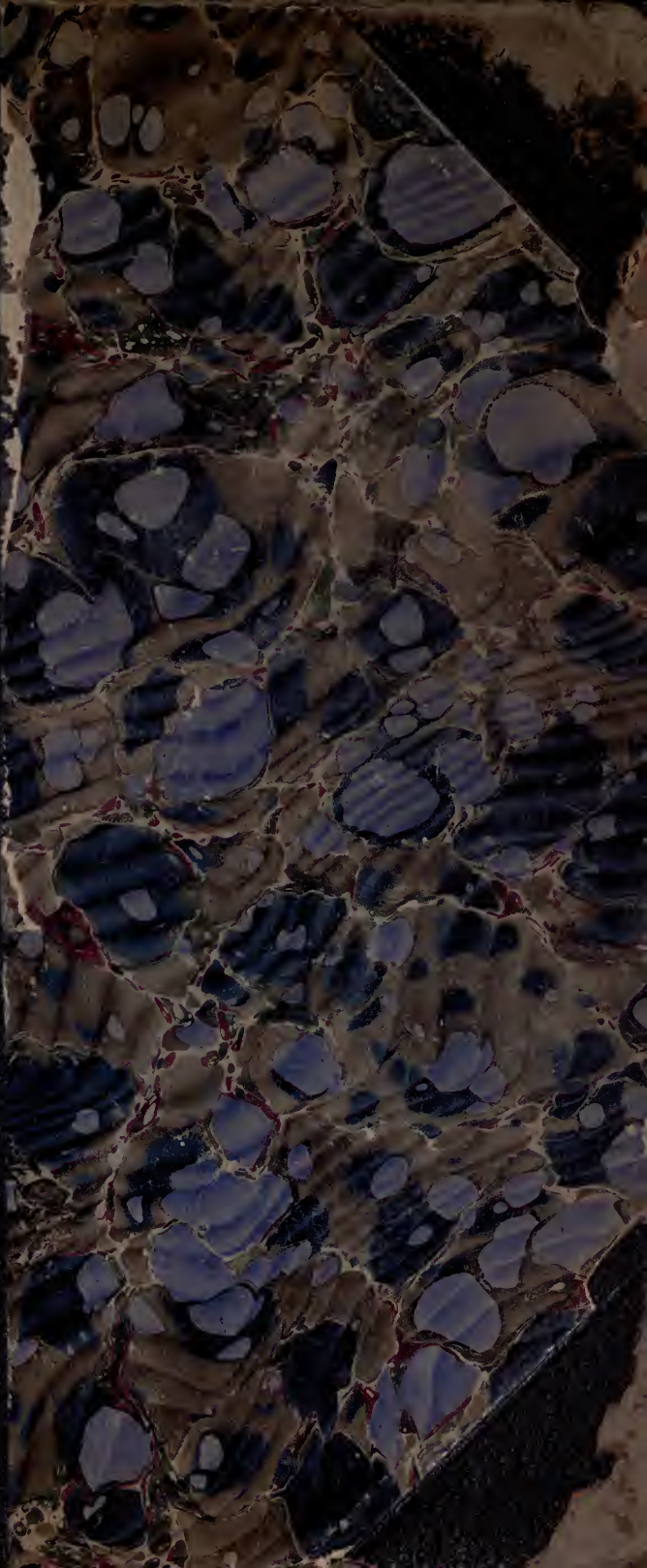


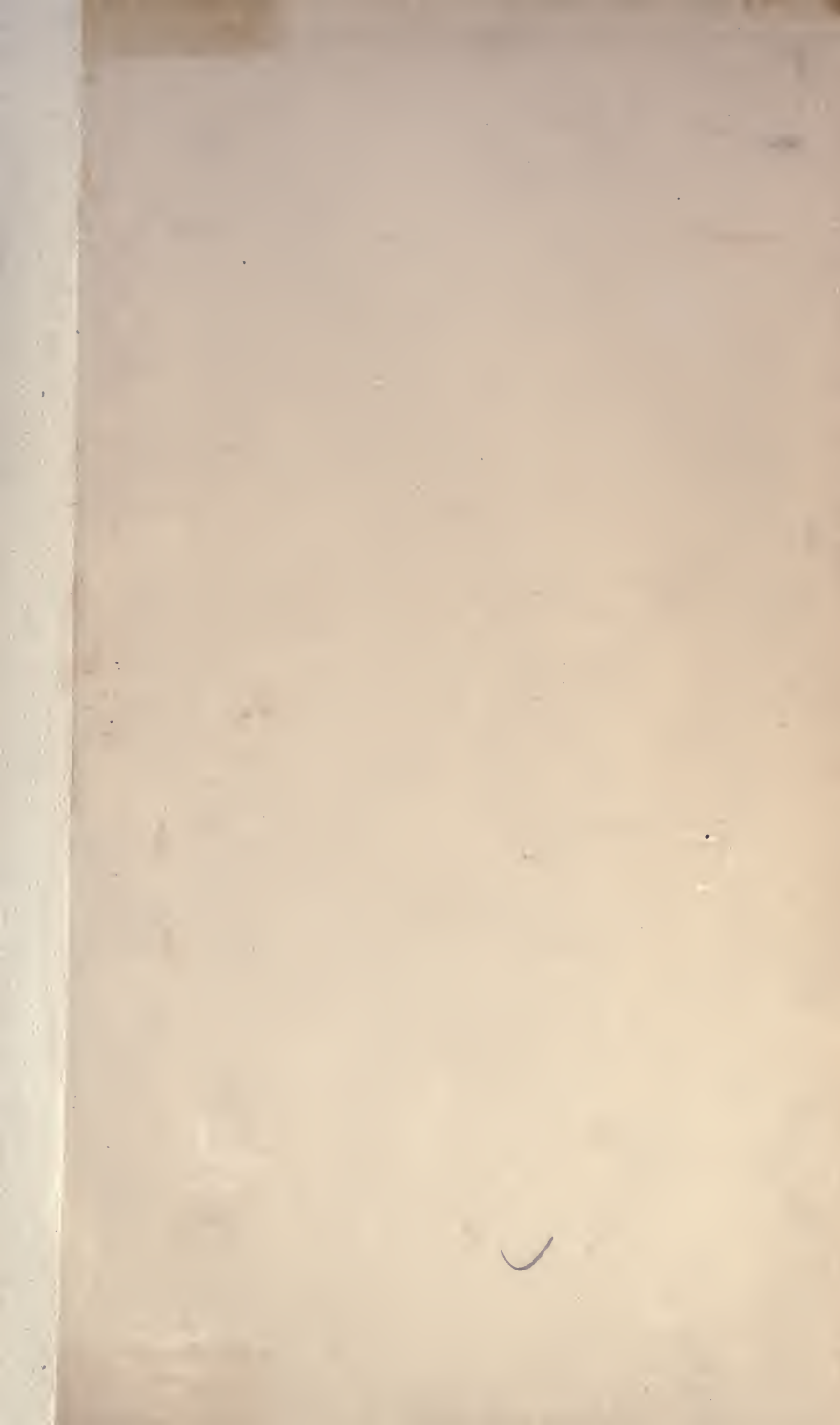


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Nydia

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THE
LAST DAYS OF POMPEII

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

THE DISOWNED

BY
EDWARD BULWER LYTTON



BOSTON
DANA ESTES & COMPANY
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1888

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TO SIR WILLIAM GELL,

ETC., ETC.

DEAR SIR, — In publishing a work, of which Pompeii furnishes the subject, I can think of no one to whom it can so fitly be dedicated as yourself. Your charming volumes upon the antiquities of that city have indissolubly connected your name with its earlier (as your residence in the vicinity has identified you with its more recent) associations.

Ere you receive these volumes, I hope to be deep in the perusal of your forthcoming work upon "The Topography of Rome and its Vicinity." The glance at its contents which you permitted me at Naples sufficed to convince me of its interest and value; and as an Englishman, and as one who has loitered under the Portico, I rejoice to think that, in adding largely to your own reputation, you will also renovate our country's claim to eminence in those departments of learning in which of late years we have but feebly supported our ancient reputation. Venturing thus a prediction of the success of your work, it would be a little superfluous to express a wish for the accomplishment of the prophecy! But I may add a more general hope, that you will long have leisure and inclination for those literary pursuits to which you bring an erudition so extensive; and that they may continue, as now, sometimes to beguile you from yourself, and never to divert you from your friends.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, very faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

LEAMINGTON,

September 21, 1834.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1834.

ON visiting those disinterred remains of an ancient city which, more perhaps than either the delicious breeze or the cloudless sun, the violet valleys and orange-groves of the South, attract the traveller to the neighborhood of Naples; on viewing, still fresh and vivid, the houses, the streets, the temples, the theatres, of a place existing in the haughtiest age of the Roman Empire, — it was not unnatural, perhaps, that a writer who had before labored, however unworthily, in the art to revive and to create, should feel a keen desire to people once more those deserted streets, to repair those graceful ruins, to reanimate the bones which were yet spared to his survey, to traverse the gulf of eighteen centuries, and to wake to a second existence — the City of the Dead!

And the reader will easily imagine how sensibly this desire grew upon one whose task was undertaken in the immediate neighborhood of Pompeii, — the sea that once bore her commerce, and received her fugitives, at his feet, and the fatal mountain of Vesuvius, still breathing forth smoke and fire, constantly before his eyes!¹

I was aware from the first, however, of the great difficulties with which I had to contend. To paint the manners and exhibit the life of the Middle Ages required the hand of a master genius; yet perhaps that task was slight and

¹ Nearly the whole of this work was written at Naples last winter (1832-33).

easy in comparison with the attempt to portray a far earlier and more unfamiliar period. With the men and customs of the feudal time we have a natural sympathy and bond of alliance: those men were our own ancestors; from those customs we received our own; the creed of our chivalric fathers is still ours, their tombs yet consecrate our churches, the ruins of their castles yet frown over our valleys; we trace in their struggles for liberty and for justice our present institutions; and in the elements of their social state we behold the origin of our own.

But with the classical age we have no household and familiar associations. The creed of that departed religion, the customs of that past civilization, present little that is sacred or attractive to our northern imaginations; they are rendered yet more trite to us by the scholastic pedantries which first acquainted us with their natures, and are linked with the recollection of studies which were imposed as a labor, and not cultivated as a delight.

Yet the enterprise, though arduous, seemed to me worth attempting; and in the time and the scene I have chosen, much may be found to arouse the curiosity of the reader, and enlist his interest in the descriptions of the author. It was the first century of our religion; it was the most civilized period of Rome; the conduct of the story lies amidst places whose relics we yet trace; the catastrophe is among the most awful which the tragedies of ancient history present to our survey.

From the ample materials before me, my endeavor has been to select those which would be most attractive to a modern reader, — the customs and superstitions least unfamiliar to him; the shadows that, when reanimated, would present to him such images as, while they represented the past, might be least uninteresting to the speculations of the present. It did indeed require a greater self-control than the reader may at first imagine, to reject much that was

most inviting in itself, but which, while it might have added attraction to parts of the work, would have been injurious to the symmetry of the whole. Thus, for instance, the date of my story is that of the short reign of Titus, when Rome was at its proudest and most gigantic eminence of luxury and power. It was therefore a most inviting temptation to the Author to conduct the characters of his tale, during the progress of its incidents, from Pompeii to Rome. What could afford such materials for description, or such field for the vanity of display, as that gorgeous city of the world, whose grandeur could lend so bright an inspiration to fancy, so favorable and so solemn a dignity to research? But in choosing for my subject, my catastrophe, the Destruction of Pompeii, it required but little insight into the higher principles of art to perceive that to Pompeii the story should be rigidly confined.

Placed in contrast with the mighty pomp of Rome, the luxuries and gaud of the vivid Campanian city would have sunk into insignificance. Her awful fate would have seemed but a petty and isolated wreck in the vast seas of the imperial sway, and the auxiliary I should have summoned to the interest of my story would only have destroyed and overpowered the cause it was invoked to support. I was therefore compelled to relinquish an episodic excursion so alluring in itself, and confining my story strictly to Pompeii, to leave to others the honor of delineating the hollow but majestic civilization of Rome.

The city whose fate supplied me with so superb and awful a catastrophe, supplied easily from the first survey of its remains the characters most suited to the subject and the scene: the half-Grecian colony of Hercules, mingling with the manners of Italy so much of the costumes of Hellas, suggested of itself the characters of Glaucus and Ione. The worship of Isis, its existent fane, with its false oracles unveiled, the trade of Pompeii with Alexandria,

the associations of the Sarnus with the Nile, called forth the Egyptian Arbaces, the base Calenus, and the fervent Apæcides. The early struggles of Christianity with the heathen superstition suggested the creation of Olinthus; and the burnt fields of Campania, long celebrated for the spells of the sorceress, naturally produced the Saga of Vesuvius. For the existence of the Blind Girl, I am indebted to a casual conversation with a gentleman well known amongst the English at Naples for his general knowledge of the many paths of life. Speaking of the utter darkness which accompanied the first recorded eruption of Vesuvius, and the additional obstacle it presented to the escape of the inhabitants, he observed that the blind would be the most favored in such a moment, and find the easiest deliverance. In this remark originated the creation of Nydia.

The characters, therefore, are the natural offspring of the scene and time. The incidents of the tale are equally consonant, perhaps, to the then existent society; for it is not only the ordinary habits of life, the feasts and the forum, the baths and the amphitheatre, the commonplace routine of the classic luxury, which we recall the past to behold; equally important, and more deeply interesting, are the passions, the crimes, the misfortunes, and reverses that might have chanced to the shades we thus summon to life! We understand any epoch of the world but ill if we do not examine its romance. There is as much truth in the poetry of life as in its prose.

As the greatest difficulty in treating of an unfamiliar and distant period is to make the characters introduced "live and move" before the eye of the reader, so such should doubtless be the first object of a work of the present description; and all attempts at the display of learning should be considered but as means subservient to this, the main requisite of fiction. The first art of the Poet (the creator) is to breathe the breath of life into his creatures; the next is to make their words and

actions appropriate to the era in which they are to speak and act. This last art is, perhaps, the better effected by not bringing the art itself constantly before the reader ; by not crowding the page with quotations and the margin with notes. The intuitive spirit which infuses antiquity into ancient images is perhaps the true learning which a work of this nature requires: without it, pedantry is offensive; with it, useless. No man who is thoroughly aware of what Prose Fiction has now become — of its dignity, of its influence, of the manner in which it has gradually absorbed all similar departments of literature, of its power in teaching as well as amusing — can so far forget its connection with History, with Philosophy, with Politics, its utter harmony with Poetry and obedience to Truth, as to debase its nature to the level of scholastic frivolities: he raises scholarship to the creative, and does not bow the creative to the scholastic.

With respect to the language used by the characters introduced, I have studied carefully to avoid what has always seemed to me a fatal error in those who have attempted in modern times to introduce the beings of a classical age.¹

¹ What the strong common sense of Sir Walter Scott has expressed so well in his preface to "Ivanhoe" (1st edition), appears to me at least as applicable to a writer who draws from classical as to one who borrows from feudal antiquity. Let me avail myself of the words I refer to, and humbly and reverently appropriate them for the moment: "It is true that I neither can, nor do pretend, to the observation [observance?] of complete accuracy even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon, or in Norman-French [*in Latin or in Greek*], and which prohibits my sending forth this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde [*written with a reed upon five rolls of parchment, fastened to a cylinder, and adorned with a boss*], prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period to which my story is laid. It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, *translated* into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in.

"In point of justice, therefore, to the multitudes who will, I trust, devour this book with avidity [*hem!*], I have so far explained ancient manners in

Authors have mostly given to them the stilted sentences, the cold and didactic solemnities of language which they find in the more admired of the classical writers. It is an error as absurd to make Romans in common life talk in the periods of Cicero, as it would be in a novelist to endow his English personages with the long-drawn sentences of Johnson or Burke. The fault is the greater, because, while it pretends to learning, it betrays in reality the ignorance of just criticism; it fatigues, it wearies, it revolts; and we have not the satisfaction, in yawning, to think that we yawn eruditely. To impart anything like fidelity to the dialogues of classic actors, we must beware (to use a university phrase) how we "*cram*" for the occasion! Nothing can give to a writer a more stiff and uneasy gait than the sudden and hasty adoption of the toga. We must bring to our task the familiarized knowledge of many years; the allusions, the phraseology, the language generally, must flow from a stream that has long been full; the flowers must be transplanted from a living soil, and not bought secondhand at the nearest market-place. This advantage — which is, in fact, only that of familiarity with our subject — is one derived rather from accident than merit, and depends upon the degree in which the classics have entered into the education of our youth and the studies of our maturity. Yet, even did a writer possess the utmost advantage of this nature which education and study can

modern language, and so far detailed the characters and sentiments of my persons, that the modern reader will not find himself, I should hope, much trammelled by the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity. In this, I respectfully contend, I have in no respect exceeded the fair license due to the author of a fictitious composition.

“It is true,” proceeds my authority, “that this license is confined within legitimate bounds; the author must introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age.” — *Preface to “Ivanhoe.”*

I can add nothing to these judicious and discriminating remarks; they form the canons of true criticism, by which all fiction that portrays the past should be judged.

bestow, it might be scarcely possible so entirely to transport himself to an age so different from his own, but that he would incur some inaccuracies, some errors of inadvertence or forgetfulness. And when, in works upon the manners of the ancients — works even of the gravest character, composed by the profoundest scholars — some such imperfections will often be discovered, even by a critic in comparison but superficially informed, it would be far too presumptuous in me to hope that I have been more fortunate than men infinitely more learned, in a work in which learning is infinitely less required. It is for this reason that I venture to believe that scholars themselves will be the most lenient of my judges. Enough if this book, whatever its imperfections, should be found a portrait — unskilful, perhaps, in coloring, faulty in drawing, but not altogether unfaithful to the features and the costume of the age which I have attempted to paint. May it be (what is far more important) a just representation of the human passions and the human heart, whose elements in all ages are the same!

P R E F A C E

TO THE EDITION OF 1850.

THIS work has had the good fortune to be so general a favorite with the Public, that the Author is spared the task of obtruding any comments in its vindication from adverse criticism. The profound scholarship of German criticism, which has given so minute an attention to the domestic life of the ancients, has sufficiently testified to the general fidelity with which the manners, habits, and customs of the inhabitants of Pompeii have been described in these pages. And

writing the work almost on the spot, and amidst a population that still preserve a strong family likeness to their classic forefathers, I could scarcely fail to catch something of those living colors which mere book-study alone would not have sufficed to bestow. It is, I suspect, to this accidental advantage that this work is principally indebted for a greater popularity than has hitherto attended the attempts of scholars to create an interest, by fictitious narrative, in the manners and persons of a classic age. Perhaps, too, the writers I allude to, and of whose labors I would speak with the highest respect, did not sufficiently remember that in works of imagination the description of manners, however important as an accessory, must still be subordinate to the vital elements of interest; namely, plot, character, and passion. And in reviving the ancient shadows they have rather sought occasion to display erudition than to show how the human heart beats the same, whether under the Grecian tunic or the Roman toga. It is this, indeed, which distinguishes the imitators of classic learning from the classic literature itself. For in classic literature there is no want of movement and passion, — of all the more animated elements of what we now call Romance. Indeed, romance itself, as we take it from the Middle Ages, owes much to Grecian fable. Many of the adventures of knight-errantry are borrowed either from the trials of Ulysses or the achievements of Theseus. And while Homer, yet unrestored to his throne among the poets, was only known to the literature of early chivalry in a spurious or grotesque form, the genius of Gothic fiction was constructing many a tale for Northern wonder from the mutilated fragments of the divine old tale-teller.

Amongst these losses of the past which we have most to deplore are the old novels or romances for which Miletus was famous. But, judging from all else of Greek literature that is left to us, there can be little doubt that they were well

fitted to sustain the attention of lively and impatient audiences by the same arts which are necessary to the modern tale-teller: that they could not have failed in variety of incident and surprises of ingenious fancy; in the contrasts of character; and least of all in the delineations of the tender passion, which, however modified in its expression by differences of national habits, forms the main subject of human interest in all the multiform varieties of fictitious narrative,—from the Chinese to the Arab, from the Arab to the Scandinavian,—and which at this day animates the tale of many an itinerant Boccaccio, gathering his spell-bound listeners round him, on sunny evenings, by the Sicilian seas.

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1874

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THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

BOOK I.

Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere; et
Quem Fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro
Adpone; nec dulces amores
Sperne, puer, neque tu choreas.

HOR. lib. i. od. ix.

The future in the morrow shun to seek;
Each day that Fate shall give thee, count as gain;
Nor spurn, O youth, sweet loves,
Nor choral dance and song.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF POMPEII.

“Ho, Diomed, well met! Do you sup with Glaucus to-night?” said a young man of small stature, who wore his tunic in those loose and effeminate folds which proved him to be a gentleman and a coxcomb.

“Alas, no! dear Clodius; he has not invited me,” replied Diomed, a man of portly frame and of middle age. “By Pollux, a scurvy trick! for they say his suppers are the best in Pompeii.”

“Pretty well; though there is never enough of wine for me. It is not the old Greek blood that flows in his veins, for he pretends that wine makes him dull the next morning.”

“There may be another reason for that thrift,” said Diomed, raising his brows. “With all his conceit and extravagance he is not so rich, I fancy, as he affects to be, and perhaps loves to save his amphoræ better than his wit.”

“An additional reason for supping with him while the sesterces last. Next year, Diomed, we must find another Glaucus.”

“He is fond of the dice, too, I hear.”

“He is fond of every pleasure; and while he likes the pleasure of giving suppers, we are all fond of *him*.”

“Ha, ha, Clodius, that is well said! Have you ever seen my wine-cellars, by the bye?”

“I think not, my good Diomed.”

“Well, you must sup with me some evening; I have tolerable *murænæ*¹ in my reservoir, and I will ask Pansa the ædile to meet you.”

“Oh, no state with me! *Persicos odi apparatus*, I am easily contented. Well, the day wanes; I am for the baths — and you —”

“To the quæstor — business of state — afterwards to the temple of Isis. *Vale!*”

“An ostentatious, bustling, ill-bred fellow,” muttered Clodius to himself, as he sauntered slowly away. “He thinks with his feasts and his wine-cellars to make us forget that he is the son of a freedman; and so he will, when we do him the honor of winning his money: these rich plebeians are a harvest for us spendthrift nobles.”

Thus soliloquizing, Clodius arrived in the Via Domitiana, which was crowded with passengers and chariots, and exhibited all that gay and animated exuberance of life and motion which we find at this day in the streets of Naples.

The bells of the cars, as they rapidly glided by each other, jingled merrily on the ear, and Clodius, with smiles or nods, claimed familiar acquaintance with whatever equipage was most elegant or fantastic; in fact, no idler was better known in Pompeii.

“What, Clodius! and how have you slept on your good fortune?” cried, in a pleasant and musical voice, a young man in a chariot of the most fastidious and graceful fashion. Upon its surface of bronze were elaborately wrought, in the still exquisite workmanship of Greece, reliefs of the Olympian games; the two horses that drew the car were of the rarest

¹ *Murænæ*, — lampreys.

breed of Parthia; their slender limbs seemed to disdain the ground and court the air, and yet at the slightest touch of the charioteer, who stood behind the young owner of the equipage, they paused, motionless, as if suddenly transformed into stone, — lifeless, but lifelike, as one of the breathing wonders of Praxiteles. The owner himself was of that slender and beautiful symmetry from which the sculptors of Athens drew their models; his Grecian origin betrayed itself in his light but clustering locks and the perfect harmony of his features. He wore no toga, which in the time of the emperors had indeed ceased to be the general distinction of the Romans and was especially ridiculed by the pretenders to fashion, but his tunic glowed in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye, and the fibulæ, or buckles, by which it was fastened, sparkled with emeralds; around his neck was a chain of gold, which in the middle of his breast twisted itself into the form of a serpent's head, from the mouth of which hung pendent a large signet ring of elaborate and most exquisite workmanship; the sleeves of the tunic were loose, and fringed at the hand with gold; and across the waist a girdle wrought in arabesque designs, and of the same material as the fringe, served in lieu of pockets for the receptacle of the handkerchief and the purse, the stilus and the tablets.

“My dear Glaucus,” said Clodius, “I rejoice to see that your losses have so little affected your mien. Why, you seem as if you had been inspired by Apollo, and your face shines with happiness like a glory; any one might take you for the winner, and me for the loser.”

“And what is there in the loss or gain of those dull pieces of metal that should change our spirit, my Clodius? By Venus! while yet young, we can cover our full locks with chaplets; while yet the cithara sounds on unsated ears, while yet the smile of Lydia or of Chloe flashes over our veins in which the blood runs so swiftly, so long shall we find delight in the sunny air, and make bald time itself but the treasurer of our joys. You sup with me to-night, you know.”

“Whoever forgets the invitation of Glaucus!”

“But which way go you now?”

“Why, I thought of visiting the baths; but it wants yet an hour to the usual time.”

“Well, I will dismiss my chariot and go with you. So, so, my Phylas,” stroking the horse nearest to him, which by a low neigh and with backward ears playfully acknowledged the courtesy; “a holiday for you to-day. Is he not handsome, Clodius?”

“Worthy of Phœbus,” returned the noble parasite, — “or of Glaucus.”

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL AND THE BEAUTY OF FASHION. —
THE ATHENIAN'S CONFESSION. — THE READER'S INTRODU-
TION TO ARBACES OF EGYPT.

TALKING lightly on a thousand matters, the two young men sauntered through the streets; they were now in that quarter which was filled with the gayest shops, their open interiors all and each radiant with the gaudy yet harmonious colors of frescos inconceivably varied in fancy and design. The sparkling fountains that at every vista threw upwards their grateful spray in the summer air; the crowd of passengers, or rather loiterers, mostly clad in robes of the Tyrian dye; the gay groups collected round each more attractive shop; the slaves passing to and fro with buckets of bronze, cast in the most graceful shapes, and borne upon their heads; the country girls stationed at frequent intervals with baskets of blushing fruit, and flowers more alluring to the ancient Italians than to their descendants (with whom, indeed, “*latet anguis in herba*,” a disease seems lurking in every violet and rose),¹ the numerous haunts which fulfilled with that idle people the office of *cafés* and clubs at this day; the shops, where on shelves of marble were ranged the vases of wine and oil, and before whose thresholds, seats, protected from the sun by a purple awning, invited the weary to rest and the indolent to lounge,

¹ See note (a) at the end.

—made a scene of such glowing and vivacious excitement as might well give the Athenian spirit of Glaucus an excuse for its susceptibility to joy.

“Talk to me no more of Rome,” said he to Clodius. “Pleasure is too stately and ponderous in those mighty walls: even in the precincts of the court, even in the Golden House of Nero and the incipient glories of the palace of Titus, there is a certain dulness of magnificence, the eye aches, the spirit is wearied; besides, my Clodius, we are discontented when we compare the enormous luxury and wealth of others with the mediocrity of our own state. But here we surrender ourselves easily to pleasure, and we have the brilliancy of luxury without the lassitude of its pomp.”

“It was from that feeling that you chose your summer retreat at Pompeii?”

“It was; I prefer it to Baiæ. I grant the charms of the latter, but I love not the pedants who resort there, and who seem to weigh out their pleasures by the drachm”

“Yet you are fond of the learned, too; and as for poetry, why, your house is literally eloquent with Æschylus and Homer, the epic and the drama.”

“Yes, but those Romans who mimic my Athenian ancestors do everything so heavily. Even in the chase they make their slaves carry Plato with them; and whenever the boar is lost, out they take their books and their papyrus, in order not to lose their time too. When the dancing-girls swim before them in all the blandishment of Persian manners, some drone of a freedman, with a face of stone, reads them a section of Cicero *De Officiis*. Unskilful pharmacists! pleasure and study are not elements to be thus mixed together; they must be enjoyed separately: the Romans lose both by this pragmatism of affectation of refinement, and prove that they have no souls for either. Oh, my Clodius, how little your countrymen know of the true versatility of a Pericles, of the true witcheries of an Aspasia! It was but the other day that I paid a visit to Pliny; he was sitting in his summer-house writing, while an unfortunate slave played on the tibia. His nephew (oh, whip me such philosophical coxcombs!) was reading Thucydides’

description of the plague, and nodding his conceited little head in time to the music, while his lips were repeating all the loathsome details of that terrible delineation. The puppy saw nothing incongruous in learning at the same time a ditty of love and a description of the plague."

"Why, they *are* much the same thing," said Clodius.

"So I told him, in excuse for his coxcombry; but my youth stared me rebukingly in the face, without taking the jest, and answered that it was only the insensate ear that the music pleased, whereas the book (the description of the plague, mind you!) elevated the heart. 'Ah!' quoth the fat uncle, wheezing, 'my boy is quite an Athenian, always mixing the *utile* with the *dulce*.' O Minerva, how I laughed in my sleeve! While I was there, they came to tell the boy-sophist that his favorite freedman was just dead of a fever. 'Inexorable death!' cried he; 'get me my Horace. How beautifully the sweet poet consoles us for these misfortunes!' Oh, can these men love, my Clodius? Scarcely even with the senses. How rarely a Roman has a heart! He is but the mechanism of genius, — he wants its bones and flesh."

Though Clodius was secretly a little sore at these remarks on his countrymen, he affected to sympathize with his friend, partly because he was by nature a parasite, and partly because it was the fashion among the dissolute young Romans to affect a little contempt for the very birth which in reality made them so arrogant; it was the mode to imitate the Greeks, and yet to laugh at their own clumsy imitation.

Thus conversing, their steps were arrested by a crowd gathered round an open space where three streets met; and, just where the porticos of a light and graceful temple threw their shade, there stood a young girl, with a flower-basket on her right arm, and a small three-stringed instrument of music in the left hand, to whose low and soft tones she was modulating a wild and half-barbaric air. At every pause in the music she gracefully waved her flower-basket round, inviting the loiterers to buy; and many a sesterce was showered into the basket, either in compliment to the music or in compassion to the songstress, — for she was blind.

“It is my poor Thessalian,” said Glaucus, stopping; “I have not seen her since my return to Pompeii. Hush! her voice is sweet; let us listen.”

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL'S SONG.

I.

Buy my flowers — oh, buy, I pray!
 The blind girl comes from afar;
 If the earth be as fair as I hear them say,
 These flowers her children are!
 Do they her beauty keep?
 They are fresh from her lap, I know;
 For I caught them fast asleep
 In her arms an hour ago.
 With the air which is her breath —
 Her soft and delicate breath —
 Over them murmuring low!

On their lips her sweet kiss lingers yet,
 And their cheeks with her tender tears are wet.
 For she weeps — that gentle mother weeps
 (As morn and night her watch she keeps,
 With a yearning heart and a passionate care)
 To see the young things grow so fair;
 She weeps — for love she weeps;
 And the dews are the tears she weeps
 From the well of a mother's love!

II.

Ye have a world of light,
 Where love in the loved rejoices;
 But the blind girl's home is the House of Night
 And its beings are empty voices.

As one in the realm below,
 I stand by the streams of woe!
 I hear the vain shadows glide,
 I feel their soft breath at my side,
 And I thirst the loved forms to see,
 And I stretch my fond arms around,
 And I catch but a shapeless sound,
 For the living are ghosts to me.

Come buy — come buy !
 Hark ! how the sweet things sigh
 (For they have a voice like ours),
 “ The breath of the blind girl closes
 The leaves of the saddening roses —
 We are tender, we sons of light,
 We shrink from this child of night,
 From the grasp of the blind girl free us :
 We yearn for the eyes that see us —
 We are for night too gay,
 In your eyes we behold the day —
 Oh, buy — oh, buy the flowers ! ”

“ I must have you bunch of violets, sweet Nydia,” said Glaucus, pressing through the crowd and dropping a handful of small coins into the basket ; “ your voice is more charming than ever.”

The blind girl started forward as she heard the Athenian’s voice, then as suddenly paused, while the blood rushed violently over neck, cheek, and temples.

“ So you are returned ! ” said she in a low voice ; and then repeated half to herself, “ Glaucus is returned ! ”

“ Yes, child, I have not been at Pompeii above a few days. My garden wants your care, as before ; you will visit it, I trust, to-morrow. And mind, no garlands at my house shall be woven by any hands but those of the pretty Nydia.”

Nydia smiled joyously, but did not answer ; and Glaucus, placing in his breast the violets he had selected, turned gayly and carelessly from the crowd.

“ So she is a sort of client of yours, this child ? ” said Clodius.

“ Ay — does she not sing prettily ? She interests me, the poor slave ! Besides, she is from the land of the Gods’ hill ; Olympus frowned upon her cradle — she is of Thessaly.”

“ The witches’ country.”

“ True : but for my part I find every woman a witch ; and at Pompeii, by Venus ! the very air seems to have taken a love-philtre, so handsome does every face without a beard seem in my eyes.”

“ And lo ! one of the handsomest in Pompeii, old Diomed’s

daughter, the rich Julia!" said Clodius, as a young lady, her face covered by her veil, and attended by two female slaves, approached them, on her way to the baths.

"Fair Julia, we salute thee!" said Clodius.

Julia partly raised her veil, so as with some coquetry to display a bold Roman profile, a full dark bright eye, and a cheek over whose natural olive art shed a fairer and softer rose.

"And Glaucus, too, is returned!" said she, glancing meaningly at the Athenian. "Has he forgotten," she added, in a half-whisper, "his friends of the last year?"

"Beautiful Julia! even Lethe itself, if it disappear in one part of the earth, rises again in another. Jupiter does not allow us ever to forget for more than a moment; but Venus, more harsh still, vouchsafes not even a moment's oblivion."

"Glaucus is never at a loss for fair words."

"Who is, when the object of them is so fair?"

"We shall see you both at my father's villa soon," said Julia, turning to Clodius.

"We will mark the day in which we visit you with a white stone," answered the gamester.

Julia dropped her veil, but slowly, so that her last glance rested on the Athenian with affected timidity and real boldness; the glance bespoke tenderness and reproach.

The friends passed on.

"Julia is certainly handsome," said Glaucus.

"And last year you would have made that confession in a warmer tone."

"True; I was dazzled at the first sight, and mistook for a gem that which was but an artful imitation."

"Nay," returned Clodius, "all women are the same at heart. Happy he who weds a handsome face and a large dowry. What more can he desire?"

Glaucus sighed.

They were now in a street less crowded than the rest, at the end of which they beheld that broad and most lovely sea, which upon those delicious coasts seems to have renounced its prerogative of terror, — so soft are the crisping winds that hover

around its bosom, so glowing and so various are the hues which it takes from the rosy clouds, so fragrant are the perfumes which the breezes from the land scatter over its depths. From such a sea might you well believe that Aphrodite rose to take the empire of the earth.

“It is still early for the bath,” said the Greek, who was the creature of every poetical impulse; “let us wander from the crowded city, and look upon the sea while the noon yet laughs along its billows.”

“With all my heart,” said Clodius; “and the bay, too, is always the most animated part of the city.”

Pompeii was the miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus, — in the energy yet corruption, in the refinement yet the vice, of its people, you beheld a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a show-box, in which the gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the great monarchy of earth, and which they afterwards hid from time to the wonder of posterity; the moral of the maxim that under the sun there is nothing new.

Crowded in the glassy bay were the vessels of commerce and the gilded galleys for the pleasure of the rich citizens. The boats of the fishermen glided rapidly to and fro; and afar off you saw the tall masts of the fleet under the command of Pliny. Upon the shore sat a Sicilian, who, with vehement gestures and flexile features, was narrating to a group of fishermen and peasants a strange tale of shipwrecked mariners and friendly dolphins, — just as at this day, in the modern neighborhood, you may hear upon the Mole of Naples.

Drawing his comrade from the crowd, the Greek bent his steps towards a solitary part of the beach, and the two friends, seated on a small crag which rose amidst the smooth pebbles, inhaled the voluptuous and cooling breeze, which, dancing over the waters, kept music with its invisible feet. There was, perhaps, something in the scene that invited them to silence and reverie. Clodius, shading his eyes from the burning sky, was

calculating the gains of the last week; and the Greek, leaning upon his hand, and shrinking not from that sun, — his nation's tutelary deity, — with whose fluent light of poesy and joy and love his own veins were filled, gazed upon the broad expanse, and envied, perhaps, every wind that bent its pinions towards the shores of Greece.

“Tell me, Clodius,” said the Greek at last, “hast thou ever been in love?”

“Yes, very often.”

“He who has loved often,” answered Glaucus, “has loved never. There is but one Eros, though there are many counterfeits of him.”

“The counterfeits are not bad little gods, upon the whole,” answered Clodius.

“I agree with you,” returned the Greek. “I adore even the shadow of Love; but I adore himself yet more.”

“Art thou, then, soberly and earnestly in love? Hast thou that feeling which the poets describe, — a feeling that makes us neglect our suppers, forswear the theatre, and write elegies? I should never have thought it. You dissemble well.”

“I am not far gone enough for that,” returned Glaucus, smiling, “or rather I say with Tibullus, —

‘He whom Love rules, where’er his path may be,
Walks safe and sacred.’

In fact, I am not in love; but I could be if there were but occasion to see the object. Eros would light his torch, but the priests have given him no oil.”

“Shall I guess the object? Is it not Diomed's daughter? She adores you, and does not affect to conceal it; and, by Hercules! I say again and again, she is both handsome and rich. She will bind the door-posts of her husband with golden fillets.”

“No, I do not desire to sell myself. Diomed's daughter is handsome, I grant; and at one time, had she not been the grandchild of a freedman, I might have — Yet no — she carries all her beauty in her face; her manners are not maiden-like, and her mind knows no culture save that of pleasure.”

“You are ungrateful. Tell me, then, who is the fortunate virgin.”

“You shall hear, my Clodius. Several months ago I was sojourning at Neapolis,¹ a city utterly to my own heart, for it still retains the manners and stamp of its Grecian origin, — and it yet merits the name of Parthenope, from its delicious air and its beautiful shores. One day I entered the temple of Minerva, to offer up my prayers, not for myself more than for the city on which Pallas smiles no longer. The temple was empty and deserted. The recollections of Athens crowded fast and meltingly upon me; imagining myself still alone in the temple, and absorbed in the earnestness of my devotion, my prayer gushed from my heart to my lips, and I wept as I prayed. I was startled in the midst of my devotions, however, by a deep sigh; I turned suddenly round, and just behind me was a female. She had raised her veil also in prayer; and when our eyes met, methought a celestial ray shot from those dark and shining orbs at once into my soul. Never, my Clodius, have I seen mortal face more exquisitely moulded: a certain melancholy softened and yet elevated its expression; that unutterable something which springs from the soul, and which our sculptors have imparted to the aspect of Psyche, gave her beauty I know not what of divine and noble; tears were rolling down her eyes. I guessed at once that she was also of Athenian lineage, and that in my prayer for Athens her heart had responded to mine. I spoke to her, though with a faltering voice. ‘Art thou not, too, Athenian,’ said I, ‘O beautiful virgin?’ At the sound of my voice she blushed, and half drew her veil across her face. ‘My forefathers’ ashes,’ said she, ‘repose by the waters of Ilissus: my birth is of Neapolis; but my heart, as my lineage, is Athenian.’ ‘Let us, then,’ said I, ‘make our offerings together:’ and, as the priest now appeared, we stood side by side while we followed the priest in his ceremonial prayer; together we touched the knees of the goddess; together we laid our olive garlands on the altar. I felt a strange emotion of almost sacred tenderness at this companionship. We, strangers from a far and

¹ Naples.

fallen land, stood together and alone in that temple of our country's deity: was it not natural that my heart should yearn to my countrywoman, for so I might surely call her? I felt as if I had known her for years; and that simple rite seemed, as by a miracle, to operate on the sympathies and ties of time. Silently we left the temple, and I was about to ask her where she dwelt, and if I might be permitted to visit her, when a youth, in whose features there was some kindred resemblance to her own, and who stood upon the steps of the fane, took her by the hand. She turned round and bade me farewell. The crowd separated us: I saw her no more. On reaching my home I found letters which obliged me to set out for Athens, for my relations threatened me with litigation concerning my inheritance. When that suit was happily over, I repaired once more to Neapolis; I instituted inquiries throughout the whole city. I could discover no clew of my lost countrywoman, and, hoping to lose in gayety all remembrance of that beautiful apparition, I hastened to plunge myself amidst the luxuries of Pompeii. This is all my history. I do not love, but I remember and regret."

As Clodius was about to reply, a slow and stately step approached them, and at the sound it made amongst the pebbles each turned, and each recognized the new-comer.

It was a man who had scarcely reached his fortieth year, of tall stature, and of a thin but nervous and sinewy frame. His skin, dark and bronzed, betrayed his Eastern origin; and his features had something Greek in their outline (especially in the chin, the lip, and the brow), save that the nose was somewhat raised and aquiline, and the bones, hard and visible, forbade that fleshy and waving contour which on the Grecian physiognomy preserved even in manhood the round and beautiful curves of youth. His eyes, large and black as the deepest night, shone with no varying and uncertain lustre; a deep, thoughtful, and half-melancholy calm seemed unalterably fixed in their majestic and commanding gaze. His step and mien were peculiarly sedate and lofty, and something foreign in the fashion and the sober hues of his sweeping garments added to the impressive effect of his quiet countenance and stately

form. Each of the young men, in saluting the new-comer, made mechanically, and with care to conceal it from him, a slight gesture or sign with their fingers; for Arbaces, the Egyptian, was supposed to possess the fatal gift of the evil eye.

“The scene must, indeed, be beautiful,” said Arbaces, with a cold though courteous smile, “which draws the gay Clodius, and Glaucus the all-admired, from the crowded thoroughfares of the city.”

“Is nature ordinarily so unattractive?” asked the Greek.

“To the dissipated — yes.”

“An austere reply, but scarcely a wise one. Pleasure delights in contrasts; it is from dissipation that we learn to enjoy solitude, and from solitude dissipation.”

“So think the young philosophers of the Garden,” replied the Egyptian; “they mistake lassitude for meditation, and imagine that, because they are sated with others, they know the delight of loneliness. But not in such jaded bosoms can Nature awaken that enthusiasm which alone draws from her chaste reserve all her unspeakable beauty: she demands from you, not the exhaustion of passion, but all that fervor from which you only seek, in adoring her, a release. When, young Athenian, the moon revealed herself in visions of light to Endymion it was after a day passed, not amongst the feverish haunts of men, but on the still mountains and in the solitary valleys of the hunter.”

“Beautiful simile!” cried Glaucus; “most unjust application! Exhaustion! that word is for age, not youth. By me, at least, one moment of satiety has never been known.”

Again the Egyptian smiled, but his smile was cold and blighting, and even the unimaginative Clodius froze beneath its light. He did not, however, reply to the passionate exclamation of Glaucus; but after a pause he said, in a soft and melancholy voice, —

“After all, you do right to enjoy the hour while it smiles for you; the rose soon withers, the perfume soon exhales. And we, O Glaucus! strangers in the land, and far from our fathers’ ashes, what is there left for us but pleasure or regret, — for you the first, perhaps for me the last.”

The bright eyes of the Greek were suddenly suffused with tears. "Ah, speak not, Arbaces," he cried, — "speak not of our ancestors. Let us forget that there were ever other liberties than those of Rome! And Glory! — oh, vainly would we call her ghost from the fields of Marathon and Thermopylæ!"

"Thy heart rebukes thee while thou speakest," said the Egyptian; "and in thy gayeties this night thou wilt be more mindful of Læna¹ than of Lais. *Vale!*"

Thus saying, he gathered his robe around him and slowly swept away.

"I breathe more freely," said Clodius. "Imitating the Egyptians, we sometimes introduce a skeleton at our feasts. In truth, the presence of such an Egyptian as yon gliding shadow were spectre enough to sour the richest grape of the Falernian."

"Strange man!" said Glaucus, musingly; "yet dead though he seem to pleasure, and cold to the objects of the world, scandal belies him, or his house and his heart could tell a different tale."

"Ah! there are whispers of other orgies than those of Osiris in his gloomy mansion. He is rich, too, they say. Can we not get him amongst us, and teach him the charms of dice? Pleasure of pleasures! hot fever of hope and fear! inexpressible, unjaded passion! how fiercely beautiful thou art, O Ganing!"

"Inspired — inspired!" cried Glaucus, laughing; "the oracle speaks poetry in Clodius. What miracle next!"

¹ Læna, the heroic mistress of Aristogiton, when put to the torture, bit out her tongue, that the pain might not induce her to betray the conspiracy against the sons of Pisistratus. The statue of a lioness, erected in her honor, was to be seen at Athens in the time of Pausanias.

CHAPTER III.

PARENTAGE OF GLAUCUS. — DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES OF POMPEII. — A CLASSIC REVEL.

HEAVEN had given to Glaucus every blessing but one: it had given him beauty, health, fortune, genius, illustrious descent, a heart of fire, a mind of poetry; but it had denied him the heritage of freedom. He was born in Athens, the subject of Rome. Succeeding early to an ample inheritance, he had indulged that inclination for travel so natural to the young, and had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught of pleasure amidst the gorgeous luxuries of the imperial court.

He was an Alcibiades without ambition. He was what a man of imagination, youth, fortune, and talents readily becomes when you deprive him of the inspiration of glory. His house at Romè was the theme of the debauchees, but also of the lovers of art; and the sculptors of Greece delighted to task their skill in adorning the porticos and *exedrae* of an Athenian. His retreat at Pompeii, — alas! the colors are faded now, the walls stripped of their paintings! — its main beauty, its elaborate finish of grace and ornament, is gone; yet when first given once more to the day, what eulogies, what wonder, did its minute and glowing decorations create, — its paintings, its mosaics! Passionately enamoured of poetry and the drama, which recalled to Glaucus the wit and the heroism of his race, that fairy mansion was adorned with representations of Æschylus and Homer. And antiquaries, who resolve taste to a trade, have turned the patron to the professor, and still (though the error is now acknowledged) they style in custom, as they first named in mistake, the disburied house of the Athenian Glaucus “THE HOUSE OF THE DRAMATIC POET.”

Previous to our description of this house, it may be as well to convey to the reader a general notion of the houses of Pompeii, which he will find to resemble strongly the plans of Vitruvius; but with all those differences in detail, of caprice

and taste, which being natural to mankind have always puzzled antiquaries. We shall endeavor to make this description as clear and unpedantic as possible.

You enter, then, usually by a small entrance-passage (called *vestibulum*), into a hall, sometimes with (but more frequently without) the ornament of columns; around three sides of this hall are doors communicating with several bedchambers (among which is the porter's), the best of these being usually appropriated to country visitors. At the extremity of the hall, on either side to the right and left, if the house is large, there are two small recesses, rather than chambers, generally devoted to the ladies of the mansion; and in the centre of the tessellated pavement of the hall is invariably a square, shallow reservoir for rain-water (classically termed *impluvium*), which was admitted by an aperture in the roof above; the said aperture being covered at will by an awning. Near this impluvium, which had a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the ancients, were sometimes (but at Pompeii more rarely than at Rome) placed images of the household gods. The hospitable hearth, often mentioned by the Roman poets, and consecrated to the Lares, was at Pompeii almost invariably formed by a movable *brazier*; while in some corner, often the most ostentatious place, was deposited a huge wooden chest, ornamented and strengthened by bands of bronze or iron, and secured by strong hooks upon a stone pedestal so firmly as to defy the attempts of any robber to detach it from its position. It is supposed that this chest was the money-box, or coffer, of the master of the house; though as no money has been found in any of the chests discovered at Pompeii, it is probable that it was sometimes rather designed for ornament than use.

In this hall (or *atrium*, to speak classically) the clients and visitors of inferior rank were usually received. In the houses of the more "respectable," an *atriensis*, or slave peculiarly devoted to the service of the hall, was invariably retained, and his rank among his fellow-slaves was high and important. The reservoir in the centre must have been rather a dangerous ornament; but the centre of the hall was like the grass-plot of a college, and interdicted to the passers to and fro, who found

ample space in the margin. Right opposite the entrance, at the other end of the hall, was an apartment (*tablinum*), in which the pavement was usually adorned with rich mosaics, and the walls covered with elaborate paintings. Here were usually kept the records of the family, or those of any public office that had been filled by the owner: on one side of this saloon, if we may so call it, was often a dining-room, or *triclinium*; on the other side, perhaps, what we should now term a cabinet of gems, containing whatever curiosities were deemed most rare and costly; and invariably a small passage for the slaves to cross to the farther parts of the house, without passing the apartments thus mentioned. These rooms all opened on a square or oblong colonnade, technically termed peristyle. If the house was small, its boundary ceased with this colonnade; and in that case its centre, however diminutive, was ordinarily appropriated to the purpose of a garden, and adorned with vases of flowers placed upon pedestals: while under the colonnade, to the right and left, were doors admitting to bedrooms,¹ to a second *triclinium*, or eating-room (for the ancients generally appropriated two rooms at least to that purpose, one for summer, and one for winter — or, perhaps, one for ordinary, the other for festive, occasions); and if the owner affected letters, a cabinet, dignified by the name of library, — for a very small room was sufficient to contain the few rolls of papyrus which the ancients deemed a notable collection of books.

At the end of the peristyle was generally the kitchen. Supposing the house was large, it did not end with the peristyle, and the centre thereof was not in that case a garden, but might be perhaps adorned with a fountain, or basin for fish; and at its end, exactly opposite to the *tablinum*, was generally another eating-room, on either side of which were bedrooms, and perhaps a picture-saloon, or *pinacotheca*.² These apartments communicated again with a square or oblong space,

¹ The Romans had bedrooms appropriated not only to the sleep of night, but also to the day siesta (*cubicula diurna*).

² In the stately palaces of Rome, this picture-room generally communicated with the atrium.

usually adorned on three sides with a colonnade like the peristyle, and very much resembling the peristyle, only usually longer. This was the proper *viridarium*, or garden, being commonly adorned with a fountain, or statues, and a profusion of gay flowers; at its extreme end was the gardener's house; on either side, beneath the colonnade, were sometimes, if the size of the family required it, additional rooms.

At Pompeii, a second or third story was rarely of importance, being built only above a small part of the house, and containing rooms for the slaves; differing in this respect from the more magnificent edifices of Rome, which generally contained the principal eating-room (or *cenaculum*) on the second floor. The apartments themselves were ordinarily of small size; for in those delightful climes they received any extraordinary number of visitors in the peristyle (or portico), the hall, or the garden; and even their banquet-rooms, however elaborately adorned and carefully selected in point of aspect, were of diminutive proportions; for the intellectual ancients, being fond of society, not of crowds, rarely feasted more than nine at a time, so that large dinner-rooms were not so necessary with them as with us.¹ But the suite of rooms, seen at once from the entrance, must have had a very imposing effect: you beheld at once the hall richly paved and painted — the tablinum — the graceful peristyle, and (if the house extended farther) the opposite banquet-room and the garden, which closed the view with some gushing fount or marble statue.

The reader will now have a tolerable notion of the Pompeian houses, which resembled in some respects the Grecian, but mostly the Roman fashion of domestic architecture. In almost every house there is some difference in detail from the rest, but the principal outline is the same in all. In all you find the hall, the tablinum, and the peristyle, communicating with each other; in all you find the walls richly painted; and in all the evidence of a people fond of the refining elegances of life. The purity of the taste of the Pompeians in decoration is, however, questionable: they were fond of the gaudiest

¹ When they entertained very large parties, the feast was usually served in the hall.

colors, of fantastic designs; they often painted the lower half of their columns a bright red, leaving the rest uncolored; and where the garden was small, its wall was frequently tinted to deceive the eye as to its extent, imitating trees, birds, temples, etc., in perspective—a meretricious delusion which the graceful pedantry of Pliny himself adopted, with a complacent pride in its ingenuity.

But the house of Glaucus was at once one of the smallest, and yet one of the most adorned and finished of all the private mansions of Pompeii: it would be a model at this day for the house of “a single man in Mayfair,”—the envy and despair of the cœlibian purchasers of buhl and marquetry.

You enter by a long and narrow vestibule, on the floor of which is the image of a dog in mosaic, with the well-known “Cave canem,” or, “Beware the dog.” On either side is a chamber of some size; for the interior part of the house not being large enough to contain the two great divisions of private and public apartments, these two rooms were set apart for the reception of visitors who neither by rank nor familiarity were entitled to admission into the penetralia of the mansion.

Advancing up the vestibule you enter an atrium, that when first discovered was rich in paintings, which *in point of expression* would scarcely disgrace a Raphael. You may see them now transplanted to the Neapolitan Museum; they are still the admiration of connoisseurs,—they depict the parting of Achilles and Briseis. Who does not acknowledge the force, the vigor, the beauty employed in delineating the forms and faces of Achilles and the immortal slave?

On one side the atrium, a small staircase admitted to the apartments for the slaves on the second floor; there also were two or three small bedrooms, the walls of which portrayed the rape of Europa, the battle of the Amazons, etc.

You now enter the tablinum, across which, at either end, hung rich draperies of Tyrian purple, half withdrawn.¹ On the walls was depicted a poet reading his verses to his

¹ The tablinum was also secured at pleasure by sliding-doors.

friends; and in the pavement was inserted a small and most exquisite mosaic, typical of the instructions given by the director of the stage to his comedians.

You passed through this saloon and entered the peristyle; and here (as I have said before was usually the case with the smaller houses of Pompeii) the mansion ended. From each of the seven columns that adorned this court hung festoons of garlands: the centre, supplying the place of a garden, bloomed with the rarest flowers placed in vases of white marble, that were supported on pedestals. At the left hand of this small garden was a diminutive fane, resembling one of those small chapels placed at the side of roads in Catholic countries, and dedicated to the Penates; before it stood a bronzed tripod: to the left of the colonnade were two small cubicula, or bedrooms; to the right was the triclinium, in which the guests were now assembled.

This room is usually termed by the antiquaries of Naples "The Chamber of Leda;" and in the beautiful work of Sir William Gell, the reader will find an engraving from that most delicate and graceful painting of Leda presenting her new-born to her husband, from which the room derives its name. This charming apartment opened upon the fragrant garden. Round the table of citrean¹ wood, highly polished and delicately wrought with silver arabesques, were placed the three couches, which were yet more common at Pompeii than the semicircular seat that had grown lately into fashion at Rome; and on these couches of bronze, studded with richer metals, were laid thick quiltings covered with elaborate broidery, and yielding luxuriously to the pressure.

"Well, I must own," said the ædile Pansa, "that your house, though scarcely larger than a case for one's fibulæ, is a gem of its kind. How beautifully painted is that parting of Achilles and Briseis!—what a style!—what heads!—what a—hem!"

"Praise from Pansa is indeed valuable on such subjects,"

¹ The most valued wood,—not the modern citron-tree. My learned friend, Mr. W. S. Landor, conjectures it with much plausibility to have been mahogany.

said Clodius, gravely. "Why, the paintings on *his* walls! — Ah, there is, indeed, the hand of a Zeuxis!"

"You flatter me, my Clodius, indeed you do," quoth the ædile, who was celebrated through Pompeii for having the worst paintings in the world; for he was patriotic, and patronized none but Pompeians. "You flatter me; but there is something pretty — Ædepol! yes — in the colors, to say nothing of the design; and then for the kitchen, my friends — ah! that was all my fancy."

"What is the design?" said Glaucus. "I have not yet seen your kitchen, though I have often witnessed the excellence of its cheer."

"A cook, my Athenian, — a cook sacrificing the trophies of his skill on the altar of Vesta, with a beautiful *muræna* (taken from the life) on a spit at a distance; there is some invention there!"

At that instant the slaves appeared, bearing a tray covered with the first preparative initia of the feast. Amidst delicious figs, fresh herbs strewed with snow, anchovies, and eggs, were ranged small cups of diluted wine sparingly mixed with honey. As these were placed on the table, young slaves bore round to each of the five guests (for there were no more) the silver basin of perfumed water, and napkins edged with a purple fringe. But the ædile ostentatiously drew forth his own napkin, which was not, indeed, of so fine a linen, but in which the fringe was twice as broad, and wiped his hands with the parade of a man who felt he was calling for admiration.

"A splendid *mappa* that of yours," said Clodius; "why, the fringe is as broad as a girdle!"

"A trifle, my Clodius, a trifle! They tell me this stripe is the latest fashion at Rome; but Glaucus attends to these things more than I."

"Be propitious, O Bacchus!" said Glaucus, inclining reverentially to a beautiful image of the god placed in the centre of the table, at the corners of which stood the Lares and the salt-holders. The guests followed the prayer, and then, sprinkling the wine on the table, they performed the wonted libation.

This over, the convivialists reclined themselves on the couches, and the business of the hour commenced.

"May this cup be my last," said the young Sallust, as the table, cleared of its first stimulants, was now loaded with the substantial part of the entertainment, and the ministering slave poured forth to him a brimming cyathus, — "May this cup be my last, but it is the best wine I have drunk at Pompeii!"

"Bring hither the amphora," said Glaucus, "and read its date and its character."

The slave hastened to inform the party that the scroll fastened to the cork betokened its birth from Chios, and its age a ripe fifty years.

"How deliciously the snow has cooled it!" said Pansa. "It is just enough."

"It is like the experience of a man who has cooled his pleasures sufficiently to give them a double zest," exclaimed Sallust.

"It is like a woman's 'No,'" added Glaucus: "it cools but to inflame the more."

"When is our next wild-beast fight?" said Clodius to Pansa.

"It stands fixed for the ninth ide of August," answered Pansa: "on the day after the Vulcanalia; we have a most lovely young lion for the occasion."

"Whom shall we get for him to eat?" asked Clodius. "Alas! there is a great scarcity of criminals. You must positively find some innocent or other to condemn to the lion, Pansa."

"Indeed, I have thought very seriously about it of late," replied the ædile, gravely. "It was a most infamous law, that which forbade us to send our own slaves to the wild beasts. Not to let us do what we like with our own, that's what I call an infringement on property itself."

"Not so in the good old days of the Republic," sighed Sallust.

"And then this pretended mercy to the slaves is such a disappointment to the poor people. How they do love to see a good tough battle between a man and a lion; and all this inno-

cent pleasure they may lose (if the gods don't send us a good criminal soon) from this cursed law!"

"What can be worse policy," said Clodius, sententiously, "than to interfere with the manly amusements of the people?"

"Well, thank Jupiter and the Fates! we have no Nero at present," said Sallust.

"He was indeed a tyrant; he shut up our amphitheatre for ten years."

"I wonder it did not create a rebellion," said Sallust.

"It very nearly did," returned Pansa, with his mouth full of wild boar.

Here the conversation was interrupted for a moment by a flourish of flutes, and two slaves entered with a single dish.

"Ah, what delicacy hast thou in store for us now, my Glaucus?" cried the young Sallust, with sparkling eyes.

Sallust was only twenty-four, but he had no pleasure in life like eating; perhaps he had exhausted all the others: yet had he some talent, and an excellent heart—as far as it went.

"I know its face, by Pollux!" cried Pansa. "It is an Ambracian kid! Ho! [snapping his fingers, a usual signal to the slaves] we must prepare a new libation in honor to the new-comer."

"I had hoped," said Glaucus, in a melancholy tone, "to have procured you some oysters from Britain; but the winds that were so cruel to Cæsar have forbid us the oysters."

"Are they in truth so delicious?" asked Lepidus, loosening to a yet more luxurious ease his ungirdled tunic.

"Why, in truth, I suspect it is the distance that gives the flavor; they want the richness of the Brundisium oyster. But at Rome no supper is complete without them."

"The poor Britons! There is some good in them after all," said Sallust. "They produce an oyster."

"I wish they would produce us a gladiator," said the ædile, whose provident mind was musing over the wants of the amphitheatre.

"By Pallas!" cried Glaucus, as his favorite slave crowned his streaming locks with a new chaplet, "I love these wild spectacles well enough when beast fights beast; but when a

man, one with bones and blood like ours, is coldly put on the arena, and torn limb from limb, the interest is too horrid. I sicken; I gasp for breath; I long to rush and defend him. The yells of the populace seem to me more dire than the voices of the Furies chasing Orestes. I rejoice that there is so little chance of that bloody exhibition for our next show."

The ædile shrugged his shoulders. The young Sallust, who was thought the best-natured man in Pompeii, stared in surprise. The graceful Lepidus, who rarely spoke for fear of disturbing his features, ejaculated "Hercle!" The parasite Clodius muttered "Ædepol!" and the sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius,¹ and whose duty it was to echo his richer friend, when he could not praise him, — the parasite of a parasite, — muttered also "Ædepol!"

"Well, you Italians are used to these spectacles; we Greeks are more merciful. Ah, shade of Pindar! the rapture of a true Grecian game, the emulation of man against man, the generous strife, the half-mournful triumph, so proud to contend with a noble foe, so sad to see him overcome! But ye understand me not."

"The kid is excellent," said Sallust. The slave, whose duty it was to carve, and who valued himself on his science, had just performed that office on the kid to the sound of music, his knife keeping time, beginning with a low tenor, and accomplishing the arduous feat amidst a magnificent diapason.

"Your cook is, of course, from Sicily?" said Pansa.

"Yes, of Syracuse."

"I will play you for him," said Clodius. "We will have a game between the courses."

"Better that sort of game, certainly, than a beast-fight; but I cannot stake my Sicilian: you have nothing so precious to stake me in return."

"My Phillida, — my beautiful dancing-girl!"

"I never buy women," said the Greek, carelessly rearranging his chaplet.

The musicians, who were stationed in the portico without, had commenced their office with the kid; they now directed

¹ See note (b) at the end.

the melody into a more soft, a more gay, yet it may be a more intellectual strain; and they chanted that song of Horace beginning "Persicos odi," etc., so impossible to translate, and which they imagined applicable to a feast that, effeminate as it seems to us, was simple enough for the gorgeous revelry of the time. We are witnessing the domestic, and not the princely feast, — the entertainment of a gentleman, not an emperor or a senator.

"Ah, good old Horace!" said Sallust, compassionately; "he sang well of feasts and girls, but not like our modern poets."

"The immortal Fulvius, for instance," said Clodius.

"Ah, Fulvius, the immortal!" said the umbra.

"And Spuræna; and Caius Mutius, who wrote three epics in a year — could Horace do that, or Virgil either?" said Lepidus. "Those old poets all fell into the mistake of copying sculpture instead of painting. Simplicity and repose, — that was their notion; but we moderns have fire, and passion, and energy: we never sleep, we imitate the colors of painting, its life, and its action. Immortal Fulvius!"

"By the way," said Sallust, "have you seen the new ode by Spuræna, in honor of our Egyptian Isis? It is magnificent, — the true religious fervor."

"Isis seems a favorite divinity at Pompeii," said Glaucus.

"Yes," said Pansa, "she is exceedingly in repute just at this moment; her statue has been uttering the most remarkable oracles. I am not superstitious, but I must confess that she has more than once assisted me materially in my magistracy with her advice. Her priests are so pious too; none of your gay, none of your proud ministers of Jupiter and Fortune: they walk barefoot, eat no meat, and pass the greater part of the night in solitary devotion!"

"An example to our other priesthoods, indeed! Jupiter's temple wants reforming sadly," said Lepidus, who was a great reformer for all but himself.

"They say that Arbaces the Egyptian has imparted some most solemn mysteries to the priests of Isis," observed Sallust. "He boasts his descent from the race of Rameses, and de-

clares that in his family the secrets of remotest antiquity are treasured."

"He certainly possesses the gift of the evil eye," said Clodius. "If I ever come upon that Medusa front without the previous charm, I am sure to lose a favorite horse, or throw the *canes*¹ nine times running."

"The last would indeed be a miracle!" said Sallust, gravely.

"How mean you, Sallust?" returned the gamester, with a flushed brow.

"I mean, what you would *leave* me if I played often with you; and that is — nothing."

Clodius answered only by a smile of disdain.

"If Arbaces were not so rich," said Pansa, with a stately air, "I should stretch my authority a little, and inquire into the truth of the report which calls him an astrologer and a sorcerer. Agrippa, when ædile of Rome, banished all such terrible citizens. But a rich man — it is the duty of an ædile to protect the rich!"

"What think you of this new sect, which I am told has even a few proselytes in Pompeii, these followers of the Hebrew God — Christus?"

"Oh, mere speculative visionaries," said Clodius; "they have not a single gentleman amongst them; their proselytes are poor, insignificant, ignorant people!"

"Who ought, however, to be crucified for their blasphemy," said Pansa, with vehemence; "they deny Venus and Jove. Nazarene is but another name for atheist. Let me catch them, that's all!"

The second course was gone; the feasters fell back on their couches; there was a pause while they listened to the soft voices of the South, and the music of the Arcadian reed. Glaucus was the most rapt and the least inclined to break the silence, but Clodius began already to think that they wasted time.

"*Bene vobis!* (your health!) my Glaucus," said he, quaffing a cup to each letter of the Greek's name, with the ease of a practised drinker. "Will you not be avenged on your ill fortune of yesterday? See, the dice court us."

¹ *Cunes*, or *Caniculæ*, the lowest throw at dice.

"As you will," said Glaucus.

"The dice in summer, and I an ædile!"¹ said Pansa, magisterially; "it is against all law."

"Not in your presence, grave Pansa," returned Clodius, rattling the dice in a long box; "your presence restrains all license; it is not the thing, but the excess of the thing, that hurts."

"What wisdom!" muttered the umbra.

"Well, I will look another way," said the ædile.

"Not yet, good Pansa; let us wait till we have supped," said Glaucus.

Clodius reluctantly yielded, concealing his vexation with a yawn.

"He gapes to devour the gold," whispered Lepidus to Sallust, in a quotation from the *Aulularia* of Plautus.

"Ah! how well I know these polypi, who hold all they touch," answered Sallust, in the same tone and out of the same play.

The third course, consisting of a variety of fruits, pistachio nuts, sweetmeats, tarts, and confectionery tortured into a thousand fantastic and airy shapes, was now placed upon the table; and the ministri, or attendants, also set there the wine (which had hitherto been handed round to the guests) in large jugs of glass, each bearing upon it the schedule of its age and quality.

"Taste this Lesbian, my Pansa," said Sallust; "it is excellent."

"It is not very old," said Glaucus, "but it has been made precocious, like ourselves, by being put to the fire: the wine to the flames of Vulcan; we to those of his wife, to whose honor I pour this cup."

"It is delicate," said Pansa, "but there is perhaps the least particle too much of rosin in its flavor."

"What a beautiful cup!" cried Clodius, taking up one of transparent crystal, the handles of which were wrought with gems and twisted in the shape of serpents, the favorite fashion at Pompeii.

¹ See note (c) at the end.

"This ring," said Glaucus, taking a costly jewel from the first joint of his finger and hanging it on the handle, "gives it a richer show, and renders it less unworthy of thy acceptance, my Clodius, on whom may the gods bestow health and fortune, long and oft, to crown it to the brim!"

"You are too generous, Glaucus," said the gamester, handing the cup to his slave; "but your love gives it a double value."

"This cup to the Graces!" said Pansa, and he thrice emptied his calyx. The guests followed his example.

"We have appointed no director to the feast," cried Sallust.

"Let us throw for him, then," said Clodius, rattling the dice-box.

"Nay," cried Glaucus, "no cold and trite director for us; no dictator of the banquet; no *rex convivii*. Have not the Romans sworn never to obey a king? Shall we be less free than your ancestors? Ho, musicians! let us have the song I composed the other night: it has a verse on this subject, 'The Bacchic Hymn of the Hours.'"

The musicians struck their instruments to a wild Ionic air, whilst the youngest voices in the band chanted forth, in Greek words, as numbers, the following strain:—

THE EVENING HYMN OF THE HOURS.

I.

Through the summer day, through the weary day,
 We have glided long;
 Ere we speed to the Night through her portals gray,
 Hail us with song!
 With song, with song,
 With a bright and joyous song;
 Such as the Cretan maid,
 While the twilight made her bolder,
 Woke, high through the ivy shade,
 When the wine-god first consoled her.
 From the hush'd, low-breathing skies,
 Half-shut look'd their starry eyes,
 And all around,
 With a loving sound.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

The Ægean waves were creeping :
 On her lap lay the lynx's head ;
 Wild thyme was her bridal bed ;
 And aye through each tiny space,
 In the green vine's green embrace,
 The Fauns were slyly peeping :
 The Fauns, the prying Fauns,
 The arch, the laughing Fauns, —
 The Fauns were slyly peeping !

II.

Flagging and faint are we
 With our ceaseless flight,
 And dull shall our journey be
 Through the realm of night.
 Bathe us, oh, bathe our weary wings,
 In the purple wave, as it freshly springs
 To your cups from the fount of light —
 From the fount of light — from the fount of light ;
 For there, when the sun has gone down in night,
 There in the bowl we find him.
 The grape is the well of that summer sun,
 Or rather the stream that he gazed upon,
 Till he left in truth, like the Thespian youth,¹
 His soul, as he gazed, behind him.

III.

A cup to Jove, and a cup to Love,
 And a cup to the son of Maia ;
 And honor with three, the band-zone free,
 The band of the bright Aglaia.
 But since every bud in the wreath of pleasure
 Ye owe to the sister Hours,
 No stinted cups, in a formal measure,
 The Bromian law makes ours.
 He honors us most who gives us most,
 And boasts, with a Bacchanal's honest boast,
 He never will count the treasure.
 Fastly we fleet, then seize our wings,
 And plunge us deep in the sparkling springs ;
 And aye, as we rise with a dripping plume,
 We'll scatter the spray round the garland's bloom.
 We glow — we glow.

¹ Narcissus.

Behold, as the girls of the Eastern wave
 Bore once with a shout to their crystal cave
 The prize of the Mysian Hylas,
 Even so — even so,
 We have caught the young god in our warm embrace,
 We hurry him on in our laughing race ;
 We hurry him on, with a whoop and song,
 The cloudy rivers of night along —
 Ho, ho ! — we have caught thee, Psilas !

The guests applauded loudly. When the poet is your host, his verses are sure to charm.

“Thoroughly Greek,” said Lepidus ; “the wildness, force, and energy of that tongue it is impossible to imitate in the Roman poetry.”

“It is, indeed, a great contrast,” said Clodius, ironically at heart, though not in appearance, “to the old-fashioned and tame simplicity of that ode of Horace which we heard before. The air is beautifully Ionic ; the word puts me in mind of a toast, — Companions, I give you the beautiful Ione.”

“Ione ! — the name is Greek,” said Glaucus, in a soft voice. “I drink the health with delight. But who is Ione ?”

“Ah ! you have but just come to Pompeii, or you would deserve ostracism for your ignorance,” said Lepidus, conceitedly ; “not to know Ione, is not to know the chief charm of our city.”

“She is of the most rare beauty,” said Pansa ; “and what a voice !”

“She can feed only on nightingales’ tongues,” said Clodius.

“Nightingales’ tongues ! beautiful thought !” sighed the umbra.

“Enlighten me, I beseech you,” said Glaucus.

“Know then —” began Lepidus.

“Let me speak,” cried Clodius ; “you drawl out your words as if you spoke tortoises.”

“And you speak stones,” muttered the coxcomb to himself, as he fell back disdainfully on his couch.

“Know then, my Glaucus,” said Clodius, “that Ione is a stranger who has but lately come to Pompeii. She sings like

Sappho, and her songs are her own composing; and as for the tibia and the cithara and the lyre, I know not in which she most outdoes the Muses. Her beauty is most dazzling. Her house is perfect; such taste, such gems, such bronzes! She is rich, and generous as she is rich."

"Her lovers, of course," said Glaucus, "take care that she does not starve; and money lightly won is always lavishly spent."

"Her lovers — ah, there is the enigma! Ione has but one vice — she is chaste. She has all Pompeii at her feet, and she has no lovers; she will not even marry."

"No lovers!" echoed Glaucus.

"No; she has the soul of Vesta, with the girdle of Venus."

"What refined expressions!" said the umbra.

"A miracle!" cried Glaucus. "Can we not see her?"

"I will take you there this evening," said Clodius; "meanwhile —" added he, once more rattling the dice.

"I am yours!" said the complaisant Glaucus. "Pansa, turn your face!"

Lepidus and Sallust played at odd and even, and the umbra looked on, while Glaucus and Clodius became gradually absorbed in the chances of the dice.

"By Pollux!" cried Glaucus, "this is the second time I have thrown the caniculæ" (the lowest throw).

"Now Venus befriend me!" said Clodius, rattling the box for several moments. "O Alma Venus — it is Venus herself!" as he threw the highest cast, named from that goddess, — whom he who wins money, indeed, usually propitiates.

"Venus is ungrateful to me," said Glaucus, gayly; "I have always sacrificed on her altar."

"He who plays with Clodius," whispered Lepidus, "will soon, like Plautus's Curculio, put his pallium for the stakes."

"Poor Glaucus! he is as blind as Fortune herself," replied Sallust, in the same tone.

"I will play no more," said Glaucus; "I have lost thirty sestertia."

"I am sorry —" began Clodius.

"Amiable man!" groaned the umbra.

“Not at all!” exclaimed Glaucus; “the pleasure I take in your gain compensates the pain of my loss.”

The conversation now grew general and animated, the wine circulated more freely, and Ione once more became the subject of eulogy to the guests of Glaucus.

“Instead of outwatching the stars, let us visit one at whose beauty the stars grow pale,” said Lepidus.

Clodius, who saw no chance of renewing the dice, seconded the proposal; and Glaucus, though he civilly pressed his guests to continue the banquet, could not but let them see that his curiosity had been excited by the praises of Ione: they therefore resolved to adjourn (all, at least, but Pansa and the umbra) to the house of the fair Greek. They drank, therefore, to the health of Glaucus and of Titus, they performed their last libation, they resumed their slippers, they descended the stairs, passed the illumined atrium, and walking unbitten over the fierce dog painted on the threshold, found themselves beneath the light of the moon just risen, in the lively and still crowded streets of Pompeii.

They passed the jewellers' quarters, sparkling with lights, caught and reflected by the gems displayed in the shops, and arrived at last at the door of Ione. The vestibule blazed with rows of lamps; curtains of embroidered purple hung on either aperture of the tablinum, whose walls and mosaic pavement glowed with the richest colors of the artist; and under the portico which surrounded the odorous viridarium they found Ione, already surrounded by adoring and applauding guests.

“Did you say she was Athenian?” whispered Glaucus, ere he passed into the peristyle.

“No, she is from Neapolis.”

“Neapolis!” echoed Glaucus; and at that moment the group, dividing on either side of Ione, gave to his view that bright, that nymph-like beauty which for mouths had shone down upon the waters of his memory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE OF ISIS. — ITS PRIEST. — THE CHARACTER OF ARBACES DEVELOPS ITSELF.

THE story returns to the Egyptian. We left Arbaces upon the shores of the noonday sea, after he had parted from Glaucus and his companion. As he approached to the more crowded part of the bay, he paused and gazed upon that animated scene with folded arms, and a bitter smile upon his dark features.

“Gulls, dupes, fools, that ye are!” muttered he to himself; “whether business or pleasure, trade or religion, be your pursuit, you are equally cheated by the passions that ye should rule! How I could loathe you, if I did not hate — yes, hate! Greek or Roman, it is from us, from the dark lore of Egypt, that ye have stolen the fire that gives you souls. Your knowledge, your poesy, your laws, your arts, your barbarous mastery of war (all how tame and mutilated when compared with the vast original!) ye have filched, as a slave filches the fragments of the feast, from us! And now, ye mimics of a mimic! — Romans, forsooth! the mushroom herd of robbers! — *ye* are our masters! The pyramids look down no more on the race of Rameses; the eagle cowers over the serpent of the Nile. *Our* masters — not *mine*. My soul, by the power of its wisdom, controls and chains you, though the fetters are unseen. So long as craft can master force, so long as religion has a cave from which oracles can dupe mankind, the wise hold an empire over earth. Even from your vices Arbaces distils his pleasures; pleasures unprofaned by vulgar eyes; pleasures vast, wealthy, inexhaustible, of which your enervate minds, in their unimaginative sensuality, cannot conceive or dream! Plod on, plod on, fools of ambition and of avarice! your petty thirst for fasces and quæstorships, and all the mummery of servile power, provokes my laughter and my scorn. My power can extend wherever man believes. I ride over the

souls that the purple veils. Thebes may fall, Egypt be a name; the world itself furnishes the subjects of Arbaces."

Thus saying, the Egyptian moved slowly on; and, entering the town, his tall figure towered above the crowded throng of the forum, and swept towards the small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis.¹

That edifice was then but of recent erection; the ancient temple had been thrown down in the earthquake sixteen years before, and the new building had become as much in vogue with the versatile Pompeians as a new church or a new preacher may be with us. The oracles of the goddess at Pompeii were indeed remarkable, not more for the mysterious language in which they were clothed, than for the credit which was attached to their mandates and predictions. If they were not dictated by a divinity, they were framed at least by a profound knowledge of mankind; they applied themselves exactly to the circumstances of individuals, and made a notable contrast to the vague and loose generalities of their rival temples. As Arbaces now arrived at the rails which separated the profane from the sacred place, a crowd, composed of all classes, but especially of the commercial, collected, breathless and reverential, before the many altars which rose in the open court. In the walls of the cella, elevated on seven steps of Parian marble, various statues stood in niches, and those walls were ornamented with the pomegranate consecrated to Isis. An oblong pedestal occupied the interior building, on which stood two statues, one of Isis, and its companion represented the silent and mystic Orus. But the building contained many other deities to grace the court of the Egyptian deity: her kindred and many-titled Bacchus, and the Cyprian Venus, a Grecian disguise for herself, rising from her bath, and the dog-headed Anubis, and the ox Apis, and various Egyptian idols of uncouth form and unknown appellations.

But we must not suppose that, among the cities of Magnæ Græcia, Isis was worshipped with those forms and ceremonies which were of right her own. The mongrel and modern nations of the South, with a mingled arrogance and ignorance,

¹ See note (d) at the end.

confounded the worships of all climes and ages; and the profound mysteries of the Nile were degraded by a hundred meretricious and frivolous admixtures from the creeds of Cephisus and of Tiber. The temple of Isis in Pompeii was served by Roman and Greek priests, ignorant alike of the language and the customs of her ancient votaries; and the descendant of the dread Egyptian kings, beneath the appearance of reverential awe, secretly laughed to scorn the puny mummeries which imitated the solemn and typical worship of his burning clime.

Ranged now on either side the steps was the sacrificial crowd, arrayed in white garments, while at the summit stood two of the inferior priests, the one holding a palm-branch, the other a slender sheaf of corn. In the narrow passage in front thronged the bystanders.

“And what,” whispered Arbaces to one of the bystanders, who was a merchant engaged in the Alexandrian trade, which trade had probably first introduced into Pompeii the worship of the Egyptian goddess, — “what occasion now assembles you before the altars of the venerable Isis? It seems, by the white robes of the group before me, that a sacrifice is to be rendered; and by the assembly of the priests, that ye are prepared for some oracle. To what question is it to vouchsafe a reply?”

“We are merchants,” replied the bystander (who was no other than Diomed) in the same voice, “who seek to know the fate of our vessels, which sail for Alexandria to-morrow. We are about to offer up a sacrifice and implore an answer from the goddess. I am not one of those who have petitioned the priest to sacrifice, as you may see by my dress, but I have some interest in the success of the fleet; by Jupiter! yes. I have a pretty trade, else how could I live in these hard times?”

The Egyptian replied gravely, that though Isis was properly the goddess of agriculture, she was no less the patron of commerce. Then turning his head towards the east, Arbaces seemed absorbed in silent prayer.

And now in the centre of the steps appeared a priest robed in white from head to foot, the veil parting over the crown;

two new priests relieved those hitherto stationed at either corner, being naked half-way down to the breast, and covered, for the rest, in white and loose robes. At the same time, seated at the bottom of the steps, a priest commenced a solemn air upon a long wind-instrument of music. Half-way down the steps stood another flamen, holding in one hand the votive wreath, in the other a white wand; while, adding to the picturesque scene of that Eastern ceremony, the stately ibis (bird sacred to the Egyptian worship) looked mutely down from the wall upon the rite, or stalked beside the altar at the base of the steps.

At that altar now stood the sacrificial flamen.¹

The countenance of Arbaces seemed to lose all its rigid calm while the aruspices inspected the entrails, and to be intent in pious anxiety; to rejoice and brighten as the signs were declared favorable, and the fire began bright and clearly to consume the sacred portion of the victim amidst odors of myrrh and frankincense. It was then that a dead silence fell over the whispering crowd, and the priests gathering round the cella, another priest, naked save by a cincture round the middle, rushed forward, and dancing with wild gestures, implored an answer from the goddess. He ceased at last in exhaustion, and a low murmuring noise was heard within the body of the statue: thrice the head moved, and the lips parted, and then a hollow voice uttered these mystic words:—

“There are waves like chargers that meet and glow,
There are graves ready wrought in the rocks below:
On the brow of the future the dangers lour,
But blest are your barks in the fearful hour.”

The voice ceased; the crowd breathed more freely; the merchants looked at each other. “Nothing can be more plain,” murmured Diomed; “there is to be a storm at sea, as there very often is at the beginning of autumn, but our vessels are to be saved. O beneficent Isis!”

“Lauded eternally be the goddess!” said the merchants; “what can be less equivocal than her prediction?”

¹ See a singular picture, in the Museum of Naples, of an Egyptian sacrifice

Raising one hand in sign of silence to the people, — for the rites of Isis enjoined what to the lively Pompeians was an impossible suspense from the use of the vocal organs, — the chief priest poured his libation on the altar, and after a short concluding prayer the ceremony was over, and the congregation dismissed. Still, however, as the crowd dispersed themselves here and there, the Egyptian lingered by the railing, and when the space became tolerably cleared, one of the priests, approaching it, saluted him with great appearance of friendly familiarity.

The countenance of the priest was remarkably unprepossessing. His shaven skull was so low and narrow in the front as nearly to approach to the conformation of that of an African savage, save only towards the temples, where, in that organ styled acquisitiveness by the pupils of a science modern in name, but best practically known (as their sculpture teaches us) amongst the ancients, two huge and almost preternatural protuberances yet more distorted the unshapely head. Around the brows the skin was puckered into a web of deep and intricate wrinkles; the eyes, dark and small, rolled in a muddy and yellow orbit; the nose, short yet coarse, was distended at the nostrils like a satyr's; and the thick but pallid lips, the high cheek-bones, the livid and motley hues that struggled through the parchment skin, completed a countenance which none could behold without repugnance, and few without terror and distrust. Whatever the wishes of the mind, the animal frame was well fitted to execute them; the wiry muscles of the throat, the broad chest, the nervous hands and lean gaunt arms, which were bared above the elbow, betokened a form capable alike of great active exertion and passive endurance.

“Calenus,” said the Egyptian to this fascinating flamen, “you have improved the voice of the statue much by attending to my suggestion; and your verses are excellent. Always prophesy good fortune, unless there is an absolute impossibility of its fulfilment.”

“Besides,” added Calenus, “if the storm does come, and if it does overwhelm the accursed ships, have we not prophesied

it, and are the barks not blest to be at rest? For rest prays the mariner in the Ægean sea, or at least so says Horace; can the mariner be more at rest in the sea than when he is at the bottom of it?"

"Right, my Calenus; I wish Apæcides would take a lesson from your wisdom. But I desire to confer with you relative to him and to other matters: you can admit me into one of your less sacred apartments?"

"Assuredly," replied the priest, leading the way to one of the small chambers which surrounded the open gate. Here they seated themselves before a small table spread with dishes containing fruit and eggs, and various cold meats, with vases of excellent wine, of which while the companions partook, a curtain, drawn across the entrance opening to the court, concealed them from view, but admonished them by the thinness of the partition to speak low, or to speak no secrets; they chose the former alternative.

"Thou knowest," said Arbaces, in a voice that scarcely stirred the air, so soft and inward was its sound, "that it has ever been my maxim to attach myself to the young. From their flexile and unformed minds I can carve out my fittest tools. I weave, I warp, I mould them at my will. Of the men I make merely followers or servants; of the women —"

"Mistresses," said Calenus, as a livid grin distorted his ungainly features.

"Yes, I do not disguise it; woman is the main object, the great appetite of my soul. As *you* feed the victim for the slaughter, *I* love to rear the votaries of my pleasure. I love to train, to ripen their minds, to unfold the sweet blossom of their hidden passions, in order to prepare the fruit to my taste. I loathe your ready-made and ripened courtesans; it is in the soft and unconscious progress of innocence to desire that I find the true charm of love; it is thus that I defy satiety; and by contemplating the freshness of others, I sustain the freshness of my own sensations. From the young hearts of my victims I draw the ingredients of the caldron in which I re-youth myself. But enough of this: to the subject before us. You know, then, that in Neapolis some time since I encountered

Ione and Apæcides, brother and sister, the children of Athenians who had settled at Neapolis. The death of their parents, who knew and esteemed me, constituted me their guardian. I was not unmindful of the trust. The youth, docile and mild, yielded readily to the impression I sought to stamp upon him. Next to woman, I love the old recollections of my ancestral land; I love to keep alive, to propagate on distant shores (which her colonies perchance yet people) her dark and mystic creeds. It may be that it pleases me to delude mankind while I thus serve the deities. To Apæcides I taught the solemn faith of Isis. I unfolded to him something of those sublime allegories which are couched beneath her worship. I excited in a soul peculiarly alive to religious fervor that enthusiasm which imagination begets on faith. I have placed him amongst you; he is one of you."

"He is so," said Calenus; "but in thus stimulating his faith, you have robbed him of wisdom. He is horror-struck that he is no longer duped: our sage delusions, our speaking statues and secret staircases dismay and revolt him; he pines; he wastes away; he mutters to himself; he refuses to share our ceremonies. He has been known to frequent the company of men suspected of adherence to that new and atheistical creed which denies all our gods, and terms our oracles the inspirations of that malevolent spirit of which Eastern tradition speaks. Our oracles — alas! we know well whose inspirations *they* are!"

"This is what I feared," said Arbaces, musingly, "from various reproaches he made me when I last saw him. Of late he hath shunned my steps; I must find him; I must continue my lessons; I must lead him into the adytum of Wisdom; I must teach him that there are two stages of sanctity, — the first, FAITH, the next, DELUSION: the one for the vulgar, the second for the sage."

"I never passed through the first," said Calenus; "nor you either, I think, my Arbaces."

"You err," replied the Egyptian, gravely. "I believe at this day (not indeed that which I teach, but that which I teach not), Nature has a sanctity against which I cannot (nor would I)

steel conviction. I believe in mine own knowledge, and that has revealed to me— But no matter. Now to earthlier and more inviting themes. If I thus fulfilled my object with Apæcides, what was my design for Ione? Thou knowest already I intend her for my queen, my bride, my heart's Isis. Never till I saw her knew I all the love of which my nature is capable."

"I hear from a thousand lips that she is a second Helen," said Calenus; and he smacked his own lips, but whether at the wine or at the notion it is not easy to decide.

"Yes, she has a beauty that Greece itself never excelled," resumed Arbaces. "But that is not all; she has a soul worthy to match with mine. She has a genius beyond that of woman,—keen, dazzling, bold. Poetry flows spontaneous to her lips; utter but a truth, and, however intricate and profound, her mind seizes and commands it. Her imagination and her reason are not at war with each other; they harmonize and direct her course as the winds and the waves direct some lofty bark. With this she unites a daring independence of thought; she can stand alone in the world; she can be brave as she is gentle; this is the nature I have sought all my life in woman, and never found till now. Ione must be mine! In her I have a double passion; I wish to enjoy a beauty of spirit as of form."

"She is not yours yet, then?" said the priest.

"No; she loves me, but as a friend: she loves me with her mind only. She fancies in me the paltry virtues which I have only the profounder virtue to disdain. But you must pursue with me her history. The brother and sister were young and rich; Ione is proud and ambitious,—proud of her genius, the magic of her poetry, the charm of her conversation. When her brother left me, and entered your temple, in order to be near him she removed also to Pompeii. She has suffered her talents to be known. She summons crowds to her feasts; her voice enchants them, her poetry subdues. She delights in being thought the successor of Erinna."

"Or of Sappho?"

"But Sappho without love! I encouraged her in this bold-

ness of career, — in this indulgence of vanity and of pleasure. I loved to steep her amidst the dissipations and luxury of this abandoned city. Mark me, Calenus, I desired to enervate her mind; it has been too pure to receive yet the breath which I wish not to pass, but burningly to eat into, the mirror. I wished her to be surrounded by lovers, hollow, vain, and frivolous (lovers that her nature must despise), in order to feel the want of love. Then, in those soft intervals of lassitude that succeed to excitement, I can weave my spells, — excite her interest, attract her passions, possess myself of her heart. For it is not the young, nor the beautiful, nor the gay, that should fascinate Ione; her imagination must be won, and the life of Arbaces has been one scene of triumph over the imaginations of his kind.”

“And hast thou no fear, then, of thy rivals? The gallants of Italy are skilled in the art to please.”

“None! Her Greek soul despises the barbarian Romans, and would scorn itself if it admitted a thought of love for one of that upstart race.”

“But thou art an Egyptian, not a Greek!”

“Egypt,” replied Arbaces, “is the mother of Athens. Her tutelary Minerva is our deity, and her founder, Cecrops, was the fugitive of Egyptian Sais. This have I already taught to her, and in my blood she venerates the eldest dynasties of earth. But yet I will own that of late some uneasy suspicions have crossed my mind. She is more silent than she used to be; she loves melancholy and subduing music; she sighs without an outward cause. This may be the beginning of love; it may be the want of love. In either case it is time for me to begin my operations on her fancies and her heart: in the one case, to divert the source of love to me; in the other, in me to awaken it. It is for this that I have sought you.”

“And how can I assist you?”

“I am about to invite her to a feast in my house; I wish to dazzle, to bewilder, to inflame her senses. Our arts — the arts by which Egypt trained her young novitiates — must be employed; and under veil of the mysteries of religion I will open to her the secrets of love.”

“Ah! now I understand: one of those voluptuous banquets that, despite our dull vows of mortified coldness, we, thy priests of Isis, have shared at thy house.”

“No, no! Thinkest thou her chaste eyes are ripe for such scenes? No; but first we must ensnare the brother,—an easier task. Listen to me while I give you my instructions.”

CHAPTER V.

MORE OF THE FLOWER-GIRL. — THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

THE sun shone gayly into that beautiful chamber in the house of Glaucus, which I have before said is now called “the Room of Leda.” The morning rays entered through rows of small casements at the higher part of the room, and through the door which opened on the garden, that answered to the inhabitants of the southern cities the same purpose that a greenhouse or conservatory does to us. The size of the garden did not adapt it for exercise, but the various and fragrant plants with which it was filled gave a luxury to that indolence so dear to the dwellers in a sunny clime. And now the odors, fanned by a gentle wind creeping from the adjacent sea, scattered themselves over that chamber, whose walls vied with the richest colors of the most glowing flowers. Besides the gem of the room — the painting of Leda and Tyndarus — in the centre of each compartment of the walls were set other pictures of exquisite beauty. In one you saw Cupid leaning on the knees of Venus; in another Ariadne sleeping on the beach, unconscious of the perfidy of Theseus. Merrily the sunbeams played to and fro on the tessellated floor and the brilliant walls; far more happily came the rays of joy to the heart of the young Glaucus.

“I have seen her, then,” said he as he paced that narrow chamber, — “I have heard her, nay, I have spoken to her again; I have listened to the music of her song, and she sung of glory and of Greece. I have discovered the long-sought idol of my

dreams, and like the Cyprian sculptor, I have breathed life into my own imaginings."

Longer, perhaps, had been the enamoured soliloquy of Glaucus, but at that moment a shadow darkened the threshold of the chamber, and a young female, still half a child in years, broke upon his solitude. She was dressed simply in a white tunic, which reached from the neck to the ankles; under her arm she bore a basket of flowers, and in the other hand she held a bronze water-vase; her features were more formed than exactly became her years, yet they were soft and feminine in their outline, and, without being beautiful in themselves, they were almost made so by their beauty of expression; there was something ineffably gentle, and you would say patient, in her aspect. A look of resigned sorrow, of tranquil endurance, had banished the smile, but not the sweetness, from her lips; something timid and cautious in her step, something wandering in her eyes, led you to suspect the affliction which she had suffered from her birth: she was blind, but in the orbs themselves there was no visible defect; their melancholy and subdued light was clear, cloudless, and serene. "They tell me that Glaucus is here," said she; "may I come in?"

"Ah, my Nydia," said the Greek, "is that you? I knew you would not neglect my invitation."

"Glaucus did but justice to himself," answered Nydia, with a blush; "for he has always been kind to the poor blind girl."

"Who could be otherwise?" said Glaucus, tenderly, and in the voice of a compassionate brother.

Nydia sighed and paused before she resumed, without replying to his remark. "You have but lately returned?"

"This is the sixth sun that hath shone upon me at Pompeii."

"And you are well? Ah, I need not ask; for who that sees the earth, which they tell me is so beautiful, can be ill?"

"I am well. And you, Nydia, how you have grown! Next year you will be thinking what answer to make your lovers."

A second blush passed over the cheek of Nydia, but this time she frowned as she blushed. "I have brought you some

flowers," said she, without replying to a remark that she seemed to resent; and feeling about the room till she found the table that stood by Glaucus, she laid the basket upon it; "they are poor, but they are fresh-gathered."

"They might come from Flora herself," said he, kindly; "and I renew again my vow to the Graces, that I will wear no other garlands while thy hands can weave me such as these."

"And how find you the flowers in your viridarium? Are they thriving?"

"Wonderfully so. The Lares themselves must have tended them."

"Ah, now you give me pleasure; for I came, as often as I could steal the leisure, to water and tend them in your absence."

"How shall I thank thee, fair Nydia?" said the Greek. "Glaucus little dreamed that he left one memory so watchful over his favorites at Pompeii."

The hand of the child trembled, and her breast heaved beneath her tunic. She turned round in embarrassment. "The sun is hot for the poor flowers," said she, "to-day, and they will miss me; for I have been ill lately, and it is nine days since I visited them."

"Ill, Nydia! yet your cheek has more color than it had last year."

"I am often ailing," said the blind girl, touchingly; "and as I grow up I grieve more that I am blind. But now to the flowers!" So saying, she made a slight reverence with her head, and passing into the viridarium, busied herself with watering the flowers.

"Poor Nydia," thought Glaucus, gazing on her; "thine is a hard doom! Thou seest not the earth, nor the sun, nor the ocean, nor the stars; above all, thou canst not behold Ione."

At that last thought his mind flew back to the past evening, and was a second time disturbed in its reveries by the entrance of Clodius. It was a proof how much a single evening had sufficed to increase and to refine the love of the Athenian for Ione, that whereas he had confided to Clodius

the secret of his first interview with her, and the effect it had produced on him, he now felt an invincible aversion even to mention to him her name. He had seen Ione, bright, pure, unsullied, in the midst of the gayest and most profligate gallants of Pompeii, charming rather than awing the boldest into respect, and changing the very nature of the most sensual and the least ideal, — as by her intellectual and refining spells she reversed the fable of Circe, and converted the animals into men. They who could not understand her soul were made spiritual, as it were, by the magic of her beauty; they who had no heart for poetry had ears, at least, for the melody of her voice. Seeing her thus surrounded, purifying and brightening all things with her presence, Glaucus almost for the first time felt the nobleness of his own nature. He felt how unworthy of the goddess of his dreams had been his companions and his pursuits. A veil seemed lifted from his eyes; he saw that immeasurable distance between himself and his associates which the deceiving mists of pleasure had hitherto concealed; he was refined by a sense of his courage in aspiring to Ione. He felt that henceforth it was his destiny to look upward and to soar. He could no longer breathe that name, which sounded to the sense of his ardent fancy as something sacred and divine, to lewd and vulgar ears. She was no longer the beautiful girl once seen and passionately remembered; she was already the mistress, the divinity of his soul. This feeling who has not experienced? If thou hast not, then thou hast never loved.

When Clodius therefore spoke to him in affected transports of the beauty of Ione, Glaucus felt only resentment and disgust that such lips should dare to praise her; he answered coldly, and the Roman imagined that his passion was cured instead of heightened. Clodius scarcely regretted it, for he was anxious that Glaucus should marry an heiress yet more richly endowed, — Julia, the daughter of the wealthy Diomed, whose gold the gamester imagined he could readily divert into his own coffers. Their conversation did not flow with its usual ease; and no sooner had Clodius left him than Glaucus bent his way to the house of Ione. In passing by the thresh-

old he again encountered Nydia, who had finished her graceful task. She knew his step on the instant.

"You are early abroad?" said she.

"Yes; for the skies of Campania rebuke the sluggard who neglects them."

"Ah, would I could see them!" murmured the blind girl, but so low that Glaucus did not overhear the complaint.

The Thessalian lingered on the threshold a few moments, and then guiding her steps by a long staff, which she used with great dexterity, she took her way homeward. She soon turned from the more gaudy streets, and entered a quarter of the town but little loved by the decorous and the sober; but from the low and rude evidences of vice around her she was saved by her misfortune; and at that hour the streets were quiet and silent, nor was her youthful ear shocked by the sounds which too often broke along the obscene and obscure haunts she patiently and sadly traversed.

She knocked at the back door of a sort of tavern; it opened, and a rude voice bade her give an account of the sesterces. Ere she could reply, another voice, less vulgarly accented, said, —

"Never mind those petty profits, my Burbo. The girl's voice will be wanted again soon at our rich friend's revels; and he pays, as thou knowest, pretty high for his nightingales' tongues."

"Oh, I hope not, I trust not," cried Nydia trembling; "I will beg from sunrise to sunset, but send me not there."

"And why?" asked the same voice.

"Because — because I am young and delicately born, and the female companions I meet there are not fit associates for one who — who —"

"Is a slave in the house of Burbo," returned the voice, ironically, and with a coarse laugh.

The Thessalian put down the flowers, and, leaning her face on her hands, wept silently.

Meanwhile Glaucus sought the house of the beautiful Neapolitan. He found Ione sitting amidst her attendants, who were at work around her. Her harp stood at her side, for

Ione herself was unusually idle, perhaps unusually thoughtful, that day. He thought her even more beautiful by the morning light, and in her simple robe, than amidst the blazing lamps, and decorated with the costly jewels of the previous night, — not the less so from a certain paleness that overspread her transparent hues; not the less so from the blush that mounted over them when he approached. Accustomed to flatter, flattery died upon his lips when he addressed Ione. He felt it beneath her to *utter* the homage which every *look* conveyed. They spoke of Greece; this was a theme on which Ione loved rather to listen than to converse: it was a theme on which the Greek could have been eloquent forever. He described to her the silver olive-groves that yet clad the banks of Ilissus, and the temples, already despoiled of half their glories, but how beautiful in decay! He looked back on the melancholy city of Harmodius the free, and Pericles the magnificent, from the height of that distant memory which mellowed into one hazy light all the ruder and darker shades. He had seen the land of poetry chiefly in the poetical age of early youth; and the associations of patriotism were blended with those of the flush and spring of life. And Ione listened to him, absorbed and mute; dearer were those accents and those descriptions than all the prodigal adulation of her numberless adorers. Was it a sin to love her countrymen? She loved Athens in him: the gods of her race, the land of her dreams, spoke to her in his voice. From that time they daily saw each other. At the cool of the evening they made excursions on the placid sea; by night they met again in Ione's porticos and halls. Their love was sudden, but it was strong; it filled all the sources of their life. Heart, brain, sense, imagination, all were its ministers and priests. As you take some obstacle from two objects that have a mutual attraction, they met, and united at once; their wonder was, that they had lived separate so long. And it was natural that they should so love. Young, beautiful, and gifted, — of the same birth and the same souls, — there was poetry in their very union. They imagined the heavens smiled upon their affection. As the persecuted seek refuge

at the shrine, so they recognized in the altar of their love an asylum from the sorrows of earth; they covered it with flowers, — they knew not of the serpents that lay coiled behind.

One evening, the fifth after their first meeting at Pompeii, Glaucus and Ione, with a small party of chosen friends, were returning from an excursion round the bay; their vessel skimmed lightly over the twilight waters, whose lucid mirror was only broken by the dripping oars. As the rest of the party conversed gayly with each other, Glaucus lay at the feet of Ione, and he would have looked up in her face, but he did not dare. Ione broke the pause between them.

“My poor brother,” said she, sighing, “how once he would have enjoyed this hour!”

“Your brother,” said Glaucus; “I have not seen him. Occupied with you, I have thought of nothing else, or I should have asked if that was not your brother for whose companionship you left me at the Temple of Minerva, in Neapolis.”

“It was.”

“And is he here?”

“He is.”

“At Pompeii, and not constantly with you! Impossible!”

“He has other duties,” answered Ione, sadly; “he is a priest of Isis.”

“So young, too; and that priesthood, in its laws at least, so severe!” said the warm and bright-hearted Greek, in surprise and pity. “What could have been his inducement?”

“He was always enthusiastic and fervent in religious devotion, and the eloquence of an Egyptian — our friend and guardian — kindled in him the pious desire to consecrate his life to the most mystic of our deities. Perhaps in the intensity of his zeal he found in the severity of that peculiar priesthood its peculiar attraction.”

“And he does not repent his choice? I trust he is happy.”

Ione sighed deeply, and lowered her veil over her eyes.

“I wish,” said she, after a pause, “that he had not been so hasty. Perhaps, like all who expect too much, he is revolted too easily.”

“Then he is not happy in his new condition. And this

Egyptian, — was he a priest himself? Was he interested in recruits to the sacred band?"

"No. His main interest was in our happiness. He thought he promoted that of my brother. We were left orphans."

"Like myself," said Glaucus, with a deep meaning in his voice.

Ione cast down her eyes as she resumed, —

"And Arbaces sought to supply the place of our parent. You must know him. He loves genius."

"Arbaces! I know him already; at least, we speak when we meet. But for your praise I would not seek to know more of him. My heart inclines readily to most of my kind. But that dark Egyptian, with his gloomy brow and icy smiles, seems to me to sadden the very sun. One would think that, like Epimenides the Cretan, he had spent forty years in a cave, and had found something unnatural in the daylight ever afterwards."

"Yet, like Epimenides, he is kind, and wise, and gentle," answered Ione.

"Oh, happy that he has thy praise! He needs no other virtues to make him dear to me."

"His calm, his coldness," said Ione, evasively pursuing the subject, "are perhaps but the exhaustion of past sufferings; as yonder mountain [and she pointed to Vesuvius], which we see dark and tranquil in the distance, once nursed the fires forever quenched."

They both gazed on the mountain as Ione said these words; the rest of the sky was bathed in rosy and tender hues, but over that gray summit, rising amidst the woods and vineyards that then clomb half-way up the ascent, there hung a black and ominous cloud, the single frown of the landscape. A sudden and unaccountable gloom came over each as they thus gazed; and in that sympathy which love had already taught them, and which bade them, in the slightest shadows of emotion, the faintest presentiment of evil, turn for refuge to each other, their gaze at the same moment left the mountain, and, full of unimaginable tenderness, met. What need had they of words to say they loved?

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOWLER SNARES AGAIN THE BIRD THAT HAD JUST ESCAPED, AND SETS HIS NETS FOR A NEW VICTIM.

IN the history I relate, the events are crowded and rapid as those of the drama. I write of an epoch in which days sufficed to ripen the ordinary fruits of years.

Meanwhile, Arbaces had not of late much frequented the house of Ione; and when he had visited her he had not encountered Glaucus, nor knew he, as yet, of that love which had so suddenly sprung up between himself and his designs. In his interest for the brother of Ione, he had been forced, too, a little while to suspend his interest in Ione herself. His pride and his selfishness were aroused and alarmed at the sudden change which had come over the spirit of the youth. He trembled lest he himself should lose a docile pupil, and Isis an enthusiastic servant. Apæcides had ceased to seek or to consult him. He was rarely to be found; he turned sullenly from the Egyptian, — nay, he fled when he perceived him in the distance. Arbaces was one of those haughty and powerful spirits accustomed to master others; he chafed at the notion that one once his own should ever elude his grasp. He swore inly that Apæcides should not escape him.

It was with this resolution that he passed through a thick grove in the city, which lay between his house and that of Ione, in his way to the latter; and there, leaning against a tree, and gazing on the ground, he came unawares on the young priest of Isis.

“Apæcides!” said he, — and he laid his hand affectionately on the young man’s shoulder.

The priest started, and his first instinct seemed to be that of flight. “My son,” said the Egyptian, “what has chanced that you desire to shun me?”

Apæcides remained silent and sullen, looking down on the earth, as his lips quivered and his breast heaved with emotion.

“Speak to me, my friend,” continued the Egyptian. “Speak. Something burdens thy spirit. What hast thou to reveal?”

“To thee — nothing.”

“And why is it to me thou art thus unconfidential?”

“Because thou hast been my enemy.”

“Let us confer,” said Arbaces, in a low voice; and drawing the reluctant arm of the priest in his own, he led him to one of the seats which were scattered within the grove. They sat down, — and in those gloomy forms there was something congenial to the shade and solitude of the place.

Apæcides was in the spring of his years, yet he seemed to have exhausted even more of life than the Egyptian; his delicate and regular features were worn and colorless; his eyes were hollow, and shone with a brilliant and feverish glare; his frame bowed prematurely, and in his hands, which were small to effeminacy, the blue and swollen veins indicated the lassitude and weakness of the relaxed fibres. You saw in his face a strong resemblance to Ione, but the expression was altogether different from that majestic and spiritual calm which breathed so divine and classical a repose over his sister's beauty. In her, enthusiasm was visible, but it seemed always suppressed and restrained; this made the charm and sentiment of her countenance: you longed to awaken a spirit which reposed, but evidently did not sleep. In Apæcides the whole aspect betokened the fervor and passion of his temperament, and the intellectual portion of his nature seemed, by the wild fire of the eyes, the great breadth of the temples when compared with the height of the brow, the trembling restlessness of the lips, to be swayed and tyrannized over by the imaginative and ideal. Fancy, with the sister, had stopped short at the golden goal of poetry: with the brother, less happy and less restrained, it had wandered into visions more intangible and unembodied; and the faculties which gave genius to the one threatened madness to the other.

“You say I have been your enemy,” said Arbaces. “I know the cause of that unjust accusation: I have placed you amidst the priests of Isis; you are revolted at their trickeries and imposture; you think that I too have deceived you; the

purity of your mind is offended ; you imagine that I am one of the deceitful — ”

“ You knew the jugglings of that impious craft,” answered Apæcides ; “ why did you disguise them from me ? When you excited my desire to devote myself to the office whose garb I bear, you spoke to me of the holy life of men resigning themselves to knowledge — you have given me for companions an ignorant and sensual herd, who have no knowledge but that of the grossest frauds ; you spoke to me of men sacrificing the earthlier pleasures to the sublime cultivation of virtue — you place me amongst men reeking with all the filthiness of vice ; you spoke to me of the friends, the enlighteners of our common kind — I see but their cheats and deluders ! Oh, it was basely done ! You have robbed me of the glory of youth, of the convictions of virtue, of the sanctifying thirst after wisdom. Young as I was, rich, fervent, the sunny pleasures of earth before me, I resigned all without a sigh, nay, with happiness and exultation, in the thought that I resigned them for the abstruse mysteries of diviner wisdom, for the companionship of gods, for the revelations of Heaven ; and now — now — ”

Convulsive sobs checked the priest’s voice ; he covered his face with his hands, and large tears forced themselves through the wasted fingers and ran profusely down his vest.

“ What I promised to thee, that will I give, my friend, my pupil : these have been but trials to thy virtue ; it comes forth the brighter for thy novitiate. Think no more of those dull cheats, assort no more with those menials of the goddess, the atrienses ¹ of her hall ; you are worthy to enter into the penetralia. I henceforth will be your priest, your guide, and you who now curse my friendship shall live to bless it.”

The young man lifted up his head, and gazed with a vacant and wondering stare upon the Egyptian.

“ Listen to me,” continued Arbaces, in an earnest and solemn voice, casting first his searching eyes around to see that they were still alone. “ From Egypt came all the knowledge of the world ; from Egypt came the lore of Athens, and the

¹ The slaves who had the care of the atrium.

profound policy of Crete ; from Egypt came those early and mysterious tribes which (long before the hordes of Romulus swept over the plains of Italy, and in the eternal cycle of events drove back civilization into barbarism and darkness) possessed all the arts of wisdom and the graces of intellectual life. From Egypt came the rites and the grandeur of that solemn Cære, whose inhabitants taught their iron vanquishers of Rome all that they yet know of elevated in religion and sublime in worship. And how deemest thou, young man, that that dread Egypt, the mother of countless nations, achieved her greatness, and soared to her cloud-capt eminence of wisdom ? It was the result of a profound and holy policy. Your modern nations owe their greatness to Egypt — Egypt her greatness to her priests. Rapt in themselves, coveting a sway over the nobler part of man, his soul and his belief, those ancient ministers of God were inspired with the grandest thought that ever exalted mortals. From the revolutions of the stars, from the seasons of the earth, from the round and unvarying circle of human destinies, they devised an august allegory ; they made it gross and palpable to the vulgar by the signs of gods and goddesses, and that which in reality was Government they named Religion. Isis is a fable — start not ! That for which Isis is a type is a reality, an immortal being ; Isis is nothing. Nature, which she represents, is the mother of all things, — dark, ancient, inscrutable, save to the gifted few. ‘None among mortals hath ever lifted up my veil,’ so saith the Isis that you adore ; but to the wise that veil *hath* been removed, and we have stood face to face with the solemn loveliness of Nature. The priests then were the benefactors, the civilizers of mankind ; true, they were also cheats, impostors if you will. But think you, young man, that if they had not deceived their kind they could have served them ? The ignorant and servile vulgar must be blinded to attain to their proper good ; they would not believe a maxim — they revere an oracle. The Emperor of Rome sways the vast and various tribes of earth, and harmonizes the conflicting and disunited elements ; thence come peace, order, law, the blessings of life. Think you it is the man, the emperor, that thus sways ? No, it

is the pomp, the awe, the majesty that surround him, — *these* are his impostures, his delusions; our oracles and our divinations, our rites and our ceremonies, are the means of *our* sovereignty and the engines of *our* power. They are the same means to the same end, — the welfare and harmony of mankind. You listen to me rapt and intent; the light begins to dawn upon you.”

Apæcides remained silent, but the changes rapidly passing over his speaking countenance betrayed the effect produced upon him by the words of the Egyptian, — words made tenfold more eloquent by the voice, the aspect, and the manner of the man.

“While, then,” resumed Arbaces, “our fathers of the Nile thus achieved the first elements by whose life chaos is destroyed, namely, the obedience and reverence of the multitude for the few, they drew from their majestic and starred meditations that wisdom which was *no* delusion: they invented the codes and regularities of law, the arts and glories of existence. They asked belief; they returned the gift by civilization. Were not their very cheats a virtue? Trust me, whosoever in yon far heavens of a diviner and more beneficent nature look down upon our world, smile approvingly on the wisdom which has worked such ends. But you wish me to apply these generalities to yourself; I hasten to obey the wish. The altars of the goddess of our ancient faith must be served, and served too by others than the stolid and soulless things that are but as pegs and hooks whereon to hang the fillet and the robe. Remember two sayings of Sextus the Pythagorean, — sayings borrowed from the lore of Egypt. The first is, ‘Speak not of God to the multitude;’ the second is, ‘The man worthy of God is a god among men.’ As genius gave to the ministers of Egypt worship, that empire in late ages so fearfully decayed, thus by Genius only can the dominion be restored. I saw in you, Apæcides, a pupil worthy of my lessons, a minister worthy of the great ends which may yet be wrought. Your energy, your talents, your purity of faith, your earnestness of enthusiasm, all fitted you for that calling which demands so imperiously high and ardent qualities: I fanned, therefore, your sacred desires; I stimulated you to the step

you have taken. But you blame me that I did not reveal to you the little souls and the juggling tricks of your companions. Had I done so, Apæcides, I had defeated my own object; your noble nature would have at once revolted, and Isis would have lost her priest."

Apæcides groaned aloud. The Egyptian continued, without heeding the interruption.

"I placed you, therefore, without preparation, in the temple; I left you suddenly to discover and to be sickened by all those mummeries which dazzle the herd. I desired that you should perceive how those engines are moved by which the fountain that refreshes the world casts its waters in the air. It was the trial ordained of old to all our priests. They who accustom themselves to the impostures of the vulgar, are left to practise them; for those, like you, whose higher natures demand higher pursuit, religion opens more godlike secrets. I am pleased to find in you the character I had expected. You have taken the vows; you cannot recede. Advance: I will be your guide."

"And what wilt thou teach me, O singular and fearful man? New cheats — new —"

"No; I have thrown thee into the abyss of disbelief: I will lead thee now to the eminence of faith. Thou hast seen the false types: thou shalt learn now the realities they represent. There is no shadow, Apæcides, without its substance. Come to me this night. Your hand."

Impressed, excited, bewildered by the language of the Egyptian, Apæcides gave him his hand, and master and pupil parted.

It was true that for Apæcides there was no retreat. He had taken the vows of celibacy; he had devoted himself to a life that at present seemed to possess all the austerities of fanaticism, without any of the consolations of belief. It was natural that he should yet cling to a yearning desire to reconcile himself to an irrevocable career. The powerful and profound mind of the Egyptian yet claimed an empire over his young imagination, excited him with vague conjecture, and kept him alternately vibrating between hope and fear.

Meanwhile Arbaces pursued his slow and stately way to the house of Ione. As he entered the tablinum, he heard a voice from the porticos of the peristyle beyond, which, musical as it was, sounded displeasingly on his ear: it was the voice of the young and beautiful Glaucus, and for the first time an involuntary thrill of jealousy shot through the breast of the Egyptian. On entering the peristyle he found Glaucus seated by the side of Ione. The fountain in the odorous garden cast up its silver spray in the air, and kept a delicious coolness in the midst of the sultry noon. The handmaids, almost invariably attendant on Ione, who with her freedom of life preserved the most delicate modesty, sat at a little distance; by the feet of Glaucus lay the lyre on which he had been playing to Ione one of the Lesbian airs. The scene — the group before Arbaces — was stamped by that peculiar and refined ideality of poesy which we yet, not erroneously, imagine to be the distinction of the ancients, — the marble columns, the vases of flowers, the statue, white and tranquil, closing every vista; and, above all, the two living forms, from which a sculptor might have caught either inspiration or despair.

Arbaces, pausing for a moment, gazed on the pair with a brow from which all the usual stern serenity had fled; he recovered himself by an effort, and slowly approached them, but with a step so soft and echoless that even the attendants heard him not, — much less Ione and her lover.

“And yet,” said Glaucus, “it is only before we love that we imagine that our poets have truly described the passion; the instant the sun rises, all the stars that had shone in his absence vanish into air. The poets exist only in the night of the heart; they are nothing to us when we feel the full glory of the god.”

“A gentle and most glowing image, noble Glaucus.”

Both started, and recognized behind the seat of Ione the cold and sarcastic face of the Egyptian.

“You are a sudden guest,” said Glaucus, rising, and with a forced smile.

“So ought all to be who know they are welcome,” returned Arbaces, seating himself, and motioning to Glaucus to do the same.

"I am glad," said Ione, "to see you at length together; for you are suited to each other, and you are formed to be friends."

"Give me back some fifteen years of life," replied the Egyptian, "before you can place me on an equality with Glaucus. Happy should I be to receive his friendship; but what can I give him in return? Can I make to him the same confidences that he would repose in me, — of banquets and garlands, of Parthian steeds and the chances of the dice? these pleasures suit his age, his nature, his career: they are not for mine."

So saying, the artful Egyptian looked down and sighed; but from the corner of his eye he stole a glance towards Ione, to see how she received these insinuations of the pursuits of her visitor. Her countenance did not satisfy him. Glaucus, slightly coloring, hastened gayly to reply. Nor was he, perhaps, without the wish in his turn to disconcert and abash the Egyptian.

"You are right, wise Arbaces," said he; "we can esteem each other, but we cannot be friends. My banquets lack the secret salt, which, according to rumor, gives such zest to your own. And, by Hercules! when I have reached your age, if I, like you, may think it wise to pursue the pleasures of manhood, like you I shall be doubtless sarcastic on the gallantries of youth."

The Egyptian raised his eyes to Glaucus with a sudden and piercing glance.

"I do not understand you," said he, coldly; "but it is the custom to consider that wit lies in obscurity." He turned from Glaucus as he spoke, with a scarcely perceptible sneer of contempt, and after a moment's pause addressed himself to Ione. "I have not, beautiful Ione," said he, "been fortunate enough to find you within doors the last two or three times that I have visited your vestibule."

"The smoothness of the sea has tempted me much from home," replied Ione, with a little embarrassment.

The embarrassment did not escape Arbaces; but without seeming to heed it, he replied with a smile: "You know that

the old poet says, 'Women should keep within doors, and there converse.'"¹

"The poet was a cynic," said Glaucus, "and hated women."

"He spake according to the customs of his country, and that country is your boasted Greece."

"To different periods different customs. Had our forefathers known Ione, they had made a different law."

"Did you learn these pretty gallantries at Rome?" said Arbaces, with ill-suppressed emotion.

"One certainly would not go for gallantries to Egypt," retorted Glaucus, playing carelessly with his chain.

"Come, come," said Ione, hastening to interrupt a conversation which she saw, to her great distress, was so little likely to cement the intimacy she had desired to effect between Glaucus and her friend, "Arbaces must not be so hard upon his poor pupil. An orphan, and without a mother's care, I may be to blame for the independent and almost masculine liberty of life that I have chosen: yet it is not greater than the Roman women are accustomed to; it is not greater than the Grecian ought to be. Alas! is it only to be among *men* that freedom and virtue are to be deemed united? Why should the slavery that destroys you be considered the only method to preserve us? Ah! believe me, it has been the great error of men — and one that has worked bitterly on their destinies — to imagine that the nature of women is (I will not say inferior, that may be so, but) so different from their own, in making laws unfavorable to the intellectual advancement of women. Have they not, in so doing, made laws against their children, whom women are to rear, — against the husbands, of whom women are to be the friends, nay, sometimes the advisers?" Ione stopped short suddenly, and her face was suffused with the most enchanting blushes. She feared lest her enthusiasm had led her too far; yet she feared the austere Arbaces less than the courteous Glaucus, for she loved the last, and it was not the custom of the Greeks to allow their women (at least such of their women as they most honored) the same liberty and the same station as those of Italy enjoyed.

¹ Euripides.

She felt, therefore, a thrill of delight as Glaucus earnestly replied, —

“Ever mayst thou think thus, Ione; ever be your pure heart your unerring guide. Happy it had been for Greece if she had given to the chaste the same intellectual charms that are so celebrated amongst the less worthy of her women. No State falls from freedom — from knowledge — while your sex smile only on the free, and by appreciating, encourage the wise.”

Arbaces was silent, for it was neither his part to sanction the sentiment of Glaucus, nor to condemn that of Ione; and, after a short and embarrassed conversation, Glaucus took his leave of Ione.

When he was gone, Arbaces, drawing his seat nearer to the fair Neapolitan's, said in those bland and subdued tones in which he knew so well how to veil the mingled art and fierceness of his character, —

“Think not, my sweet pupil, if so I may call you, that I wish to shackle that liberty you adorn while you assume; but which, if not greater, as you rightly observe, than that possessed by the Roman women, must at least be accompanied by great circumspection when arrogated by one unmarried. Continue to draw crowds of the gay, the brilliant, the wise themselves, to your feet; continue to charm them with the conversation of an Aspasia, the music of an Erinna; but reflect, at least, on those censorious tongues which can so easily blight the tender reputation of a maiden; and while you provoke admiration, give, I beseech you, no victory to envy.”

“What mean you, Arbaces?” said Ione, in an alarmed and trembling voice; “I know you are my friend, that you desire only my honor and my welfare. What is it you would say?”

“Your friend — ah, how sincerely! May I speak then as a friend, without reserve and without offence?”

“I beseech you do so.”

“This young profligate, this Glaucus, how didst thou know him? Hast thou seen him often?” And as Arbaces spoke,

he fixed his gaze steadfastly upon Ione, as if he sought to penetrate into her soul.

Recoiling before that gaze, with a strange fear which she could not explain, the Neapolitan answered with confusion and hesitation: "He was brought to my house as a countryman of my father's, and I may say of mine. I have known him only within this last week or so; but why these questions?"

"Forgive me," said Arbaces; "I thought you might have known him longer, — base insinuator that he is!"

"How! what mean you? Why that term?"

"It matters not; let me not rouse your indignation against one who does not deserve so grave an honor."

"I implore you speak. What has Glaucus insinuated; or rather, in what do you *suppose* he has offended?"

Smothering his resentment at the last part of Ione's question, Arbaces continued: "You know his pursuits, his companions, his habits: the *comissatio* and the *alea* (the revel and the dice) make his occupation; and amongst the associates of vice how can he dream of virtue?"

"Still you speak riddles. By the gods! I entreat you, say the worst at once."

"Well, then, it must be so. Know, my Ione, that it was but yesterday that Glaucus boasted openly, yes, in the public baths, of your love to him. He said it amused him to take advantage of it. Nay, I will do him justice, he praised your beauty; who could deny it? But he laughed scornfully when his Clodius or his Lepidus asked him if he loved you enough for marriage, and when he purposed to adorn his door-posts with flowers."

"Impossible! How heard you this base slander?"

"Nay, would you have me relate to you all the comments of the insolent coxcombs with which the story has circled through the town? Be assured that I myself disbelieved at first, and that I have now painfully been convinced by several ear-witnesses of the truth of what I have reluctantly told thee."

Ione sank back, and her face was whiter than the pillar against which she leaned for support.

"I own it vexed, it irritated me, to hear your name thus lightly pitched from lip to lip, like some mere dancing-girl's fame. I hastened this morning to seek and to warn you. I found Glaucus here. I was stung from my self-possession. I could not conceal my feelings; nay, I was uncourteous in thy presence. Canst thou forgive thy friend, Ione?"

Ione placed her hand in his, but replied not.

"Think no more of this," said he; "but let it be a warning voice to tell thee how much prudence thy lot requires. It cannot hurt thee, Ione, for a moment; for a gay thing like this could never have been honored by even a serious thought from Ione. These insults only wound when they come from one we love; far different indeed is he whom the lofty Ione shall stoop to love."

"Love!" muttered Ione, with an hysterical laugh. "Ay, indeed."

It is not without interest to observe in those remote times, and under a social system so widely different from the modern, the same small causes that ruffle and interrupt the "course of love," which operate so commonly at this day; the same inventive jealousy, the same cunning slander, the same crafty and fabricated retailings of petty gossip, which so often now suffice to break the ties of the truest love, and counteract the tenor of circumstances most apparently propitious. When the bark sails on over the smoothest wave, the fable tells us of the diminutive fish that can cling to the keel and arrest its progress: so is it ever with the great passions of mankind; and we should paint life but ill if, even in times the most prodigal of romance, and of the romance of which we most largely avail ourselves, we did not also describe the mechanism of those trivial and household springs of mischief which we see every day at work in our chambers and at our hearths. It is in these, the lesser intrigues of life, that we mostly find ourselves at home with the past.

Most cunningly had the Egyptian appealed to Ione's ruling foible; most dexterously had he applied the poisoned dart to her pride. He fancied he had arrested what he hoped, from the shortness of the time she had known Glaucus, was, at most,

out an incipient fancy; and hastening to change the subject, he now led her to talk of her brother. Their conversation did not last long. He left her, resolved not again to trust so much to absence, but to visit, to watch her, every day.

No sooner had his shadow glided from her presence than woman's pride, her sex's dissimulation, deserted his intended victim, and the haughty Ione burst into passionate tears.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAY LIFE OF THE POMPEIAN LOUNGER. — A MINIATURE LIKENESS OF THE ROMAN BATHS.

WHEN Glaucus left Ione, he felt as if he trod upon air. In the interview with which he had just been blessed, he had for the first time gathered from her distinctly that his love was not unwelcome to, and would not be unrewarded by her. This hope filled him with a rapture for which earth and heaven seemed too narrow to afford a vent. Unconscious of the sudden enemy he had left behind, and forgetting not only his taunts but his very existence, Glaucus passed through the gay streets, repeating to himself, in the wantonness of joy, the music of the soft air to which Ione had listened with such intentness; and now he entered the Street of Fortune, with its raised footpath, — its houses painted without, and the open doors admitting the view of the glowing frescos within. Each end of the street was adorned with a triumphal arch; and as Glaucus now came before the Temple of Fortune, the jutting portico of that beautiful fane (which is supposed to have been built by one of the family of Cicero, perhaps by the orator himself) imparted a dignified and venerable feature to a scene otherwise more brilliant than lofty in its character. That temple was one of the most graceful specimens of Roman architecture. It was raised on a somewhat lofty podium; and between two flights of steps ascending to a platform, stood the altar of the

goddess. From this platform another flight of broad stairs led to the portico, from the height of whose fluted columns hung festoons of the richest flowers. On either side the extremities of the temple were placed statues of Grecian workmanship; and at a little distance from the temple rose the triumphal arch crowned with an equestrian statue of Caligula, which was flanked by trophies of bronze. In the space before the temple a lively throng was assembled, — some seated on benches and discussing the politics of the empire, some conversing on the approaching spectacle of the amphitheatre. One knot of young men were lauding a new beauty, another discussing the merits of the last play; a third group, more stricken in age, were speculating on the chance of the trade with Alexandria, and amidst these were many merchants in the Eastern costume, whose loose and peculiar robes, painted and gemmed slippers, and composed and serious countenances, formed a striking contrast to the tunicked forms and animated gestures of the Italians. For that impatient and lively people had, as now, a language distinct from speech, — a language of signs and motions, inexpressibly significant and vivacious; their descendants retain it, and the learned Jorio hath written a most entertaining work upon that species of hieroglyphical gesticulation.

Sauntering through the crowd, Glaucus soon found himself amidst a group of his merry and dissipated friends.

“Ah!” said Sallust, “it is a lustrum since I saw you.”

“And how have you spent the lustrum? What new dishes have you discovered?”

“I have been scientific,” returned Sallust, “and have made some experiments in the feeding of lampreys; I confess I despair of bringing them to the perfection which our Roman ancestors attained.”

“Miserable man! and why?”

“Because,” returned Sallust, with a sigh, “it is no longer lawful to give them a slave to eat. I am very often tempted to make away with a very fat carptor [butler] whom I possess, and pop him slyly into the reservoir. He would give the fish a most oleaginous flavor! But slaves are not slaves nowa-

days, and have no sympathy with their masters' interest, or Davus would destroy himself to oblige me!"

"What news from Rome?" said Lepidus as he languidly joined the group.

"The emperor has been giving a splendid supper to the senators," answered Sallust.

"He is a good creature," quoth Lepidus; "they say he never sends a man away without granting his request."

"Perhaps he would let me kill a slave for my reservoir," returned Sallust, eagerly.

"Not unlikely," said Glaucus; "for he who grants a favor to one Roman, must always do it at the expense of another. Be sure, that for every smile Titus has caused, a hundred eyes have wept."

"Long live Titus!" cried Pansa, overhearing the emperor's name, as he swept patronizingly through the crowd; "he has promised my brother a quæstorship because he had run through his fortune."

"And wishes now to enrich himself among the people, my Pansa," said Glaucus.

"Exactly so," said Pansa.

"That is putting the people to some use," said Glaucus.

"To be sure," returned Pansa. "Well, I must go and look after the ærarium; it is a little out of repair." And followed by a long train of clients, distinguished from the rest of the throng by the togas they wore (for togas, once the sign of freedom in a citizen, were now the badge of servility to a patron), the ædile fidgeted fussily away.

"Poor Pansa;" said Lepidus: "he never has time for pleasure. Thank Heaven, I am not an ædile!"

"Ah, Glaucus, how are you, — gay as ever?" said Clodius, joining the group.

"Are you come to sacrifice to Fortune?" said Sallust.

"I sacrifice to her every night," returned the gamester.

"I do not doubt it. No man has made more victims!"

"By Hercules, a biting speech!" cried Glaucus, laughing.

"The dog's letter is never out of your mouth, Sallust," said Clodius, angrily; "you are always snarling."

"I may well have the dog's letter in my mouth, since, whenever I play with you, I have the dog's throw in my hand," returned Sallust.

"Hist!" said Glaucus, taking a rose from a flower-girl who stood beside.

"The rose is the token of silence," replied Sallust; "but I love only to see it at the supper-table."

"Talking of that, Diomed gives a grand feast next week," said Sallust; "are you invited, Glaucus?"

"Yes, I received an invitation this morning."

"And I too," said Sallust, drawing a square piece of papyrus from his girdle; "I see that he asks us an hour earlier than usual: an earnest of something sumptuous."¹

"Oh, he is rich as Cræsus," said Clodius; "and his bill of fare is as long as an epic."

"Well, let us to the baths," said Glaucus: "this is the time when all the world is there; and Fulvius, whom you admire so much, is going to read us his last ode."

The young men assented readily to the proposal, and they strolled to the baths.

Although the public thermæ, or baths, were instituted rather for the poorer citizens than the wealthy (for the last had baths in their own houses), yet to the crowds of all ranks who resorted to them it was a favorite place for conversation, and for that indolent lounging so dear to a gay and thoughtless people. The baths at Pompeii differed, of course, in plan and construction from the vast and complicated thermæ of Rome; and indeed it seems that in each city of the empire there was always some slight modification of arrangement in the general architecture of the public baths. This mightily puzzles the learned, — as if architects and fashion were not capricious before the nineteenth century! Our party entered by the principal porch in the Street of Fortune. At the wing of the portico sat the keeper of the baths, with his two boxes before him, one for the money he received, one for the tickets

¹ The Romans sent tickets of invitation, like the moderns, specifying the hour of the repast; which, if the intended feast was to be sumptuous, was earlier than usual.

he dispensed. Round the walls of the portico were seats crowded with persons of all ranks; while others, as the regimen of the physicians prescribed, were walking briskly to and fro in the portico, stopping every now and then to gaze on the innumerable notices of shows, games, sales, exhibitions, which were painted or inscribed upon the walls. The general subject of conversation was, however, the spectacle announced in the amphitheatre; and each new-comer was fastened upon by a group eager to know if Pompeii had been so fortunate as to produce some monstrous criminal, some happy case of sacrilege or of murder, which would allow the ædiles to provide a man for the jaws of the lion: all other more common exhibitions seemed dull and tame when compared with the possibility of this fortunate occurrence.

“For my part,” said one jolly-looking man, who was a goldsmith, “I think the emperor, if he is as good as they say, might have sent us a Jew.”

“Why not take one of the new sect of Nazarenes?” said a philosopher. “I am not cruel; but an atheist, one who denies Jupiter himself, deserves no mercy.”

“I care not how many gods a man likes to believe in,” said the goldsmith; “but to deny all gods is something monstrous.”

“Yet I fancy,” said Glaucus, “that these people are not absolutely atheists. I am told that they believe in a God,—nay, in a future state.”

“Quite a mistake, my dear Glaucus,” said the philosopher. “I have conferred with them: they laughed in my face when I talked of Pluto and Hades.”

“O ye gods!” exclaimed the goldsmith in horror; “are there any of these wretches in Pompeii?”

“I know there are a few; but they meet so privately that it is impossible to discover who they are.”

As Glaucus turned away, a sculptor, who was a great enthusiast in his art, looked after him admiringly.

“Ah!” said he, “if we could get *him* on the arena, there would be a model for you! What limbs! what a head! he ought to have been a gladiator! A subject, a subject worthy of our art! Why don’t they give him to the lion?”

Meanwhile Fulvius, the Roman poet, whom his contemporaries declared immortal, and who, but for this history, would never have been heard of in our neglectful age, came eagerly up to Glaucus. "Oh, my Athenian, my Glaucus, you have come to hear my ode! That is indeed an honor; you, a Greek, to whom the very language of common life is poetry. How I thank you. It is but a trifle; but if I secure your approbation, perhaps I may get an introduction to Titus. Oh, Glaucus, a poet without a patron is an amphora without a label! the wine may be good, but nobody will laud it. And what says Pythagoras? 'Frankincense to the gods, but praise to man.' A patron, then, is the poet's priest: he procures him the incense and obtains him his believers."

"But all Pompeii is your patron, and every portico an altar in your praise."

"Ah! the poor Pompeians are very civil; they love to honor merit. But they are only the inhabitants of a petty town, — *spero meliora!* Shall we within?"

"Certainly; we lose time till we hear your poem."

At this instant there was a rush of some twenty persons from the baths into the portico; and a slave stationed at the door of a small corridor now admitted the poet, Glaucus, Clodius, and a troop of the bard's other friends, into the passage.

"A poor place this, compared with the Roman thermæ!" said Lepidus, disdainfully.

"Yet is there some taste in the ceiling," said Glaucus, who was in a mood to be pleased with everything, pointing to the stars which studded the roof.

Lepidus shrugged his shoulders, but was too languid to reply.

They now entered a somewhat spacious chamber, which served for the purposes of the apodyterium (that is, a place where the bathers prepared themselves for their luxurious ablutions). The vaulted ceiling was raised from a cornice, glowingly colored with motley and grotesque paintings; the ceiling itself was panelled in white compartments bordered with rich crimson; the unsullied and shining floor was paved

with white mosaics, and along the walls were ranged benches for the accommodation of the loiterers. This chamber did not possess the numerous and spacious windows which Vitruvius attributes to his more magnificent *frigidarium*. The Pompeians, as all the southern Italians, were fond of banishing the light of their sultry skies, and combined in their voluptuous associations the idea of luxury with darkness. Two windows of glass¹ alone admitted the soft and shaded ray; and the compartment in which one of these casements was placed was adorned with a large relief of the destruction of the Titans.

In this apartment Fulvius seated himself with a magisterial air, and his audience gathering round him, encouraged him to commence his recital.

The poet did not require much pressing. He drew forth from his vest a roll of papyrus, and after hemming three times, as much to command silence as to clear his voice, he began that wonderful ode, of which, to the great mortification of the author of this history, no single verse can be discovered.

By the plaudits he received, it was doubtless worthy of his fame; and Glaucus was the only listener who did not find it excel the best odes of Horace.

The poem concluded, those who took only the cold bath began to undress; they suspended their garments on hooks fastened in the wall, and receiving, according to their condition, either from their own slaves or those of the *thermæ*, loose robes in exchange, withdrew into that graceful and circular building which yet exists, to shame the unlaving posterity of the south. The more luxurious departed by another door to the *tepidarium*, a place which was heated to a voluptuous warmth, partly by a movable fireplace, principally by a suspended pavement, beneath which was conducted the caloric of the *laconicum*.

Here this portion of the intended bathers, after unrobing themselves, remained for some time enjoying the artificial

¹ The discoveries at Pompeii have controverted the long-established error of the antiquaries, that glass windows were unknown to the Romans. The use of them was not, however, common among the middle and inferior classes in their private dwellings.

warmth of the luxurious air. And this room, as befitted its important rank in the long process of ablution, was more richly and elaborately decorated than the rest. The arched roof was beautifully carved and painted; the windows above, of ground glass, admitted but wandering and uncertain rays; below the massive cornices were rows of figures in massive and bold relief; the walls glowed with crimson, the pavement was skilfully tessellated in white mosaics. Here the habituated bathers, men who bathed seven times a day, would remain in a state of enervate and speechless lassitude, either before or (mostly) after the water-bath; and many of these victims of the pursuit of health turned their listless eyes on the newcomers, recognizing their friends with a nod, but dreading the fatigue of conversation.

From this place the party again diverged, according to their several fancies, some to the sudatorium, which answered the purpose of our vapor-baths, and thence to the warm-bath itself; those more accustomed to exercise, and capable of dispensing with so cheap a purchase of fatigue, resorted at once to the calidarium or water-bath.

In order to complete this sketch, and give to the reader an adequate notion of this, the main luxury of the ancients, we will accompany Lepidus, who regularly underwent the whole process, save only the cold-bath which had gone lately out of fashion. Being then gradually warmed in the tepidarium, which has just been described, the delicate steps of the Pompeian *élégant* were conducted to the sudatorium. Here let the reader depict to himself the gradual process of the vapor-bath, accompanied by an exhalation of spicy perfumes. After our bather had undergone this operation, he was seized by his slaves, who always awaited him at the baths, and the dews of heat were removed by a kind of scraper, which (by the way) a modern traveller has gravely declared to be used only to remove the dirt, not one particle of which could ever settle on the polished skin of the practised bather. Thence, somewhat cooled, he passed into the water-bath, over which fresh perfumes were profusely scattered, and on emerging from the opposite part of the room, a cooling shower played over his

head and form. Then wrapping himself in a light robe, he returned once more to the tepidarium, where he found Glaucus, who had not encountered the sudatorium; and now the main delight and extravagance of the bath commenced. Their slaves anointed the bathers from vials of gold, of alabaster, or of crystal, studded with profusest gems, and containing the rarest unguents gathered from all quarters of the world (the number of these smegmata used by the wealthy would fill a modern volume, especially if the volume were printed by a fashionable publisher: *Amoracinum, Megalium, Nardum*, — *omne quod exit in um*), while soft music played in an adjacent chamber, and such as used the bath in moderation, refreshed and restored by the grateful ceremony, conversed with all the zest and freshness of rejuvenated life.

“Blessed be he who invented baths!” said Glaucus, stretching himself along one of those bronze seats (then covered with soft cushions) which the visitor to Pompeii sees at this day in that same tepidarium. “Whether he were Hercules or Bacchus, he deserved deification.”

“But tell me,” said a corpulent citizen, who was groaning and wheezing under the operation of being rubbed down, — “tell me, O Glaucus! — evil chance to thy hands, O slave! why so rough? — tell me, — ugh! ugh! — are the baths at Rome really so magnificent?” Glaucus turned and recognized Diomed, though not without some difficulty, so red and so inflamed were the good man’s cheeks by the sudatory and the scraping he had so lately undergone. “I fancy they must be a great deal finer than these, eh?”

Suppressing a smile, Glaucus replied, —

“Imagine all Pompeii converted into baths, and you will then form a notion of the size of the imperial thermæ of Rome; but a notion of the *size* only. Imagine every entertainment for mind and body; enumerate all the gymnastic games our fathers invented; repeat all the books Italy and Greece have produced; suppose places for all these games, admirers for all these works; add to this baths of the vastest size, the most complicated construction; intersperse the whole with gardens, with theatres, with porticos, with schools, —

suppose, in one word, a city of the gods composed but of palaces and public edifices, and you may form some faint idea of the glories of the great baths of Rome."

"By Hercules!" said Diomed, opening his eyes; "why, it would take a man's whole life to bathe!"

"At Rome it often does so," replied Glaucus, gravely. "There are many who live only at the baths. They repair there the first hour in which the doors are opened, and remain till that in which the doors are closed. They seem as if they knew nothing of the rest of Rome, as if they despised all other existence."

"By Pollux! you amaze me."

"Even those who bathe only thrice a day contrive to consume their lives in this occupation. They take their exercise in the tennis-court or the porticos to prepare them for the first bath; they lounge into the theatre, to refresh themselves after it. They take their prandium under the trees, and think over their second bath. By the time it is prepared, the prandium is digested. From the second bath they stroll into one of the peristyles to hear some new poet recite, or into the library to sleep over an old one. Then comes the supper, which they still consider but a part of the bath; and then a third time they bathe again, as the best place to converse with their friends."

"Per Hercle! but we have their imitators at Pompeii."

"Yes, and without their excuse. The magnificent voluptuaries of the Roman baths are happy; they see nothing but gorgeousness and splendor; they visit not the squalid parts of the city; they know not that there is poverty in the world. All Nature smiles for them, and her only frown is the last one, which sends them to bathe in Cocytus. Believe me, they are your only true philosophers."

While Glaucus was thus conversing, Lepidus, with closed eyes and scarce perceptible breath, was undergoing all the mystic operations, not one of which he ever suffered his attendants to omit. After the perfumes and the unguents, they scattered over him the luxurious powder, which prevented any farther accession of heat; and this being rubbed away by

the smooth surface of the pumice, he began to indue, not the garments he had put off, but those more festive ones termed "the synthesis," with which the Romans marked their respect for the coming ceremony of supper, if rather, from its hour (three o'clock in our measurement of time), it might not be more fitly denominated dinner. This done, he at length opened his eyes and gave signs of returning life.

At the same time, too, Sallust betokened by a long yawn the evidence of existence.

"It is supper-time," said the epicure; "you, Glaucus and Lepidus, come and sup with me."

"Recollect you are all three engaged to my house next week," cried Diomed, who was mightily proud of the acquaintance of men of fashion.

"Ah, ah! we recollect," said Sallust; "the seat of memory, my Diomed, is certainly in the stomach."

Passing now once again into the cooler air, and so into the street, our gallants of that day concluded the ceremony of a Pompeian bath.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES COGS HIS DICE WITH PLEASURE, AND WINS THE GAME.

THE evening darkened over the restless city as Apæcides took his way to the house of the Egyptian. He avoided the more lighted and populous streets; and as he strode onward with his head buried in his bosom, and his arms folded within his robe, there was something startling in the contrast, which his solemn mien and wasted form presented to the thoughtless brows and animated air of those who occasionally crossed his path.

At length, however, a man of a more sober and staid demeanor, and who had twice passed him with a curious but doubting look, touched him on the shoulder.

“Apæcides!” said he, and he made a rapid sign with his hands: it was the sign of the cross.

“Well, Nazarene,” replied the priest, and his pale face grew paler, “what wouldst thou?”

“Nay,” returned the stranger, “I would not interrupt thy meditations; but the last time we met I seemed not to be so unwelcome.”

“You are not unwelcome, Olinthus; but I am sad and weary: nor am I able this evening to discuss with you those themes which are most acceptable to you.”

“O backward of heart!” said Olinthus, with bitter fervor; “and art thou sad and weary, and wilt thou turn from the very springs that refresh and heal?”

“O earth!” cried the young priest, striking his breast passionately, “from what regions shall my eyes open to the true Olympus, where thy gods really dwell? Am I to believe with this man that none whom for so many centuries my fathers worshipped have a being or a name? Am I to break down, as something blasphemous and profane, the very altars which I have deemed most sacred, or am I to think with Arbaces — what?”

He paused, and strode rapidly away in the impatience of a man who strives to get rid of himself. But the Nazarene was one of those hardy, vigorous, and enthusiastic men by whom God in all times has worked the revolutions of earth, and those, above all, in the establishment and in the reformation of His own religion; men who were formed to convert, because formed to endure. It is men of this mould whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays; in the fervor of belief they are inspired and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use; they force themselves into men’s hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment. Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm; it is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus: it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.

Olinthus did not then suffer Apæcides thus easily to escape him. He overtook and addressed him thus:—

"I do not wonder, Apæcides, that I distress you; that I shake all the elements of your mind; that you are lost in doubt; that you drift here and there in the vast ocean of uncertain and benighted thought. I wonder not at this; but bear with me a little: watch and pray,—the darkness shall vanish, the storm sleep, and God Himself, as He came of yore on the sea of Galilee, shall walk over the lulled billows, to the delivery of your soul. Ours is a religion jealous in its demands, but how infinitely prodigal in its gifts! It troubles you for an hour, it repays you by immortality."

"Such promises," said Apæcides, sullenly, "are the tricks by which man is ever gulled. Oh, glorious were the promises which led me to the shrine of Isis!"

"But," answered the Nazarene, "ask thy reason, can that religion be sound which outrages all morality? You are told to worship your gods. What are those gods, even according to yourselves,—what their actions, what their attributes? Are they not all represented to you as the blackest of criminals? Yet you are asked to serve them as the holiest of divinities. Jupiter himself is a parricide and an adulterer. What are the meaner deities but imitators of his vices? You are told not to murder, but you worship murderers; you are told not to commit adultery, and you make your prayers to an adulterer. Oh, what is this but a mockery of the holiest part of man's nature, which is faith? Turn now to the God, the one, the true God, to whose shrine I would lead you. If He seem to you too sublime, too shadowy, for those human associations, those touching connections between Creator and creature, to which the weak heart clings, contemplate Him in his Son, who put on mortality like ourselves. His mortality is not indeed declared, like that of your fabled gods, by the vices of our nature, but by the practice of all its virtues. In Him are united the austere morals with the tenderest affections. If He were but a mere man, He had been worthy to become a god. You honor Socrates; he has his sect, his disciples, his schools. But what are the doubtful virtues of the Athenian, to the bright, the undisputed, the active, the unceasing, the devoted holiness of Christ? I speak to you now

only of His human character. He came in that, as the pattern of future ages, to show us the form of virtue which Plato thirsted to see embodied. This was the true sacrifice that He made for man; but the halo that encircled His dying hour not only brightened earth but opened to us the sight of heaven! You are touched, you are moved. God works in your heart; His spirit is with you. Come, resist not the holy impulse; come at once, unhesitatingly. A few of us are now assembled to expound the Word of God. Come, let me guide you to them. You are sad, you are weary. Listen, then, to the words of God. 'Come to me,' saith He, 'all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!'"

"I cannot now," said Apæcides; "another time."

"Now — now!" exclaimed Olinthus, earnestly, and clasping him by the arm.

But Apæcides, yet unprepared for the renunciation of that faith, that life, for which he had sacrificed so much, and still haunted by the promises of the Egyptian, extricated himself forcibly from the grasp; and feeling an effort necessary to conquer the irresolution which the eloquence of the Christian had begun to effect in his heated and feverish mind, he gathered up his robes and fled away with a speed that defied pursuit.

Breathless and exhausted, he arrived at last in a remote and sequestered part of the city, and the lone house of the Egyptian stood before him. As he paused to recover himself, the moon emerged from a silver cloud and shone full upon the walls of that mysterious habitation.

No other house was near. The darksome vines clustered far and wide in front of the building, and behind it rose a copse of lofty forest-trees sleeping in the melancholy moonlight; beyond stretched the dim outline of the distant hills, and amongst them the quiet crest of Vesuvius, not then so lofty as the traveller beholds it now.

Apæcides passed through the arching vines, and arrived at the broad and spacious portico. Before it, on either side of the steps, reposed the image of the Egyptian sphinx, and the moonlight gave an additional and yet more solemn calm to

those large and harmonious and passionless features in which the sculptors of that type of wisdom united so much of loveliness with awe; half-way up the extremities of the steps darkened the green and massive foliage of the aloe, and the shadow of the Eastern palm cast its long and unwavering boughs partially over the marble surface of the stairs.

Something there was in the stillness of the place, and the strange aspect of the sculptured sphinxes, which thrilled the blood of the priest with a nameless and ghostly fear, and he longed even for an echo to his noiseless steps as he ascended to the threshold.

He knocked at the door, over which was wrought an inscription in characters unfamiliar to his eyes; it opened without a sound, and a tall Ethiopian slave, without question or salutation, motioned to him to proceed.

The wide hall was lighted by lofty candelabra of elaborate bronze, and round the walls were wrought vast hieroglyphics, in dark and solemn colors, which contrasted strangely with the bright hues and graceful shapes with which the inhabitants of Italy decorated their abodes. At the extremity of the hall, a slave, whose countenance, though not African, was darker by many shades than the usual color of the south, advanced to meet him.

"I seek Arbaces," said the priest; but his voice trembled even in his own ear. The slave bowed his head in silence, and leading Apæcides to a wing without the hall, conducted him up a narrow staircase, and then traversing several rooms, in which the stern and thoughtful beauty of the sphinx still made the chief and most impressive object of the priest's notice, Apæcides found himself in a dim and half-lighted chamber, in the presence of the Egyptian.

Arbaces was seated before a small table, on which lay unfolded several scrolls of papyrus, impressed with the same character as that on the threshold of the mansion. A small tripod stood at a little distance, from the incense in which the smoke slowly rose. Near this was a vast globe, depicting the signs of heaven; and upon another table lay several instruments, of curious and quaint shape, whose uses were unknown

to Apæcides. The farther extremity of the room was concealed by a curtain, and the oblong window in the roof admitted the rays of the moon, mingling sadly with the single lamp which burned in the apartment.

“Seat yourself, Apæcides,” said the Egyptian, without rising. The young man obeyed.

“You ask me,” resumed Arbaces, after a short pause, in which he seemed absorbed in thought, — “You ask me, or would do so, the mightiest secrets which the soul of man is fitted to receive ; it is the enigma of life itself that you desire me to solve. Placed like children in the dark, and but for a little while, in this dim and confined existence, we shape out spectres in the obscurity ; our thoughts now sink back into ourselves in terror, now wildly plunge themselves into the guideless gloom, guessing what it may contain ; stretching our helpless hands here and there, lest, blindly, we stumble upon some hidden danger ; not knowing the limits of our boundary, now feeling them suffocate us with compression, now seeing them extend far away till they vanish into eternity. In this state all wisdom consists necessarily in the solution of two questions, — ‘What are we to believe, and what are we to reject ?’ These questions you desire to decide ?”

Apæcides bowed his head in assent.

“Man *must* have some belief,” continued the Egyptian, in a tone of sadness. “He must fasten his hope to something : it is our common nature that you inherit when, aghast and terrified to see that in which you have been taught to place your faith swept away, you float over a dreary and shoreless sea of incertitude, you cry for help, you ask for some plank to cling to, some land, however dim and distant, to attain. Well, then, listen. You have not forgotten our conversation of to-day ?”

“Forgotten !”

“I confessed to you that those deities for whom smoke so many altars were but inventions. I confessed to you that our rites and ceremonies were but mummeries, to delude and lure the herd to their proper good. I explained to you that from those delusions came the bonds of society, the harmony of the

world, the power of the wise; that power is in the obedience of the vulgar. Continue we then these salutary delusions; if man must have some belief, continue to him that which his fathers have made dear to him, and which custom sanctifies and strengthens. In seeking a subtler faith for us, whose senses are too spiritual for the gross one, let us leave others that support which crumbles from ourselves. This is wise; it is benevolent."

"Proceed."

"This being settled," resumed the Egyptian, "the old landmarks being left uninjured for those whom we are about to desert, we gird up our loins and depart to new climes of faith. Dismiss at once from your recollection, from your thought, all that you have believed before. Suppose the mind a blank, an unwritten scroll, fit to receive impressions for the first time. Look round the world; observe its order, its regularity, its design. Something must have created it; the design speaks a designer: in that certainty we first touch land. But what is that something?—A god, you cry. Stay! no confused and confusing names. Of that which created the world, we know, we can know, nothing, save these attributes, — power and unvarying regularity; stern, crushing, relentless regularity, heeding no individual cases, rolling, sweeping, burning on, no matter what scattered hearts, severed from the general mass, fall ground and scorched beneath its wheels. The mixture of evil with good — the existence of suffering and of crime — in all times have perplexed the wise. They created a god; they supposed him benevolent. How then came this evil? Why did he permit — nay, why invent, why perpetuate — it? To account for this, the Persian creates a second spirit, whose nature is evil, and supposes a continual war between that and the god of good. In our own shadowy and tremendous Typhon, the Egyptians image a similar demon. Perplexing blunder that yet more bewilders us! folly that arose from the vain delusion that makes a palpable, a corporeal, a human being, of this unknown power; that clothes the Invisible with attributes and a nature similar to the Seen. No: to this designer let us give a name that does not command our bewil-

dering associations, and the mystery becomes more clear; that name is NECESSITY. Necessity, say the Greeks, compels the gods. Then why the gods? their agency becomes unnecessary; dismiss them at once. Necessity is the ruler of all we see; power, regularity, — these two qualities make its nature. Would you ask more? You can learn nothing: whether it be eternal, whether it compel us, its creatures, to new careers after that darkness which we call death, we cannot tell. There leave we this ancient, unseen, unfathomable power, and come to that which, to our eyes, is the great minister of its functions. This we can task more, from this we can learn more: its evidence is around us; its name is NATURE. The error of the sages has been to direct their researches to the attributes of necessity, where all is gloom and blindness. Had they confined their researches to Nature, what of knowledge might we not already have achieved? Here patience, examination, are never directed in vain. We see what we explore; our minds ascend a palpable ladder of causes and effects. Nature is the great agent of the external universe, and Necessity imposes upon it the laws by which it acts, and imparts to us the powers by which we examine; those powers are curiosity and memory: their union is reason, their perfection is wisdom. Well, then, I examine by the help of these powers this inexhaustible Nature. I examine the earth, the air, the ocean, the heaven: I find that all have a mystic sympathy with each other; that the moon sways the tides; that the air maintains the earth, and is the medium of the life and sense of things; that by the knowledge of the stars we measure the limits of the earth; that we portion out the epochs of time; that by their pale light we are guided into the abyss of the past; that in their solemn lore we discern the destinies of the future. And thus, while we know not that which Necessity is, we learn, at least, her decrees. And now, what morality do we glean from this religion? — for religion it is. I believe in two deities, Nature and Necessity; I worship the last by reverence, the first by investigation. What is the morality my religion teaches? This: all things are subject but to general rules; the sun shines for the joy of the many — it may bring sorrow

to the few; the night sheds sleep on the multitude, but it harbors murder as well as rest; the forests adorn the earth, but shelter the serpent and the lion; the ocean supports a thousand barks, but it engulfs the one. It is only thus for the general, and not for the universal benefit that Nature acts, and Necessity speeds on her awful course. This is the morality of the dread agents of the world; it is mine, who am their creature. I would preserve the delusions of priestcraft, for they are serviceable to the multitude; I would impart to man the arts I discover, the sciences I perfect; I would speed the vast career of civilizing lore: in this I serve the mass, I fulfil the general law, I execute the great moral that Nature preaches. For myself I claim the individual exception; I claim it for the wise: satisfied that my individual actions are nothing in the great balance of good and evil, satisfied that the product of my knowledge can give greater blessings to the mass than my desires can operate evil on the few (for the first can extend to remotest regions and humanize nations yet unborn), I give to the world wisdom, to myself freedom. I enlighten the lives of others, and I enjoy my own. Yes; our wisdom is eternal, but our life is short: make the most of it while it lasts. Surrender thy youth to pleasure, and thy senses to delight. Soon comes the hour when the wine-cup is shattered, and the garlands shall cease to bloom. Enjoy while you may. Be still, O Apæcides, my pupil and my follower! I will teach thee the mechanism of Nature, — her darkest and her wildest secrets, the lore which fools call magic, and the mighty mysteries of the stars. By this shalt thou discharge thy duty to the mass; by this shalt thou enlighten thy race. But I will lead thee also to pleasures of which the vulgar do not dream; and the day which thou givest to men shall be followed by the sweet night which thou surrenderest to thyself."

As the Egyptian ceased there rose about, around, beneath, the softest music that Lydia ever taught, or Ionia ever perfected. It came like a stream of sound, bathing the senses unawares; enervating, subduing with delight. It seemed the melodies of invisible spirits, such as the shepherd might have heard in the golden age, floating through the vales of Thessaly,

or in the noontide glades of Paphos. The words which had rushed to the lip of Apæcides, in answer to the sophistries of the Egyptian, died tremblingly away. He felt it as a profanation to break upon that enchanted strain: the susceptibility of his excited nature, the Greek softness and ardor of his secret soul, were swayed and captured by surprise. He sank on the seat with parted lips and thirsting ear; while in a chorus of voices, bland and melting as those which waked Psyche in the halls of love, rose the following song: —

THE HYMN OF EROS.

By the cool banks where soft Cephisis flows,
A voice sail'd trembling down the waves of air;
The leaves blushed brighter in the Teian's rose,
The doves couch'd breathless in their summer lair;

While from their hands the purple flowerets fell,
The laughing hours stood listening in the sky;
From Pan's green cave to Ægle's¹ haunted cell,
Heaved the charm'd earth in one delicious sigh.

"Love, sons of earth! I am the power of love!
Eldest of all the gods, with Chaos² born;
My smile sheds light along the courts above,
My kisses wake the eyelids of the Morn.

"Mine are the stars — there, ever as ye gaze,
Ye meet the deep spell of my haunting eyes;
Mine is the moon — and, mournful if her rays,
'T is that she lingers where her Carian lies.

"The flowers are mine, — the blushes of the rose,
The violet-charming Zephyr to the shade;
Mine the quick light that in the Maybeam glows,
And mine the day-dream in the lonely glade.

"Love, sons of earth, for love is earth's soft lore,
Look where ye will — earth overflows with me;
Learn from the waves that ever kiss the shore,
And the winds nestling on the heaving sea.

"All teaches love!" — The sweet voice, like a dream,
Melted in light; yet still the airs above,
The waving sedges, and the whispering stream,
And the green forest rustling, murmur'd, "LOVE!"²

¹ The fairest of the Naiads.

² Hesiod.

As the voices died away, the Egyptian seized the hand of Apæcides, and led him, wandering, intoxicated, yet half-reluctant, across the chamber towards the curtain at the far end; and now, from behind that curtain, there seemed to burst a thousand sparkling stars; the veil itself, hitherto dark, was now lighted by these fires behind into the tenderest blue of heaven. It represented heaven itself, — such a heaven as in the nights of June might have shone down over the streams of Castaly. Here and there were painted rosy and aerial clouds, from which smiled, by the limner's art, faces of divinest beauty, and on which reposed the shapes of which Phidias and Apelles dreamed. And the stars which studded the transparent azure rolled rapidly as they shone, while the music, that again woke with a livelier and lighter sound, seemed to imitate the melody of the joyous spheres.

“Oh! what miracle is this, Arbaces?” said Apæcides in faltering accents. “After having denied the gods, art thou about to reveal to me —”

“Their pleasures!” interrupted Arbaces, in a tone so different from its usual cold and tranquil harmony that Apæcides started, and thought the Egyptian himself transformed; and now, as they neared the curtain, a wild, a loud, an exulting melody burst from behind its concealment. With that sound the veil was rent in twain, it parted, it seemed to vanish into air; and a scene, which no Sybarite ever more than rivalled, broke upon the dazzled gaze of the youthful priest. A vast banquet-room stretched beyond, blazing with countless lights, which filled the warm air with the scents of frankincense, of jasmine, of violets, of myrrh; all that the most odorous flowers, all that the most costly spices could distil, seemed gathered into one ineffable and ambrosial essence: from the light columns that sprang upwards to the airy roof, hung draperies of white, studded with golden stars. At the extremities of the room two fountains cast up a spray, which, catching the rays of the roseate light, glittered like countless diamonds. In the centre of the room as they entered there rose slowly from the floor, to the sound of unseen minstrelsy, a table spread with all the viands which sense ever devoted to

fancy, and vases of that lost Myrrhine fabric,¹ so glowing in its colors, so transparent in its material, were crowned with the exotics of the East. The couches, to which this table was the centre, were covered with tapestries of azure and gold; and from invisible tubes in the vaulted roof descended showers of fragrant waters, that cooled the delicious air, and contended with the lamps, as if the spirits of wave and fire disputed which element could furnish forth the most delicious odors. And now, from behind the snowy draperies, trooped such forms as Adonis beheld when he lay on the lap of Venus. They came, some with garlands, others with lyres; they surrounded the youth; they led his steps to the banquet; they flung the chaplets round him in rosy chains. The earth, the thought of earth, vanished from his soul. He imagined himself in a dream, and suppressed his breath lest he should wake too soon; the senses, to which he had never yielded as yet, beat in his burning pulse, and confused his dizzy and reeling sight. And while thus amazed and lost, once again, but in brisk and Bacchic measures, rose the magic strain:—

ANACREONTIC.^o

In the veins of the calyx foams and glows
 The blood of the mantling vine,
 But oh, in the bowl of Youth there glows
 A Lesbian, more divine!
 Bright, bright,
 As the liquid light,
 Its waves through thine eyelids shine!

Fill up, fill up, to the sparkling brim,
 The juice of the young Lyæus;²
 The grape is the key that we owe to him
 From the jail of the world to free us.
 Drink, drink!
 What need to shrink,
 When the lamps alone can see us?

¹ Which, however, was possibly the porcelain of China, though this is a matter which admits of considerable dispute.

² Name of Bacchus, from $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\omega$, to unbind, to release.

Drink, drink, as I quaff from thine eyes
The wine of a softer tree ;
Give the smiles to the god of the grape, — thy sighs,
Beloved one, give to me.
Turn, turn,
My glances burn,
And thirst for a look from thee !

As the song ended, a group of three maidens, entwined with a chain of starred flowers, and who, while they imitated, might have shamed the Graces, advanced towards him in the gliding measures of the Ionian dance, such as the Nereids wreathed in moonlight on the yellow sands of the Ægean wave ; such as Cytherea taught her handmaids in the marriage-feast of Psyche and her son.

Now approaching, they wreathed their chaplet round his head ; now kneeling, the youngest of the three proffered him the bowl, from which the wine of Lesbos foamed and sparkled. The youth resisted no more ; he grasped the intoxicating cup ; the blood mantled fiercely through his veins. He sank upon the breast of the nymph who sat beside him, and turning with swimming eyes to seek for Arbaces, whom he had lost in the whirl of his emotions, he beheld him seated beneath a canopy at the upper end of the table, and gazing upon him with a smile that encouraged him to pleasure. He beheld him, but not as he had hitherto seen, with dark and sable garments, with a brooding and solemn brow : a robe that dazzled the sight, so studded was its whitest surface with gold and gems, blazed upon his majestic form ; white roses, alternated with the emerald and the ruby, and shaped tiara-like, crowned his raven locks. He appeared, like Ulysses, to have gained the glory of a second youth ; his features seemed to have exchanged thought for beauty, and he towered amidst the loveliness that surrounded him, in all the beaming and relaxing benignity of the Olympian god.

“ Drink, feast, love, my pupil ! ” said he ; “ blush not that thou art passionate and young. That which thou art, thou feelest in thy veins ; that which thou shalt be, survey ! ”

With this he pointed to a recess, and the eyes of Apæcides,

following the gesture, beheld on a pedestal, placed between the statues of Bacchus and Idalia, the form of a skeleton.

“Start not,” resumed the Egyptian; “that friendly guest admonishes us but of the shortness of life. From its jaws I hear a voice that summons us to ENJOY.”

As he spoke, a group of nymphs surrounded the statue; they laid chaplets on its pedestal, and while the cups were emptied and refilled at that glowing board, they sang the following strain: —

BACCHIC HYMNS TO THE IMAGE OF DEATH.

I.

Thou art in the land of the shadowy Host,
 Thou that didst drink and love :
 By the Solemn River, a gliding ghost,
 But thy thought is ours above !
 If memory yet can fly
 Back to the golden sky,
 And mourn the pleasures lost !
 By the ruin'd hall these flowers we lay,
 Where thy soul once held its palace ;
 When the rose to thy scent and sight was gay,
 And the smile was in the chalice,
 And the cithara's silver voice
 Could bid thy heart rejoice
 When night eclipsed the day.

Here a new group, advancing, turned the tide of the music into a quicker and more joyous strain: —

II.

Death, death is the gloomy shore
 Where we all sail :
 Soft, soft, thou gliding oar ;
 Blow soft, sweet gale !
 Chain with bright wreaths the Hours ;
 Victims if all,
 Ever, 'mid song and flowers,
 Victims should fall !

Pausing for a moment, yet quicker and quicker danced the silver-footed music: —

Since Life 's so short, we 'll live to laugh,
 Ah, wherefore waste a minute !
 If youth 's the cup we yet can quaff,
 Be love the pearl within it !

A third band now approached with brimming cups, which they poured in libation upon that strange altar; and once more, slow and solemn, rose the changeful melody : —

III.

Thou art welcome, Guest of gloom,
 From the far and fearful sea ?
 When the last rose sheds its bloom,
 Our board shall be spread with thee !
 All hail, dark Guest !
 Who hath so fair a plea
 Our welcome guest to be,
 As thou, whose solemn hall
 At last shall feast us all
 In the dim and dismal coast ?
 Long yet be *we* the Host ?
 And thou, Dead Shadow, thou,
 All joyless though thy brow,
 Thou — but our passing *Guest* !

At this moment, she who sat beside Apæcides suddenly took up the song : —

IV.

Happy is yet our doom,
 The earth and the sun are ours !
 And far from the dreary tomb
 Speed the wings of the rosy Hours :
 Sweet is for thee the bowl,
 Sweet are thy looks, my love ;
 I fly to thy tender soul,
 As the bird to its mated dove !
 Take me, ah, take !
 Clasp'd to thy guardian breast,
 Soft let me sink to rest :
 But wake me — ah, wake !
 And tell me with words and sighs,
 But more with thy melting eyes,
 That my sun is not set ;
 That the Torch is not quench'd at the Urn,
 That we love, and we breathe, and burn,
 Tell me — thou lov'st me yet !

BOOK II.

Lucus tremiscit. Tota succusso solo
Nutavit aula, dubia quo pondus daret,
Ac fluctuanti similis. — SENECA : *Thyestes*, v. 696.

Trembled the grove. Earth quivered ; with the shock
Quaked all the nodding hall, as doubtful where
Ponderous to fall, — and heaving like a wave.

CHAPTER I.

“ A FLASH HOUSE ” IN POMPEII — AND THE GENTLEMEN OF THE CLASSIC RING.

To one of those parts of Pompeii, which were tenanted not by the lords of pleasure, but by its minions and its victims ; the haunt of gladiators and prize-fighters ; of the vicious and the penniless ; of the savage and obscene ; the Alsatia of an ancient city — we are now transported.

It was a large room that opened at once on the confined and crowded lane. Before the threshold was a group of men, whose iron and well-strung muscles, whose short and Herculean necks, whose hardy and reckless countenances, indicated the champions of the arena. On a shelf, without the shop, were ranged jars of wine and oil ; and right over this was inserted in the wall a coarse painting which exhibited gladiators drinking, — so ancient and so venerable is the custom of signs ! Within the room were placed several small tables, arranged somewhat in the modern fashion of “ boxes,” and round these were seated several knots of men, some drinking, some playing at dice, some at that more skilful game called “ *duodecim scriptæ*,” which certain of the blundering learned have mistaken for chess, though it *rather*, perhaps, resembled backgammon of the two, and was usually, though not always,

played by the assistance of dice. The hour was in the early forenoon, and nothing better, perhaps, than that unseasonable time itself denoted the habitual indolence of these tavern loungers. Yet, despite the situation of the house and the character of its inmates, it indicated none of that sordid squalor which would have characterized a similar haunt in a modern city. The gay disposition of all the Pompeians, who sought, at least, to gratify the sense even where they neglected the mind, was typified by the gaudy colors which decorated the walls, and the shapes, fantastic but not inelegant, in which the lamps, the drinking-cups, the commonest household utensils, were wrought.

“By Pollux!” said one of the gladiators, as he leaned against the wall of the threshold, “the wine thou sellest us, old Silenus,” — and as he spoke he slapped a portly personage on the back, — “is enough to thin the best blood in one’s veins.”

The man thus caressingly saluted, and whose bared arms, white apron, and keys and napkin tucked carelessly within his girdle, indicated him to be the host of the tavern, was already passed into the autumn of his years; but his form was still so robust and athletic, that he might have shamed even the sinewy shapes beside him, save that the muscles had seeded, as it were, into flesh, that the cheeks were swelled and bloated, and the increasing stomach threw into shade the vast and massive chest which rose above it.

“None of thy scurrilous blusterings with me,” growled the gigantic landlord, in the gentle semi-roar of an insulted tiger; “my wine is good enough for a carcass which shall so soon soak the dust of the spoliarium.”¹

“Croakest thou thus, old raven!” returned the gladiator, laughing scornfully; “thou shalt live to hang thyself with despite when thou seest me win the palm crown; and when I get the purse at the amphitheatre, as I certainly shall, my first vow to Hercules shall be to forswear thee and thy vile potations evermore.”

¹ The place to which the killed or mortally wounded were dragged from the arena.

"Hear to him; hear to this modest Pyrgopolinices! He has certainly served under Bombochides Cluninstaridysarchides,"¹ cried the host. "Sporus, Niger, Tetraides, he declares he shall win the purse from you. Why, by the gods! each of your muscles is strong enough to stifle all his body, or I know nothing of the arena!"

"Ha!" said the gladiator, coloring with rising fury, "our lanista would tell a different story."

"What story could he tell against me, vain Lydon?" said Tetraides, frowning.

"Or me, who have conquered in fifteen fights?" said the gigantic Niger, stalking up to the gladiator.

"Or me?" grunted Sporus, with eyes of fire.

"Tush!" said Lydon, folding his arms, and regarding his rivals with a reckless air of defiance. "The time of trial will soon come; keep your valor till then."

"Ay, do," said the surly host; "and if I press down my thumb to save you, may the Fates cut my thread!"

"Your rope, you mean," said Lydon, sneeringly: "here is a sesterce to buy one."

The Titan wine-vender seized the hand extended to him, and griped it in so stern a vice that the blood spirted from the fingers' ends over the garments of the bystanders.

They set up a savage laugh.

"I will teach thee, young braggart, to play the Macedonian with me! I am no puny Persian, I warrant thee! What, man, have I not fought twenty years in the ring, and never lowered my arms once? And have I not received the rod from the editor's own hand as a sign of victory, and as a grace to retirement on my laurels? And am I now to be lectured by a boy?" So saying, he flung the hand from him in scorn.

Without changing a muscle, but with the same smiling face with which he had previously taunted mine host, did the gladiator brave the painful grasp he had undergone. But no sooner was his hand released, than, crouching for one moment as a wild-cat crouches, you might see his hair bristle on his

¹ "Miles Gloriosus," Act I.; as much as to say, in modern phrase, "He has served under Bombastes Furioso."

head and beard, and with a fierce and shrill yell he sprang on the throat of the giant, with an impetus that threw him, vast and sturdy as he was, from his balance; and down, with the crash of a falling rock, he fell, while over him fell also his ferocious foe.

Our host, perhaps, had had no need of the rope so kindly recommended to him by Lydon, had he remained three minutes longer in that position. But, summoned to his assistance by the noise of his fall, a woman, who had hitherto kept in an inner apartment, rushed to the scene of battle. This new ally was in herself a match for the gladiator; she was tall, lean, and with arms that could give other than soft embraces. In fact, the gentle helpmate of Burbo the wine-seller had, like himself, fought in the lists,¹ nay, under the emperor's eye. And Burbo himself — Burbo, the unconquered in the field, according to report — now and then yielded the palm to his soft Stratonice. This sweet creature no sooner saw the imminent peril that awaited her worse half, than without other weapons than those with which Nature had provided her, she darted upon the incumbent gladiator, and, clasping him round the waist with her long and snake-like arms, lifted him by a sudden wrench from the body of her husband, leaving only his hands still clinging to the throat of his foe. So have we seen a dog snatched by the hind legs from the strife with a fallen rival in the arms of some envious groom; so have we seen one half of him high in air, passive and offenceless, while the other half — head, teeth, eyes, claws — seemed buried and engulfed in the mangled and prostrate enemy. Meanwhile, the gladiators, lapped, and pampered, and glutted upon blood, crowded delightedly round the combatants, their nostrils distended, their lips grinning, their eyes gloatingly fixed on the bloody throat of the one and the indented talons of the other.

“*Habet! habet!* [he has got it!]” cried they, with a sort of yell, rubbing their nervous hands.

“*Non habeo*, ye liars! [I have *not* got it!]” shouted the host, as with a mighty effort he wrenched himself from those deadly

¹ Not only did women sometimes fight in the amphitheatres, but even those of noble birth participated in that meek ambition.

hands, and rose to his feet, breathless, panting, lacerated, bloody; and fronting, with reeling eyes, the glaring look and grinning teeth of his baffled foe, now struggling (but struggling with disdain) in the gripe of the sturdy amazon.

"Fair play!" cried the gladiators: "one to one;" and crowding round Lydon and the woman, they separated our pleasing host from his courteous guest.

But Lydon, feeling ashamed at his present position, and endeavoring in vain to shake off the grasp of the virago, slipped his hand into his girdle and drew forth a short knife. So menacing was his look, so brightly gleamed the blade, that Stratonice, who was used only to that fashion of battle which we moderns call the pugilistic, started back in alarm.

"O gods!" cried she, "the ruffian; he has concealed weapons! Is that fair? Is that like a gentleman and a gladiator? No, indeed, I scorn such fellows." With that she contemptuously turned her back on the gladiator, and hastened to examine the condition of her husband.

But he, as much inured to the constitutional exercises as an English bull-dog is to a contest with a more gentle antagonist, had already recovered himself. The purple hues receded from the crimson surface of his cheek; the veins of the forehead retired into their wonted size. He shook himself with a complacent grunt, satisfied that he was still alive, and then looking at his foe from head to foot with an air of more approbation than he had ever bestowed upon him before, —

"By Castor!" said he, "thou art a stronger fellow than I took thee for. I see thou art a man of merit and virtue; give me thy hand, my hero."

"Jolly old Burbo!" cried the gladiators, applauding; "stanch to the backbone. Give him thy hand, Lydon."

"Oh, to be sure," said the gladiator; "but now I have tasted his blood, I long to lap the whole."

"By Hercules!" returned the host, quite unmoved, "that is the true gladiator feeling. Pollux! to think what good training may make a man; why, a beast could not be fiercer!"

"A beast! Oh, dullard! we beat the beasts hollow!" cried Tetraides.

“Well, well,” said Stratonice, who was now employed in smoothing her hair and adjusting her dress, “if ye are all good friends again, I recommend you to be quiet and orderly; for some young noblemen, your patrons and backers, have sent to say they will come here to pay you a visit: they wish to see you more at their ease than at the schools, before they make up their bets on the great fight at the amphitheatre. So they always come to my house for that purpose: they know we only receive the best gladiators in Pompeii; our society is very select, praised be the gods!”

“Yes,” continued Burbo, drinking off a bowl, or rather a pail of wine, “a man who has won my laurels can only encourage the brave. Lydon, drink, my boy; may you have an honorable old age like mine.”

“Come here,” said Stratonice, drawing her husband to her affectionately by the ears, in that caress which Tibullus has so prettily described, — “come here.”

“Not so hard, she-wolf! thou art worse than the gladiator,” murmured the huge jaws of Burbo.

“Hist!” said she, whispering him; “Calenus has just stole in, disguised, by the back way. I hope he has brought the sesterces.”

“Ho! ho! I will join him,” said Burbo; “meanwhile, I say, keep a sharp eye on the cups: attend to the score. Let them not cheat thee, wife; they are heroes, to be sure, but then they are arrant rogues: Cacus was nothing to them.”

“Never fear me, fool!” was the conjugal reply; and Burbo, satisfied with the dear assurance, strode through the apartment and sought the penetralia of his house.

“So those soft patrons are coming to look at our muscles,” said Niger. “Who sent to prewise thee of it, my mistress?”

“Lepidus. He brings with him Clodius, the surest better in Pompeii, and the young Greek Glaucus.”

“A wager on a wager,” cried Tetraides; “Clodius bets on me, for twenty sesterces! What say you, Lydon?”

“He bets on *me!*” said Lydon.

“No, on *me!*” grunted Sporus.

"Dolts! do you think he would prefer any of you to Niger?" said the athletic, thus modestly naming himself.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, as she pierced a huge amphora for her guests, who had now seated themselves before one of the tables, "great men and brave, as ye all think yourselves, which of you will fight the Numidian lion in case no malefactor should be found to deprive you of the option?"

"I who have escaped your arms, stout Stratonice," said Lydon, "might safely, I think, encounter the lion."

"But tell me," said Tetraides, "where is that pretty young slave of yours, — the blind girl, with bright eyes? I have not seen her for a long time."

"Oh, she is too delicate for you, my son of Neptune,"¹ said the hostess, "and too nice even for us, I think. We send her into the town to sell flowers and sing to the ladies; she makes us more money so than she would by waiting on you. Besides, she has often other employments which lie under the rose."

"Other employments!" said Niger; "why, she is too young for them."

"Silence, beast!" said Stratonice; "you think there is no play but the Corinthian. If Nydia were twice the age she is at present, she would be equally fit for Vesta, poor girl!"

"But, hark ye, Stratonice," said Lydon; "how didst thou come by so gentle and delicate a slave? She were more meet for the handmaid of some rich matron of Rome than for thee."

"That is true," returned Stratonice; "and some day or other I shall make my fortune by selling her. How came I by Nydia, thou askest?"

"Ay!"

"Why, thou seest, my slave Staphyla — thou rememberest Staphyla, Niger?"

"Ay, a large-handed wench, with a face like a comic mask. How should I forget her, by Pluto, whose handmaid she doubtless is at this moment!"

"Tush, brute! Well, Staphyla died one day, and a great

¹ Son of Neptune, — a Latin phrase for a boisterous, ferocious fellow.

loss she was to me, and I went into the market to buy me another slave. But, by the gods! they were all grown so dear since I had bought poor Staphyla, and money was so scarce, that I was about to leave the place in despair, when a merchant plucked me by the robe. 'Mistress,' said he, 'dost thou want a slave cheap? I have a child to sell, — a bargain. She is but little, and almost an infant, it is true; but she is quick and quiet, docile and clever, sings well, and is of good blood, I assure you.' 'Of what country?' said I. 'Thessalian.' Now I knew the Thessalians were acute and gentle; so I said I would see the girl. I found her just as you see her now, scarcely smaller and scarcely younger in appearance. She looked patient and resigned enough, with her hands crossed on her bosom, and her eyes downcast. I asked the merchant his price. It was moderate, and I bought her at once. The merchant brought her to my house, and disappeared in an instant. Well, my friends, guess my astonishment when I found she was blind! Ha! ha! a clever fellow that merchant! I ran at once to the magistrates, but the rogue was already gone from Pompeii. So I was forced to go home in a very ill humor, I assure you; and the poor girl felt the effects of it too. But it was not her fault that she was blind, for she had been so from her birth. By degrees we got reconciled to our purchase. True, she had not the strength of Staphyla, and was of very little use in the house, but she could soon find her way about the town as well as if she had the eyes of Argus; and when one morning she brought us home a handful of sesterces, which she said she had got from selling some flowers she had gathered in our poor little garden, we thought the gods had sent her to us. So from that time we let her go out as she likes, filling her basket with flowers, which she wreathes into garlands after the Thessalian fashion, which pleases the gallants; and the great people seem to take a fancy to her, for they always pay her more than they do any other flower-girl, and she brings all of it home to us, which is more than any other slave would do. So I work for myself, but I shall soon afford from her earnings to buy me a second Staphyla; doubtless the Thessalian kidnapper had

stolen the blind girl from gentle parents.¹ Besides her skill in the garlands, she sings and plays on the cithara, which also brings money, and lately — but *that* is a secret.”

“*That* is a secret! What!” cried Lydon, “art thou turned sphinx?”

“Sphinx, no! Why sphinx?”

“Cease thy gabble, good mistress, and bring us our meat; I am hungry,” said Sporus, impatiently.

“And I, too,” echoed the grim Niger, whetting his knife on the palm of his hand.

The amazon stalked away to the kitchen, and soon returned with a tray laden with large pieces of meat half-raw: for so, as now, did the heroes of the prize-fight imagine they best sustained their hardihood and ferocity; they drew round the table with the eyes of famished wolves; the meat vanished, the wine flowed. So leave we those important personages of classic life to follow the steps of Burbo.

CHAPTER II.

TWO WORTHIES.

IN the earlier times of Rome the priesthood was a profession, not of lucre but of honor. It was embraced by the noblest citizens; it was forbidden to the plebians. Afterwards, and long previous to the present date, it was equally open to all ranks; at least, that part of the profession which embraced the flamens, or priests, — not of religion generally, but of peculiar gods. Even the priest of Jupiter (the Flamen Dialis), preceded by a licitor, and entitled by his office to the entrance of the senate, at first the especial dignitary of the patricians, was subsequently the choice of the people. The

¹ The Thessalian slave-merchants were celebrated for purloining persons of birth and education: they did not always spare those of their own country. Aristophanes sneers bitterly at that people (proverbially treacherous) for their unquenchable desire of gain by this barter of flesh.

less national and less honored deities were usually served by plebeian ministers; and many embraced the profession, as now the Roman Catholic Christians enter the monastic fraternity, less from the impulse of devotion than the suggestions of a calculating poverty. Thus Calenus, the priest of Isis, was of the lowest origin. His relations, though not his parents, were freedmen. He had received from them a liberal education, and from his father a small patrimony, which he had soon exhausted. He embraced the priesthood as a last resource from distress. Whatever the State emoluments of the sacred profession, which at that time were probably small, the officers of a popular temple could never complain of the profits of their calling. There is no profession so lucrative as that which practises on the superstition of the multitude.

Calenus had but one surviving relative at Pompeii, and that was Burbo. Various dark and disreputable ties, stronger than those of blood, united together their hearts and interests; and often the minister of Isis stole disguised and furtively from the supposed austerity of his devotions, and gliding through the back door of the retired gladiator, — a man infamous alike by vices and by profession, — rejoiced to throw off the last rag of an hypocrisy which but for the dictates of avarice, his ruling passion, would at all times have sat clumsily upon a nature too brutal for even the mimicry of virtue.

Wrapped in one of those large mantles which came in use among the Romans in proportion as they dismissed the toga, whose ample folds well concealed the form, and in which a sort of hood (attached to it) afforded no less a security to the features, Calenus now sat in the small and private chamber of the wine-cellar, whence a small passage ran at once to that back entrance with which nearly all the houses of Pompeii were furnished.

Opposite to him sat the sturdy Burbo, carefully counting on a table between them a little pile of coins which the priest had just poured from his purse; for purses were as common then as now, with this difference, — they were usually better furnished.

“You see,” said Calenus, “that we pay you handsomely,

and you ought to thank me for recommending you to so advantageous a market."

"I do, my cousin, I do," replied Burbo, affectionately, as he swept the coins into a leathern receptacle, which he then deposited in his girdle, drawing the buckle round his capacious waist more closely than he was wont to do in the lax hours of his domestic avocations. "And by Isis, Pisis, and Nisis, or whatever other gods there may be in Egypt, my little Nydia is a very Hesperides, — a garden of gold to me."

"She sings well, and plays like a muse," returned Calenus; "those are virtues that he who employs me always pays liberally."

"He is a god," cried Burbo, enthusiastically; "every rich man who is generous deserves to be worshipped. But come, a cup of wine, old friend; tell me more about it. What does she do? She is frightened, talks of her oath, and reveals nothing."

"Nor will I, by my right hand! I, too, have taken that terrible oath of secrecy."

"Oath! what are oaths to men like us?"

"True, oaths of a common fashion; but this!" and the stalwart priest shuddered as he spoke. "Yet," he continued, in emptying a huge cup of unmixed wine, "I will own to thee that it is not so much the oath that I dread as the vengeance of him who proposed it. By the gods! he is a mighty sorcerer, and could draw my confession from the moon, did I dare to make it to her. Talk no more of this. By Pollux! wild as those banquets are which I enjoy with him, I am never quite at my ease there. I love, my boy, one jolly hour with thee, and one of the plain, unsophisticated, laughing girls that I meet in this chamber, all smoke-dried though it be, better than whole nights of those magnificent debauches."

"Ho! sayest thou so? To-morrow night, please the gods, we will have then a snug carousal."

"With all my heart," said the priest, rubbing his hands and drawing himself nearer to the table.

At this moment they heard a slight noise at the door, as of one feeling the handle. The priest lowered the hood over his head.

"Tush!" whispered the host, "it is but the blind girl," as Nydia opened the door and entered the apartment.

"Ho! girl, and how durst thou? Thou lookest pale, — thou hast kept late revels. No matter, the young must be always the young," said Burbo, encouragingly.

The girl made no answer, but she dropped on one of the seats with an air of lassitude. Her color went and came rapidly: she beat the floor impatiently with her small feet, then she suddenly raised her face, and said with a determined voice, —

"Master, you may starve me if you will, you may beat me, you may threaten me with death; but I will go no more to that unholy place!"

"How, fool!" said Burbo, in a savage voice, and his heavy brows met darkly over his fierce and bloodshot eyes; "how, rebellious! Take care!"

"I have said it," said the poor girl, crossing her hands on her breast.

"What! my modest one, sweet vestal, thou wilt go no more! Very well; thou shalt be carried."

"I will raise the city with my cries," said she, passionately; and the color mounted to her brow.

"We will take care of that, too; thou shalt go gagged."

"Then may the gods help me!" said Nydia, rising; "I will appeal to the magistrates."

"*Thine oath remember!*" said a hollow voice, as for the first time Calenus joined in the dialogue.

At those words a trembling shook the frame of the unfortunate girl; she clasped her hands imploringly. "Wretch that I am!" she cried, and burst violently into sobs.

Whether or not it was the sound of that vehement sorrow which brought the gentle Stratonice to the spot, her grisly form at this moment appeared in the chamber.

"How now? what hast thou been doing with my slave, brute?" said she, angrily, to Burbo.

"Be quiet, wife," said he, in a tone half sullen, half timid; "you want new girdles and fine clothes, do you? Well, then, take care of your slave, or you may want them long. *Væ capiti tuo*, — vengeance on thy head, wretched one!"

"What is this?" said the hag, looking from one to the other.

Nydia started as by a sudden impulse from the wall against which she had leaned; she threw herself at the feet of Stratonice; she embraced her knees, and looking up at her with those sightless but touching eyes,—

"Oh, my mistress," sobbed she, "you are a woman; you have had sisters; you have been young like me: feel for me, save me! I will go to those horrible feasts no more!"

"Stuff!" said the hag, dragging her up rudely by one of those delicate hands, fit for no harsher labor than that of weaving the flowers which made her pleasure or her trade; "stuff! these fine scruples are not for slaves."

"Hark ye," said Burbo, drawing forth his purse and chinking its contents; "you hear this music, wife; by Pollux! if you do not break in you colt with a tight rein, you will hear it no more."

"The girl is tired," said Stratonice, nodding to Calenus; "she will be more docile when you next want her."

"*You! you!* who is here?" cried Nydia, casting her eyes round the apartment with so fearful and straining a survey, that Calenus rose in alarm from his seat.

"She *must* see with those eyes!" muttered he.

"Who is here? Speak, in Heaven's name! Ah, if you were blind like me, you would be less cruel," said she; and she again burst into tears.

"Take her away," said Burbo, impatiently; "I hate these whimperings."

"Come!" said Stratonice, pushing the poor child by the shoulders.

Nydia drew herself aside, with an air to which resolution gave dignity.

"Hear me," she said; "I have served you faithfully,—I, who was brought up— Ah, my mother, my poor mother! didst thou dream I should come to this?" She dashed the tears from her eyes, and proceeded: "Command me in aught else, and I will obey; but I tell you now, hard, stern, inexorable as you are,—I tell you that I will go there no more; or,

if I am forced there, that I will implore the mercy of the prætor himself: I have said it. Hear me, ye gods: I swear!"

The hag's eyes glowed with fire; she seized the child by the hair with one hand, and raised on high the other, — that formidable right hand, the least blow of which seemed capable to crush the frail and delicate form that trembled in her grasp. That thought itself appeared to strike her, for she suspended the blow, changed her purpose, and dragging Nydia to the wall, seized from a hook a rope, often, alas! applied to a similar purpose, and the next moment the shrill, the agonized shrieks of the blind girl rang piercingly through the house.

CHAPTER III.

GLAUCUS MAKES A PURCHASE THAT AFTERWARDS COSTS HIM DEAR.

"HOLLA, my brave fellows!" said Lepidus, stooping his head, as he entered the low doorway of the house of Burbo. "We have come to see which of you most honors your lanista." The gladiators rose from the table in respect to three gallants known to be among the gayest and richest youths of Pompeii, and whose voices were therefore the dispensers of amphitheatrical reputation.

"What fine animals!" said Clodius to Glaucus: "worthy to be gladiators."

"It is a pity they are not warriors," returned Glaucus.

A singular thing it was to see the dainty and fastidious Lepidus, whom in a banquet a ray of daylight seemed to blind, whom in the bath a breeze of air seemed to blast, in whom Nature seemed twisted and perverted from every natural impulse, and curdled into one dubious thing of effeminacy and art, — a singular thing was it to see this Lepidus, now all eagerness, and energy, and life, patting the vast shoulders of the gladiators with a blanched and girlish hand, feeling with a mincing gripe their great brawn and iron muscles, all lost in

calculating admiration at that manhood which he had spent his life in carefully banishing from himself.

So have we seen at this day the beardless flutterers of the saloons of London thronging round the heroes of the Fives-court; so have we seen them admire, and gaze, and calculate a bet; so have we seen them meet together, in ludicrous yet in melancholy assemblage, — the two extremes of civilized society, the patrons of pleasure and its slaves; vilest of all slaves, at once ferocious and mercenary; male prostitutes, who sell their strength as women their beauty; beasts in act, but baser than beasts in motive: for the last, at least, do not mangle themselves for money.

“Ha, Niger, how will you fight?” said Lepidus; “and with whom?”

“Sporus challenges me,” said the grim giant; “we shall fight to the death, I hope.”

“Ah, to be sure!” grunted Sporus, with a twinkle of his small eye.

“He takes the sword, I the net and the trident: it will be rare sport. I hope the survivor will have enough to keep up the dignity of the crown.”

“Never fear, we’ll fill the purse, my Hector,” said Clodius: “let me see, you fight against Niger? Glaucus, a bet; I back Niger.”

“I told you so,” cried Niger, exultingly. “The noble Clodius knows me; count yourself dead already, my Sporus.”

Clodius took out his tablet. “A bet, — ten sestertia.¹ What say you?”

“So be it,” said Glaucus. “But whom have we here? I never saw this hero before;” and he glanced at Lydon, whose limbs were slighter than those of his companions, and who had something of grace, and something even of nobleness, in his face, which his profession had not yet wholly destroyed.

“It is Lydon, a youngster practised only with the wooden sword as yet,” answered Niger, condescendingly. “But he has the true blood in him, and has challenged Tetraides.”

“*He* challenged *me*,” said Lydon: “I accept the offer.”

¹ A little more than £80.

“And how do you fight?” asked Lepidus. “Chut, my boy, wait a while before you contend with Tetraides.” Lydon smiled disdainfully.

“Is he a citizen or a slave?” said Clodius.

“A citizen; we are all citizens here,” quoth Niger.

“Stretch out your arm, my Lydon,” said Lepidus, with the air of a connoisseur.

The gladiator, with a significant glance at his companions, extended an arm which, if not so huge in its girth as those of his comrades, was so firm in its muscles, so beautifully symmetrical in its proportions, that the three visitors uttered simultaneously an admiring exclamation.

“Well, man, what is your weapon?” said Clodius, tablet in hand.

“We are to fight first with the cestus; afterwards, if both survive, with swords,” returned Tetraides, sharply, and with an envious scowl.

“With the cestus!” cried Glaucus; “there you are wrong, Lydon; the cestus is the Greek fashion: I know it well. You should have encouraged flesh for that contest; you are far too thin for it: avoid the cestus.”

“I cannot,” said Lydon.

“And why?”

“I have said: because he has challenged me.”

“But he will not hold you to the precise weapon.”

“My honor holds me!” returned Lydon, proudly.

“I bet on Tetraides, two to one, at the cestus,” said Clodius; “shall it be, Lepidus, — even betting, with swords?”

“If you give me three to one, I will not take the odds,” said Lepidus: “Lydon will never come to the swords. You are mighty courteous.”

“What say you, Glaucus?” said Clodius.

“I will take the odds three to one.”

“Ten sestertia to thirty.”

“Yes.”¹

¹ The reader will not confound the *sestertii* with the *sestertia*. A *sestertium*, which was a *sum*, not a *coin*, was a thousand times the value of a *sestertius*; the first was equivalent to £8 1s. 5½d., the last to 1d 3¾ farthings of our money.

Clodius wrote the bet in his book.

"Pardon me, noble sponsor mine," said Lydon, in a low voice to Glaucus: "but how much think you the victor will gain?"

"How much? Why, perhaps seven sestertia."

"You are sure it will be as much?"

"At least. But out on you! A Greek would have thought of the honor, and not the money. O Italians! everywhere ye are Italians!"

A blush mantled over the bronzed cheek of the gladiator.

"Do not wrong me, noble Glaucus; I think of both, but I should never have been a gladiator but for the money."

"Base! mayest thou fall! A miser never was a hero."

"I am not a miser," said Lydon, haughtily; and he withdrew to the other end of the room.

"But I don't see Burbo; where is Burbo? I must talk with Burbo," cried Clodius.

"He is within," said Niger, pointing to the door at the extremity of the room.

"And Stratonicè, the brave old lass, where is she?" quoth Lepidus.

"Why she was here just before you entered; but she heard something that displeased her yonder, and vanished. Pollux! old Burbo had perhaps caught hold of some girl in the back room. I heard a female's voice crying out; the old dame is as jealous as Juno."

"Ho! excellent!" cried Lepidus, laughing. "Come, Clodius, let us go shares with Jupiter; perhaps he has caught a Leda."

At this moment a loud cry of pain and terror startled the group.

"Oh, spare me! spare me! I am but a child; I am blind; is not *that* punishment enough?"

"O Pallas! I know that voice, it is my poor flower-girl!" exclaimed Glaucus; and he darted at once into the quarter whence the cry arose.

He burst the door: he beheld Nydia writhing in the grasp of the infuriate hag; the cord, already dabbled with blood, was raised in the air: it was suddenly arrested.

"Fury!" said Glaucus, and with his left hand he caught Nydia from her grasp; "how dare you use thus a girl, — one of your own sex, a child! My Nydia, my poor infant!"

"Oh, is that you, — is that Glaucus?" exclaimed the flower-girl, in a tone almost of transport; the tears stood arrested on her cheek; she smiled, she clung to his breast, she kissed his robe as she clung.

"And how dare you, pert stranger! interfere between a free woman and her slave? By the gods! despite your fine tunic and your filthy perfumes, I doubt whether you are even a Roman citizen, my manikin."

"Fair words, mistress, fair words!" said Clodius, now entering with Lepidus. "This is my friend and sworn brother: he must be put under shelter of your tongue, sweet one; it rains stones!"

"Give me my slave!" shrieked the virago, placing her mighty grasp on the breast of the Greek.

"Not if all your sister Furies could help you," answered Glaucus. "Fear not, sweet Nydia; an Athenian never forsook distress!"

"Holla!" said Burbo, rising reluctantly, "what turmoil is all this about a slave? Let go the young gentleman, wife, — let him go: for his sake the pert thing shall be spared this once." So saying he drew, or rather dragged off his ferocious helpmate.

"Methought when we entered," said Clodius, "there was another man present?"

"He is gone."

For the priest of Isis had indeed thought it high time to vanish.

"Oh, a friend of mine, a brother cupman, a quiet dog, who does not love these snarlings," said Burbo, carelessly. "But go, child; you will tear the gentleman's tunic if you cling to him so tight: go, you are pardoned."

"Oh, do not, — do not forsake me!" cried Nydia, clinging yet closer to the Athenian.

Moved by her forlorn situation, her appeal to him, her own innumerable and touching graces, the Greek seated himself on

one of the rude chairs. He held her on his knees, he wiped the blood from her shoulders with his long hair, he kissed the tears from her cheeks, he whispered to her a thousand of those soothing words with which we calm the grief of a child; and so beautiful did he seem in his gentle and consoling task, that even the fierce heart of Stratonice was touched. His presence seemed to shed light over that base and obscene haunt; young, beautiful, glorious, he was the emblem of all that earth made most happy, comforting one that the earth had abandoned!

“Well, who could have thought our blind Nydia had been so honored!” said the virago, wiping her heated brow.

Glaucus looked up at Burbo.

“My good man,” said he, “this is your slave; she sings well, she is accustomed to the care of flowers; I wish to make a present of such a slave to a lady. Will you sell her to me?” As he spoke he felt the whole frame of the poor girl tremble with delight; she started up, she put her dishevelled hair from her eyes, she looked around, as if, alas! she had the power to *see*.

“Sell our Nydia! No indeed,” said Stratonice, gruffly.

Nydia sank back with a long sigh, and again clasped the robe of her protector.

“Nonsense!” said Clodius, imperiously; “you must oblige me. What, man! what, old dame! offend me, and your trade is ruined. Is not Burbo my kinsman Pansa’s client? Am I not the oracle of the amphitheatre and its heroes? If I say the word, Break up your wine-jars, you sell no more. Glaucus, the slave is yours.”

Burbo scratched his huge head, in evident embarrassment.

“The girl is worth her weight in gold to me.”

“Name your price; I am rich,” said Glaucus.

The ancient Italians were like the modern, — there was nothing they would not sell, much less a poor blind girl.

“I paid six sestertia for her; she is worth twelve now,” muttered Stratonice.

“You shall have twenty; come to the magistrates at once, and then to my house for your money.”

"I would not have sold the dear girl for a hundred but to oblige noble Clodius," said Burbo, whiningly. "And you will speak to Pansa about the place of *designator* at the amphitheatre, noble Clodius? It would just suit me."

"Thou shalt have it," said Clodius; adding in a whisper to Burbo, "Yon Greek can make your fortune; money runs through him like a sieve: mark to-day with white chalk, my Priam."

"*An dabis?*" said Glaucus, in the formal question of sale and barter.

"*Dabitur,*" answered Burbo.

"Then, then I am to go with you — with you? Oh, happiness!" murmured Nydia.

"Pretty one, yes; and thy hardest task henceforth shall be to sing thy Grecian hymns to the loveliest lady in Pompeii."

The girl sprang from his clasp; a change came over her whole face, so bright the instant before; she sighed heavily, and then once more taking his hand, she said, —

"I thought I was to go to *your* house?"

"And so thou shalt for the present; come, we lose time."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVAL OF GLAUCUS PRESSES ONWARD IN THE RACE.

IONE was one of those brilliant characters which but once or twice flash across our career. She united in the highest perfection the rarest of earthly gifts, — Genius and Beauty. No one ever possessed superior intellectual qualities without knowing them. The alliteration of modesty and merit is pretty enough, but where merit is great, the veil of that modesty you admire never disguises its extent from its possessor. It is the proud consciousness of certain qualities that it cannot reveal to the every-day world, that gives to genius that shy and reserved and troubled air which puzzles and flatters you when you encounter it.

Ione, then, knew her genius; but with that charming versatility that belongs of right to women, she had the faculty so few of a kindred genius in the less malleable sex can claim, — the faculty to bend and model her graceful intellect to all whom it encountered. The sparkling fountain threw its waters alike upon the strand, the cavern, and the flowers; it refreshed, it smiled, it dazzled everywhere. That pride which is the necessary result of superiority she wore easily; in her breast it concentrated itself in independence. She pursued thus her own bright and solitary path. She asked no aged matron to direct and guide her; she walked alone by the torch of her own unflickering purity. She obeyed no tyrannical and absolute custom: she moulded custom to her own will; but this so delicately and with so feminine a grace, so perfect an exemption from error, that you could not say she *outraged* custom but *commanded* it. The wealth of her graces was inexhaustible: she beautified the commonest action; a word, a look from her, seemed magic. Love her, and you entered into a new world; you passed from this trite and commonplace earth; you were in a land in which your eyes saw everything through an enchanted medium. In her presence you felt as if listening to exquisite music; you were steeped in that sentiment which has so little of earth in it, and which music so well inspires, — that intoxication which refines and exalts, which seizes, it is true, the senses, but gives them the character of the soul.

She was peculiarly formed, then, to command and fascinate the less ordinary and the bolder natures of men; to love her was to unite two passions, — that of love and of ambition: you aspired when you adored her. It was no wonder that she had completely chained and subdued the mysterious but burning soul of the Egyptian, a man in whom dwelt the fiercest passions. Her beauty and her soul alike enthralled him.

Set apart himself from the common world, he loved that daringness of character which also made itself, among common things, aloof and alone. He did not, or he would not, see that that very isolation put her yet more from him than from the vulgar. Far as the poles, far as the night from day, his soli-

tude was divided from hers. He was solitary from his dark and solemn vices: she from her beautiful fancies and her purity of virtue.

If it was not strange that Ione thus enthralled the Egyptian, far less strange was it that she had captured, as suddenly as irrevocably, the bright and sunny heart of the Athenian. The gladness of a temperament which seemed woven from the beams of light had led Glaucus into pleasure. He obeyed no more vicious dictates when he wandered into the dissipations of his time than the exhilarating voices of youth and health. He threw the brightness of his nature over every abyss and cavern through which he strayed. His imagination dazzled him, but his heart never was corrupted. Of far more penetration than his companions deemed, he saw that they sought to prey upon his riches and his youth; but he despised wealth save as the means of enjoyment, and youth was the great sympathy that united him to them. He felt, it is true, the impulse of nobler thoughts and higher aims than in pleasure could be indulged: but the world was one vast prison, to which the Sovereign of Rome was the Imperial jailer; and the very virtues, which in the free days of Athens would have made him ambitious, in the slavery of earth made him inactive and supine. For in that unnatural and bloated civilization all that was noble in emulation was forbidden. Ambition in the regions of a despotic and luxurious court was but the contest of flattery and craft. Avarice had become the sole ambition; men desired prætorships and provinces only as the license to pillage, and government was but the excuse of rapine. It is in small States that glory is most active and pure: the more confined the limits of the circle, the more ardent the patriotism. In small States opinion is concentrated and strong: every eye reads your actions; your public motives are blended with your private ties; every spot in your narrow sphere is crowded with forms familiar since your childhood; the applause of your citizens is like the caresses of your friends. But in large States the city is but the court; the provinces—unknown to you, unfamiliar in customs, perhaps in language—have no claim on your patriotism; the ancestry of their

inhabitants is not yours. In the court you desire favor instead of glory; at a distance from the court public opinion has vanished from you, and self-interest has no counterpoise.

Italy, Italy, while I write, your skies are over me, your seas flow beneath my feet. Listen not to the blind policy which would unite all your crested cities, mourning for their republics, into one empire; false, pernicious delusion! your only hope of regeneration is in division. Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, may be free once more, if each is free. But dream not of freedom for the whole while you enslave the parts; the heart must be the centre of the system, the blood must circulate freely everywhere; and in vast communities you behold but a bloated and feeble giant, whose brain is imbecile, whose limbs are dead, and who pays in disease and weakness the penalty of transcending the natural proportions of health and vigor.

Thus thrown back upon themselves, the more ardent qualities of Glaucus found no vent, save in that overflowing imagination which gave grace to pleasure, and poetry to thought. Ease was less despicable than contention with parasites and slaves and luxury could yet be refined; though ambition could not be ennobled. But all that was best and brightest in his soul woke at once when he knew Ione. Here was an empire worthy of demigods to attain; here was a glory which the reeking smoke of a foul society could not soil or dim. Love, in every time, in every State, can thus find space for its golden altars. And tell me if there ever, even in the ages most favorable to glory, could be a triumph more exalted and elating than the conquest of one noble heart?

And whether it was that this sentiment inspired him, his ideas glowed more brightly, his soul seemed more awake and more visible, in Ione's presence. If natural to love her, it was natural that she should return the passion. Young, brilliant, eloquent, enamoured, and Athenian, he was to her as the incarnation of the poetry of her father's land. They were not like creatures of a world in which strife and sorrow are the elements; they were like things to be seen only in the holiday of nature, so glorious and so fresh were their youth, their beauty, and their love. They seemed out of place in the

harsh and every-day earth; they belonged of right to the Saturnian age, and the dreams of demigod and nymph. It was as if the poetry of life gathered and fed itself in them, and in their hearts were concentrated the last rays of the sun of Delos and of Greece.

But if Ione was independent in her choice of life, so was her modest pride proportionably vigilant and easily alarmed. The falsehood of the Egyptian was invented by a deep knowledge of her nature. The story of coarseness, of indelicacy, in Glaucus, stung her to the quick. She felt it a reproach upon her character and her career, a punishment above all to her love; she felt, for the first time, how suddenly she had yielded to that love; she blushed with shame at a weakness, the extent of which she was startled to perceive: she imagined it was that weakness which had incurred the contempt of Glaucus; she endured the bitterest curse of noble natures, — *humiliation!* Yet her love, perhaps, was no less alarmed than her pride. If one moment she murmured reproaches upon Glaucus, — if one moment she renounced, she almost hated him, — at the next she burst into passionate tears, her heart yielded to its softness, and she said in the bitterness of anguish, “He despises me; he does not love me.”

From the hour the Egyptian had left her she had retired to her most secluded chamber, she had shut out her handmaids, she had denied herself to the crowds that besieged her door. Glaucus was excluded with the rest; he wondered, but he guessed not why. He never attributed to his Ione, his queen, his goddess, that woman-like caprice of which the love-poets of Italy so unceasingly complain. He imagined her, in the majesty of her candor, above all the arts that torture. He was troubled, but his hopes were not dimmed, for he knew already that he loved and was beloved; what more could he desire as an amulet against fear?

At deepest night, then, when the streets were hushed, and the high moon only beheld his devotions, he stole to that temple of his heart, — her home,¹ — and wooed her after the beautiful fashion of his country. He covered her threshold with

¹ Athenæus: “The true temple of Cupid is the house of the beloved one.”

the richest garlands, in which every flower was a volume of sweet passion ; and he charmed the long summer night with the sound of the Lycian lute, and verses which the inspiration of the moment sufficed to weave.

But the window above opened not ; no smile made yet more holy the shining air of night. All was still and dark. He knew not if his verse was welcome and his suit was heard.

Yet Ione slept not, nor disdained to hear. Those soft strains ascended to her chamber ; they soothed, they subdued her. While she listened, she believed nothing against her lover ; but when they were stilled at last, and his step departed, the spell ceased, and in the bitterness of her soul she almost conceived in that delicate flattery a new affront.

I said she was denied to all ; but there was one exception ; there was one person who would not be denied, assuming over her actions and her house something like the authority of a parent : Arbaces, for himself, claimed an exemption from all the ceremonies observed by others. He entered the threshold with the license of one who feels that he is privileged and at home. He made his way to her solitude, and with that sort of quiet and unapologetic air which seemed to consider the right as a thing of course. With all the independence of Ione's character, his heart had enabled him to obtain a secret and powerful control over her mind. She could not shake it off ; sometimes she desired to do so, but she never actively struggled against it. She was fascinated by his serpent eye. He arrested, he commanded her by the magic of a mind long accustomed to awe and to subdue. Utterly unaware of his real character or his hidden love, she felt for him the reverence which genius feels for wisdom, and virtue for sanctity. She regarded him as one of those mighty sages of old who attained to the mysteries of knowledge by an exemption from the passions of their kind. She scarcely considered him as a being, like herself, of the earth, but as an oracle at once dark and sacred. She did not love him, but she feared. His presence was unwelcome to her ; it dimmed her spirit even in its brightest mood ; he seemed, with his chilling and lofty aspect, like some eminence which casts a shadow over the sun. But

she never thought of forbidding his visits. She was passive under the influence which created in her breast, not the repugnance, but something of the stillness of terror.

Arbaces himself now resolved to exert all his arts to possess himself of that treasure he so burningly coveted. He was cheered and elated by his conquests over her brother. From the hour in which Apæcides fell beneath the voluptuous sorcery of that *fête* which we have described, he felt his empire over the young priest triumphant and insured. He knew that there is no victim so thoroughly subdued as a young and fervent man for the first time delivered to the thralldom of the senses.

When Apæcides recovered, with the morning light, from the profound sleep which succeeded to the delirium of wonder and of pleasure, he was, it is true, ashamed, terrified, appalled. His vows of austerity and celibacy echoed in his ear; his thirst after holiness, — had it been quenched at so unhallowed a stream? But Arbaces knew well the means by which to confirm his conquest. From the arts of pleasure he led the young priest at once to those of his mysterious wisdom. He bared to his amazed eyes the initiatory secrets of the sombre philosophy of the Nile, — those secrets plucked from the stars, and the wild chemistry, which, in those days, when Reason herself was but the creature of Imagination, might well pass for the lore of a diviner magic. He seemed to the young eyes of the priest as a being above mortality, and endowed with supernatural gifts. That yearning and intense desire for the knowledge which is not of earth, which had burned from his boyhood in the heart of the priest, was dazzled until it confused and mastered his clearer sense. He gave himself to the art which thus addressed at once the two strongest of human passions, — that of pleasure and that of knowledge. He was loth to believe that one so wise could err, that one so lofty could stoop to deceive. Entangled in the dark web of metaphysical moralities, he caught at the excuse by which the Egyptian converted vice into a virtue. His pride was insensibly flattered that Arbaces had deigned to rank him with himself, to set him apart from the laws

which bound the vulgar, to make him an august participator, both in the mystic studies and the magic fascinations of the Egyptian's solitude. The pure and stern lessons of that creed to which Olinthus had sought to make him convert were swept away from his memory by the deluge of new passions; and the Egyptian, who was versed in the articles of that true faith, and who soon learned from his pupil the effect which had been produced upon him by his believers, sought, not unskilfully, to undo that effect by a tone of reasoning half sarcastic and half earnest.

"This faith," said he, "is but a borrowed plagiarism from one of the many allegories invented by our priests of old. Observe," he added, pointing to a hieroglyphical scroll, — "observe in these ancient figures the origin of the Christian's Trinity. Here are also three gods, — the Deity, the Spirit, and the Son. Observe, that the epithet of the Son is 'Saviour;' observe that the sign by which his human qualities are denoted is the cross.¹ Note here, too, the mystic history of Osiris: how he put on death; how he lay in the grave; and how, thus fulfilling a solemn atonement, he rose again from the dead! In these stories we but design to paint an allegory from the operations of nature and the evolutions of the eternal heavens. But the allegory unknown, the types themselves have furnished to credulous nations the materials of many creeds. They have travelled to the vast plains of India; they have mixed themselves up in the visionary speculations of the Greek: becoming more and more gross and embodied, as they emerge farther from the shadows of their antique origin, they have assumed a human and palpable form in this novel faith; and the believers of Galilee are but the unconscious repeaters of one of the superstitions of the Nile."

This was the last argument, which completely subdued the priest. It was necessary to him, as to all, to believe in something; and undivided, and at last unreluctant, he surrendered himself to that belief which Arbaces inculcated, and which all that was human in passion, all that was flattering in vanity,

¹ The believer will draw from this vague coincidence a very different corollary from that of the Egyptian.

all that was alluring in pleasure, served to invite to, and contributed to confirm.

This conquest thus easily made, the Egyptian could now give himself wholly up to the pursuit of a far dearer and mightier object; and he hailed, in his success with the brother, an omen of his triumph over the sister.

He had seen Ione on the day following the revel we have witnessed, and which was also the day after he had poisoned her mind against his rival. The next day, and the next, he saw her also; and each time he laid himself out with consummate art, partly to confirm her impression against Glaucus, and principally to prepare her for the impressions he desired her to receive. The proud Ione took care to conceal the anguish she endured, and the pride of woman has an hypocrisy which can deceive the most penetrating and shame the most astute; but Arbaces was no less cautious not to recur to a subject which he felt it was most politic to treat as of the lightest importance. He knew that by dwelling much upon the fault of a rival, you only give him dignity in the eyes of your mistress; the wisest plan is, neither loudly to hate, nor bitterly to condemn; the wisest plan is to lower him by an indifference of tone, as if you could not dream that *he* could be loved. Your safety is in concealing the wound to your own pride, and imperceptibly alarming that of the umpire, whose voice is fate! Such, in all times, will be the policy of one who knows the science of the sex: it was now the Egyptian's.

He recurred no more, then, to the presumption of Glaucus; he mentioned his name, but not more often than that of Clodius or of Lepidus. He affected to class them together as things of a low and ephemeral species; as things wanting nothing of the butterfly save its innocence and its grace. Sometimes he slightly alluded to some invented debauch, in which he declared them companions; sometimes he adverted to them as the antipodes of those lofty and spiritual natures to whose order that of Ione belonged. Blinded alike by the pride of Ione, and, perhaps, by his own, he dreamed not that she already loved; but he dreaded lest she might have formed

for Glaucus the first fluttering prepossessions that *lead* to love. And secretly he ground his teeth in rage and jealousy when he reflected on the youth, the fascinations, and the brilliancy of that formidable rival whom he pretended to undervalue.

It was on the fourth day from the date of the close of the previous book that Arbaces and Ione sat together.

"You wear your veil at home," said the Egyptian; "that is not fair to those whom you honor with your friendship."

"But to Arbaces," answered Ione, who, indeed, had cast the veil over her features to conceal eyes red with weeping, — "to Arbaces, who looks only to the mind, what matters it that the face is concealed?"

"I do look only to the mind," replied the Egyptian: "show me then your face, for there I shall see it!"

"You grow gallant in the air of Pompeii," said Ione, with a forced tone of gayety.

"Do you think, fair Ione, that it is only at Pompeii that I have learned to value you?" The Egyptian's voice trembled; he paused for a moment, and then resumed.

"There is a love, beautiful Greek, which is not the love only of the thoughtless and the young, — there is a love which sees not with the eyes, which hears not with the ears, but in which soul is enamoured of soul. The countryman of thy ancestors, the cave-nursed Plato, dreamed of such a love: his followers have sought to imitate it; but it is a love that is not for the herd to echo; it is a love that only high and noble natures can conceive; it hath nothing in common with the sympathies and ties of coarse affection; wrinkles do not revolt it, homeliness of feature does not deter; it asks youth, it is true, but it asks it only in the freshness of the emotions; it asks beauty, it is true, but it is the beauty of the thought and of the spirit. Such is the love, O Ione, which is a worthy offering to thee from the cold and the austere. Austere and cold thou deemest me: such is the love that I venture to lay upon thy shrine; thou canst receive it without a blush."

"And its name is Friendship," replied Ione. Her answer was innocent, yet it sounded like the reproof of one conscious of the design of the speaker.

“Friendship!” said Arbaces, vehemently. “No; that is a word too often profaned to apply to a sentiment so sacred. Friendship! it is a tie that binds fools and profligates! Friendship! it is the bond that unites the frivolous hearts of a Glaucus and a Clodius! Friendship! no, *that* is an affection of earth, of vulgar habits and sordid sympathies. The feeling of which I speak is borrowed from the stars;¹ it partakes of that mystic and ineffable yearning which we feel when we gaze on them; it burns, yet it purifies; it is the lamp of naphtha in the alabaster vase, glowing with fragrant odors, but shining only through the purest vessels. No; it is not love, and it is not friendship, that Arbaces feels for Ione. Give it no name, — earth has no name for it; it is not of earth: why debase it with earthly epithets and earthly associations?”

Never before had Arbaces ventured so far, yet he felt his ground step by step: he knew that he uttered a language which, if at this day of affected platonisms it would speak unequivocally to the ears of beauty, was at that time strange and unfamiliar, to which no precise idea could be attached, from which he could imperceptibly advance or recede, as occasion suited, as hope encouraged or fear deterred. Ione trembled, though she knew not why; her veil hid her features, and masked an expression, which, if seen by the Egyptian, would have at once damped and enraged him; in fact, he never was more displeasing to her: the harmonious modulation of the most suasive voice that ever disguised unhallowed thought fell discordantly on her ear. Her whole soul was still filled with the image of Glaucus, and the accent of tenderness from another only revolted and dismayed; yet she did not conceive that any passion more ardent than that platonism which Arbaces expressed lurked beneath his words. She thought that he, in truth, spoke only of the affection and sympathy of the soul; but was it not precisely that affection and that sympathy which had made a part of those emotions she felt for Glaucus; and could any other footstep than his approach the haunted adytum of her heart?

¹ Plato.

Anxious at once to change the conversation, she replied, therefore, with a cold and indifferent voice: "Whomsoever Arbaces honors with the sentiment of esteem, it is natural that his elevated wisdom should color that sentiment with its own hues; it is natural that his friendship should be purer than that of others, whose pursuits and errors he does not deign to share. But tell me, Arbaces, hast thou seen my brother of late? He has not visited me for several days; and when I last saw him his manner disturbed and alarmed me much. I fear lest he was too precipitate in the severe choice that he has adopted, and that he repents an irrevocable step."

"Be cheered, Ione," replied the Egyptian. "It is true that some little time since he was troubled and sad of spirit; those doubts beset him which were likely to haunt one of that fervent temperament, which ever ebbs and flows, and vibrates between excitement and exhaustion. But *he*, Ione, *he* came to me in his anxieties and his distress; he sought one who pitied and loved him. I have calmed his mind, I have removed his doubts, I have taken him from the threshold of Wisdom into its temple; and before the majesty of the goddess his soul is hushed and soothed. Fear not, he will repent no more; they who trust themselves to Arbaces never repent but for a moment."

"You rejoice me," answered Ione. "My dear brother! in his contentment I am happy."

The conversation then turned upon lighter subjects; the Egyptian exerted himself to please, he condescended even to entertain; the vast variety of his knowledge enabled him to adorn and light up every subject on which he touched; and Ione, forgetting the displeasing effect of his former words, was carried away, despite her sadness, by the magic of his intellect. Her manner became unrestrained and her language fluent; and Arbaces, who had waited his opportunity, now hastened to seize it.

"You have never seen," said he, "the interior of my home; it may amuse you to do so: it contains some rooms that may explain to you what you have often asked me to describe,—

the fashion of an Egyptian house ; not, indeed, that you will perceive in the poor and minute proportions of Roman architecture the massive strength, the vast space, the gigantic magnificence, or even the domestic construction of the palaces of Thebes and Memphis ; but something there is, here and there, that may serve to express to you some notion of that antique civilization which has humanized the world. Devote, then, to the austere friend of your youth, one of these bright summer evenings, and let me boast that my gloomy mansion has been honored with the presence of the admired Ione."

Unconscious of the pollutions of the mansion, of the danger that awaited her, Ione readily assented to the proposal. The next evening was fixed for the visit ; and the Egyptian, with a serene countenance, and a heart beating with fierce and unholy joy, departed. Scarce had he gone, when another visitor claimed admission. — But now we return to Glaucus.

CHAPTER V.

THE POOR TORTOISE. — NEW CHANGES FOR NYDIA.

THE morning sun shone over the small and odorous garden enclosed within the peristyle of the house of the Athenian. He lay reclined, sad and listlessly, on the smooth grass which intersected the viridarium, and a slight canopy stretched above broke the fierce rays of the summer sun.

When that fairy mansion was first disinterred from the earth they found in the garden the shell of a tortoise that had been its inmate.¹ That animal, so strange a link in the creation, to which Nature seems to have denied all the pleasures of life, save life's passive and dreamlike perception, had been the guest of the place for years before Glaucus purchased it, — for years, indeed, which went beyond the memory of man, and to

¹ I do not know whether it be still preserved (I hope so), but the shell of a tortoise was found in the house appropriated, in this work, to Glaucus.

which tradition assigned an almost incredible date. The house had been built and rebuilt, its possessors had changed and fluctuated, generations had flourished and decayed, and still the tortoise dragged on its slow and unsympathizing existence. In the earthquake, which sixteen years before had overthrown many of the public buildings of the city, and scared away the amazed inhabitants, the house now inhabited by Glaucus had been terribly shattered. The possessors deserted it for many days; on their return they cleared away the ruins which encumbered the viridarium, and found still the tortoise, unharmed, and unconscious of the surrounding destruction. It seemed to bear a charmed life in its languid blood and imperceptible motions; yet was it not so inactive as it seemed: it held a regular and monotonous course; inch by inch it traversed the little orbit of its domain, taking months to accomplish the whole gyration. It was a restless voyager, that tortoise! patiently, and with pain, did it perform its self-appointed journeys, evincing no interest in the things around it, — a philosopher concentrated in itself. There was something grand in its solitary selfishness: the sun in which it basked, the waters poured daily over it, the air, which it insensibly inhaled, were its sole and unfailing luxuries. The mild changes of the season in that lovely clime affected it not. It covered itself with its shell, as the saint in his piety, as the sage in his wisdom, as the lover in his hope.

It was impervious to the shocks and mutations of time, it was an emblem of time itself, — slow, regular, perpetual, unwitting of the passions that fret themselves around, of the wear and tear of mortality. The poor tortoise! nothing less than the bursting of volcanoes, the convulsions of the riven world, could have quenched its sluggish spark! The inexorable Death, that spared not pomp or beauty, passed unheedingly by a thing to which death could bring so insignificant a change.

For this animal the mercurial and vivid Greek felt all the wonder and affection of contrast. He could spend hours in surveying its creeping progress, in moralizing over its mechanism. He despised it in joy; he envied it in sorrow.

Regarding it now as he lay along the sward, its dull mass moving while it seemed motionless, the Athenian murmured to himself:—

“The eagle dropped a stone from his talons, thinking to break thy shell: the stone crushed the head of a poet. This is the allegory of Fate! Dull thing! thou hadst a father and a mother; perhaps, ages ago, thou thyself hadst a mate. Did thy parents love, or didst thou? Did thy slow blood circulate more gladly when thou didst creep to the side of thy wedded one? Wert thou capable of affection? Could it distress thee if she were away from thy side? Couldst thou feel when she was present? What would I not give to know the history of thy mailed breast, to gaze upon the mechanism of thy faint desires, to mark what hairbreadth difference separates thy sorrow from thy joy! Yet, methinks, thou wouldst know if Ione were present! Thou wouldst feel her coming like a happier air, like a gladder sun. I envy thee now, for thou knowest not that she is absent; and I—would I could be like thee between the intervals of seeing her! What doubt, what presentiment, haunts me! Why will she not admit me? Days have passed since I heard her voice. For the first time, life grows flat to me. I am as one who is left alone at a banquet, the lights dead and the flowers faded. Ah, Ione, couldst thou dream how I adore thee!”

From these enamoured reveries Glaucus was interrupted by the entrance of Nydia. She came with her light though cautious step along the marble tablinum. She passed the portico, and paused at the flowers which bordered the garden. She had her water-vase in her hand, and she sprinkled the thirsting plants, which seemed to brighten at her approach. She bent to inhale their odor; she touched them timidly and caressingly; she felt along their stems, if any withered leaf or creeping insect marred their beauty. And as she hovered from flower to flower, with her earnest and youthful countenance and graceful motions, you could not have imagined a fitter handmaid for the goddess of the garden.

“Nydia, my child!” said Glaucus.

At the sound of his voice she paused at once, — listening, blushing, breathless ; with her lips parted, her face upturned to catch the direction of the sound, she laid down the vase, she hastened to him ; and wonderful it was to see how unerringly she threaded her dark way through the flowers, and came by the shortest path to the side of her new lord.

“Nydia,” said Glaucus, tenderly stroking back her long and beautiful hair, “it is now three days since thou hast been under the protection of my household gods. Have they smiled on thee ? Art thou happy ?”

“Ah, so happy !” sighed the slave.

“And now,” continued Glaucus, “that thou hast recovered somewhat from the hateful recollections of thy former state, and now that they have fitted thee [touching her brodered tunic] with garments more meet for thy delicate shape, and now, sweet child, that thou hast accustomed thyself to a happiness which may the gods grant thee ever, I am about to pray at thy hands a boon.”

“Oh, what can I do for thee ?” said Nydia, clasping her hands.

“Listen,” said Glaucus, “and, young as thou art, thou shalt be my confidante. Hast thou ever heard the name of Ione ?”

The blind girl gasped for breath, and turning pale as one of the statues which shone upon them from the peristyle, she answered with an effort, and after a moment’s pause, —

“Yes ; I have heard that she is of Neapolis, and beautiful.”

“Beautiful ! Her beauty is a thing to dazzle the day ! Neapolis ! nay, she is Greek by origin ; Greece only could furnish forth such shapes. Nydia, I love her !”

“I thought so,” replied Nydia, calmly.

“I love, and thou shalt tell her so. I am about to send thee to her. Happy Nydia, thou wilt be in her chamber, thou wilt drink the music of her voice, thou wilt bask in the sunny air of her presence !”

“What ! what ! wilt thou send me from thee ?”

“Thou wilt go to Ione,” answered Glaucus, in a tone that said, “What more canst thou desire ?”

Nydia burst into tears.



IDEAL INTERIOR OF A POMPEIIAN HOUSE.

Glaucus, raising himself, drew her towards him with the soothing caresses of a brother.

“My child, my Nydia, thou weepest in ignorance of the happiness I bestow on thee. She is gentle and kind, and soft as the breeze of spring. She will be a sister to thy youth, she will appreciate thy winning talents, she will love thy simple graces as none other could, for they are like her own. Weepest thou still, fond fool? I will not force thee, sweet. Wilt thou not do for me this kindness?”

“Well, if I can serve thee, command. See, I weep no longer; I am calm.”

“That is my own Nydia,” continued Glaucus, kissing her hand. “Go, then, to her: if thou art disappointed in her kindness, — if I have deceived thee, — return when thou wilt. I do not *give* thee to another; I but lend. My home ever be thy refuge, sweet one. Ah, would it could shelter all the friendless and distressed! But if my heart whispers truly, I shall claim thee again soon, my child. My home and Ione’s will become the same, and thou shalt dwell with both.”

A shiver passed through the slight frame of the blind girl, but she wept no more; she was resigned.

“Go, then, my Nydia, to Ione’s house; they shall show thee the way. Take her the fairest flowers thou canst pluck; the vase which contains them I will give thee: thou must excuse its unworthiness. Thou shalt take, too, with thee the lute that I gave thee yesterday, and from which thou knowest so well to awaken the charming spirit. Thou shalt give her also this letter, in which, after a hundred efforts, I have embodied something of my thoughts. Let thy ear catch every accent, every modulation of her voice, and tell me, when we meet again, if its music should flatter me or discourage. It is now, Nydia, some days since I have been admitted to Ione; there is something mysterious in this exclusion. I am distracted with doubts and fears; learn, — for thou art quick, and thy care for me will sharpen tenfold thy acuteness, — learn the cause of this unkindness; speak of me as often as thou canst; let my name come ever to thy lips; *insinuate* how I love rather than *proclaim* it; watch if she sighs whilst thou speakest; if she

answer thee; or, if she reproveth, in what accents she reproveth. Be my friend, plead for me; and ah, how vastly wilt thou overpay the little I have done for thee! Thou comprehendest, Nydia; thou art yet a child, — have I said more than thou canst understand?”

“No.”

“And thou wilt serve me?”

“Yes.”

“Come to me when thou hast gathered the flowers, and I will give thee the vase I spake of; seek me in the chamber of Leda. Pretty one, thou dost not grieve now?”

“Glaucus, I am a slave; what business have I with grief or joy?”

“Sayest thou so? No, Nydia, be free. I give thee freedom; enjoy it as thou wilt, and pardon me that I reckoned on thy desire to serve me.”

“You are offended. Oh, I would not, for that which no freedom can give, offend you, Glaucus! My guardian, my saviour, my protector, forgive the poor blind girl! She does not grieve, even in leaving thee, if she can contribute to thy happiness.”

“May the gods bless this grateful heart!” said Glaucus, greatly moved; and, unconscious of the fires he excited, he repeatedly kissed her forehead.

“Thou forgivest me,” said she, “and thou wilt talk no more of freedom; my happiness is to be thy slave: thou hast promised thou wilt not give me to another.”

“I have promised.”

“And now, then, I will gather the flowers.”

Silently Nydia took from the hand of Glaucus the costly and jewelled vase, in which the flowers vied with each other in hue and fragrance; tearlessly she received his parting admonition. She paused for a moment when his voice ceased; she did not trust herself to reply; she sought his hand; she raised it to her lips, dropped her veil over her face, and passed at once from his presence. She paused again as she reached the threshold; she stretched her hands towards it, and murmured, —

“Three happy days — days of unspeakable delight — have I

known since I passed thee, blessed threshold! May peace dwell ever with thee when I am gone! And now, my heart tears itself from thee, and the only sound it utters bids me — die!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPY BEAUTY AND THE BLIND SLAVE.

A SLAVE entered the chamber of Ione. A messenger from Glaucus desired to be admitted.

Ione hesitated an instant.

“She is blind, that messenger,” said the slave; “she will do her commission to none but thee.”

Base is that heart which does not respect affliction! The moment she heard the messenger was blind, Ione felt the impossibility of returning a chilling reply. Glaucus had chosen a herald that was indeed sacred, — a herald that could not be denied.

“What can he want with me? what message can he send?” and the heart of Ione beat quick. The curtain across the door was withdrawn; a soft and echoless step fell upon the marble; and Nydia, led by one of the attendants, entered with her precious gift.

She stood still a moment, as if listening for some sound that might direct her.

“Will the noble Ione,” said she, in a soft and low voice, “deign to speak, that I may know whither to steer these benighted steps, and that I may lay my offerings at her feet?”

“Fair child,” said Ione, touched and soothingly, “give not thyself the pain to cross these slippery floors; my attendant will bring to me what thou hast to present;” and she motioned to the handmaid to take the vase.

“I may give these flowers to none but thee,” answered Nydia; and, guided by her ear, she walked slowly to the place where Ione sat, and kneeling when she came before her, proffered the vase.

Ione took it from her hand, and placed it on the table at her side. She then raised her gently, and would have seated her on the couch, but the girl modestly resisted.

"I have not yet discharged my office," said she; and she drew the letter of Glaucus from her vest. "This will, perhaps, explain why he who sent me chose so unworthy a messenger to Ione."

The Neapolitan took the letter with a hand, the trembling of which Nydia at once felt and sighed to feel. With folded arms and downcast looks, she stood before the proud and stately form of Ione; no less proud, perhaps, in her attitude of submission. Ione waved her hand, and the attendants withdrew; she gazed again upon the form of the young slave in surprise and beautiful compassion; then, retiring a little from her, she opened and read the following letter: —

"Glaucus to Ione sends more than he dares to utter. Is Ione ill? Thy slaves tell me 'No,' and that assurance comforts me. Has Glaucus offended Ione? Ah! that question I may not ask from them. For five days I have been banished from thy presence. Has the sun shone? I know it not. Has the sky smiled? It has had no smile for me. My sun and my sky are Ione. Do I offend thee? Am I too bold? Did I say that on the tablet which my tongue has hesitated to breathe? Alas! it is in thine absence that I feel most the spells by which thou hast subdued me. And absence, that deprives me of joy, brings me courage. Thou wilt not see me; thou hast banished also the common flatterers that flock around thee. Canst thou confound me with them? It is not possible! Thou knowest too well that I am not of them, — that their clay is not mine. For even were I of the humblest mould, the fragrance of the rose has penetrated me, and the spirit of thy nature hath passed within me, to embalm, to sanctify, to inspire. Have they slandered me to thee, Ione? Thou wilt not believe them. Did the Delphic oracle itself tell me thou wert unworthy, I would not believe it; and am I less incredulous than thou? I think of the last time we met, of the song which I sang to thee, of the look that thou gavest me in return. Disguise it as thou wilt, Ione, there is something kindred between us, and our eyes acknowledged it, though our lips were silent. Deign to see me, to listen to me, and after that exclude me if thou wilt. I meant not so soon to say I loved. But those words rush to my heart; they will have way. Accept, then, my homage and my vows. We

met first at the shrine of Pallas; shall we not meet before a softer and a more ancient altar?

“Beautiful, adored Ione! If my hot youth and my Athenian blood have misguided and allured me, they have but taught my wanderings to appreciate the rest, the haven they have attained. I hang up my dripping robes on the Sea-god’s shrine. I have escaped shipwreck. I have found THEE. Ione, deign to see me; thou art gentle to strangers, wilt thou be less merciful to those of thine own land? I await thy reply. Accept the flowers which I send; their sweet breath has a language more eloquent than words. They take from the sun the odors they return; they are the emblem of the love that receives and repays tenfold, — the emblem of the heart that drunk thy rays, and owes to thee the germ of the treasures that it proffers to thy smile. I send these by one whom thou wilt receive for her own sake, if not for mine. She, like us, is a stranger; her father’s ashes lie under brighter skies; but, less happy than we, she is blind and a slave. Poor Nydia! I seek as much as possible to repair to her the cruelties of Nature and of Fate, in asking permission to place her with thee. She is gentle, quick, and docile. She is skilled in music and the song; and she is a very Chloris¹ to the flowers. She thinks, Ione, that thou wilt love her: if thou dost not, send her back to me.

“One word more: let me be bold, Ione. Why thinkest thou so highly of yon dark Egyptian? he hath not about him the air of honest men. We Greeks learn mankind from our cradle: we are not the less profound, in that we affect no sombre mien: our lips smile, but our eyes are grave, — they observe, they note, they study. Arbaces is not one to be credulously trusted: can it be that he hath wronged me to thee? I think it, for I left him with thee; thou sawest how my presence stung him; since then thou hast not admitted me. Believe nothing that he can say to my disfavor; if thou dost, tell me so at once; for this Ione owes to Glaucus. Farewell! this letter touches thy hand; these characters meet thine eyes: shall they be more blessed than he who is their author? Once more farewell!”

It seemed to Ione, as she read this letter, as if a mist had fallen from her eyes. What had been the supposed offence of Glaucus? That he had not really loved! And now, plainly, and in no dubious terms, he confessed that love. From that moment his power was fully restored. At every tender word in that letter, so full of romantic and trustful passion, her

¹ The Greek Flora.

heart smote her. And had she doubted his faith, and had she believed another; and had she not, at least, allowed to him the culprit's right to know his crime, to plead in his defence? The tears rolled down her cheeks, she kissed the letter, she placed it in her bosom; and turning to Nydia, who stood in the same place and in the same posture, —

“Wilt thou sit, my child,” said she, “while I write an answer to this letter?”

“You will answer it, then!” said Nydia, coldly. “Well, the slave that accompanied me will take back your answer.”

“For you,” said Ione, “stay with me; trust me, your service shall be light.”

Nydia bowed her head.

“What is your name, fair girl?”

“They call me Nydia.”

“Your country?”

“The land of Olympus, — Thessaly.”

“Thou shalt be to me a friend,” said Ione, caressingly, “as thou art already half a countrywoman. Meanwhile, I beseech thee, stand not on these cold and glassy marbles. There! now that thou art seated, I can leave thee for an instant.”

“Ione to Glaucus greeting: Come to me, Glaucus [wrote Ione], — come to me to-morrow. I may have been unjust to thee, but I will tell thee, at least, the fault that has been imputed to thy charge. Fear not henceforth the Egyptian; fear none. Thou sayest thou hast expressed too much: alas! in these hasty words I have already done so. Farewell!”

As Ione reappeared with the letter, which she did not dare to read after she had written (ah, common rashness, common timidity of love!), Nydia started from her seat.

“You have written to Glaucus?”

“I have.”

“And will he thank the messenger who gives to him thy letter?”

Ione forgot her companion was blind; she blushed from the brow to the neck, and remained silent.

“I mean this,” added Nydia in a calmer tone; “the lightest

word of coldness from thee will sadden him, the lightest kindness will rejoice. If it be the first, let the slave take back thine answer; if it be the last, let me. I will return this evening."

"And why, Nydia," asked Ione, evasively, "wouldst thou be the bearer of my letter?"

"It is so, then!" said Nydia. "Ah! how could it be otherwise; who could be unkind to Glaucus?"

"My child," said Ione, a little more reservedly than before, "thou speakest warmly. Glaucus, then, is amiable in thine eyes?"

"Noble Ione, Glaucus has been that to me which neither fortune nor the gods have been, — a *friend!*"

The sadness, mingled with dignity, with which Nydia uttered these simple words affected the beautiful Ione; she bent down and kissed her. "Thou art grateful, and deservedly so; why should I blush to say that Glaucus is worthy of thy gratitude? Go, my Nydia; take to him thyself this letter, but return again. If I am from home when thou returnest, — as this evening, perhaps, I shall be, — thy chamber shall be prepared next my own. Nydia, I have no sister: wilt thou be one to me?"

The Thessalian kissed the hand of Ione, and then said, with some embarrassment, —

"One favor, fair Ione; may I dare to ask it?"

"Thou canst not ask what I will not grant," replied the Neapolitan.

"They tell me," said Nydia, "that thou art beautiful beyond the loveliness of earth. Alas! I cannot see that which gladdens the world. Wilt thou suffer me, then, to pass my hand over thy face? That is my sole criterion of beauty, and I usually guess aright."

She did not wait for the answer of Ione, but, as she spoke, gently and slowly passed her hand over the bending and half-averted features of the Greek, — features which but one image in the world can yet depicture and recall: that image is the mutilated but all-wondrous statue in her native city, her own Neapolis; that Parian face, before which all the beauty of the

Florentine Venus is poor and earthly; that aspect so full of harmony, of youth, of genius, of the soul, which modern critics have supposed the representation of Psyche.¹

Her touch lingered over the braided hair and polished brow, over the downy and damask cheek, over the dimpled lip, the swan-like and whitish neck. "I know now that thou art beautiful," she said, "and I can picture thee to my darkness henceforth and forever."

When Nydia left her, Ione sank into a deep but delicious reverie. Glaucus, then, loved her; he owned it, — yes, he loved her. She drew forth again that dear confession; she paused over every word, she kissed every line; she did not ask why he had been maligned, she only felt assured that he had been so. She wondered how she had ever believed a syllable against him; she wondered how the Egyptian had been enabled to exercise a power against Glaucus; she felt a chill creep over her as she again turned to his warning against Arbaces, and her secret fear of that gloomy being darkened into awe. She was awakened from these thoughts by her maidens, who came to announce to her that the hour appointed to visit Arbaces was arrived; she started: she had forgotten the promise. Her first impression was to renounce it; her second was to laugh at her own fears of her eldest surviving friend. She hastened to add the usual ornaments to her dress, and, doubtful whether she should yet question the Egyptian more closely with respect to his accusation of Glaucus, or whether she should wait till, without citing the authority, she should insinuate to Glaucus the accusation itself, she took her way to the gloomy mansion of Arbaces.

¹ The wonderful remains of the statue so called in the Museo Borbonico. The face, for sentiment and for feature, is the most beautiful of all which ancient sculpture has bequeathed to us.

CHAPTER VII.

IONE ENTRAPPED. — THE MOUSE TRIES TO GNAW THE NET.

“O DEAREST Nydia!” exclaimed Glaucus as he read the letter of Ione, “whitest-robed messenger that ever passed between earth and heaven, how, how shall I thank thee?”

“I am rewarded,” said the poor Thessalian.

“To-morrow, — to-morrow! How shall I while the hours till then?”

The enamoured Greek would not let Nydia escape him, though she sought several times to leave the chamber. He made her recite to him over and over again every syllable of the brief conversation that had taken place between her and Ione; a thousand times, forgetting her misfortune, he questioned her of the looks, of the countenance of his beloved; and then quickly again excusing his fault, he bade her recommence the whole recital which he had thus interrupted. The hours thus painful to Nydia passed rapidly and delightfully to him, and the twilight had already darkened ere he once more dismissed her to Ione with a fresh letter and with new flowers. Scarcely had she gone, than Clodius and several of his gay companions broke in upon him: they rallied him on his seclusion during the whole day, and his absence from his customary haunts; they invited him to accompany them to the various resorts in that lively city, which night and day proffered diversity to pleasure. Then, as now, in the south (for no land, perhaps, losing more of greatness has retained more of custom), it was the delight of the Italians to assemble in the evening; and, under the porticos of temples, or the shade of the groves that interspersed the streets, listening to music or the recitals of some inventive tale-teller, they hailed the rising moon with libations of wine and the melodies of song. Glaucus was too happy to be unsocial; he longed to cast off the exuberance of joy that oppressed him. He willingly accepted the proposal of his comrades, and laugh-

ingly they sallied out together down the populous and glittering streets.

In the mean time Nydia once more gained the house of Ione, who had long left it; she inquired indifferently whither Ione had gone.

The answer arrested and appalled her.

"To the house of Arbaces, — of the Egyptian? Impossible!"

"It is true, my little one," said the slave, who had replied to her question. "She has known the Egyptian long."

"Long! ye gods, yet Glaucus loves her!" murmured Nydia to herself. "And has," asked she aloud, — "has she often visited him before?"

"Never till now," answered the slave. "If all the rumored scandal of Pompeii be true, it would be better, perhaps, if she had not ventured there at present. But she, poor mistress mine, hears nothing of that which reaches us; the talk of the vestibulum reaches not to the peristyle."¹

"Never till now!" repeated Nydia. "Art thou sure?"

"Sure, pretty one; but what is that to thee or to us?"

Nydia hesitated a moment, and then, putting down the flowers with which she had been charged, she called to the slave who had accompanied her, and left the house without saying another word.

Not till she had got half-way back to the house of Glaucus did she break silence, and even then she only murmured inly: —

"She does not dream, she cannot, of the dangers into which she has plunged. Fool that I am, shall I save her? Yes, for I love Glaucus better than myself."

When she arrived at the house of the Athenian, she learnt that he had gone out with a party of his friends, and none knew whither. He probably would not be home before midnight.

The Thessalian groaned; she sank upon a seat in the hall, and covered her face with her hands as if to collect her thoughts. "There is no time to be lost," thought she, starting up. She turned to the slave who had accompanied her.

¹ Terence.

“Knowest thou,” said she, “if Ione has any relative, any intimate friend at Pompeii?”

“Why, by Jupiter!” answered the slave, “art thou silly enough to ask the question? Every one in Pompeii knows that Ione has a brother who, young and rich, has been — under the rose I speak — so foolish as to become a priest of Isis.”

“A priest of Isis! O Gods! his name?”

“Apæcides.”

“I know it all,” muttered Nydia: “brother and sister, then, are to be both victims! Apæcides! Yes, that was the name I heard in ——. Ha! he well, then, knows the peril that surrounds his sister; I will go to him.”

She sprang up at that thought, and taking the staff which always guided her steps, she hastened to the neighboring shrine of Isis. Till she had been under the guardianship of the kindly Greek, that staff had sufficed to conduct the poor blind girl from corner to corner of Pompeii. Every street, every turning in the more frequented parts, was familiar to her; and as the inhabitants entertained a tender and half-superstitious veneration for those subject to her infirmity, the passengers had always given way to her timid steps. Poor girl, she little dreamed that she should, ere very many days were passed, find her blindness her protection, and a guide far safer than the keenest eyes!

But since she had been under the roof of Glaucus, he had ordered a slave to accompany her always; and the poor devil thus appointed, who was somewhat of the fattest, and who, after having twice performed the journey to Ione’s house, now saw himself condemned to a third excursion (whither, the gods only knew), hastened after her, deploring his fate, and solemnly assuring Castor and Pollux that he believed the blind girl had the talaria of Mercury as well as the infirmity of Cupid.

Nydia, however, required but little of his assistance to find her way to the popular temple of Isis: the space before it was now deserted, and she won without obstacle to the sacred rails.

“There is no one here,” said the fat slave. “What dost

thou want, or whom? Knowest thou not that the priests do not live in the temple?"

"Call out," said she, impatiently; "night and day there is always one flamen, at least, watching in the shrines of Isis."

The slave called: no one appeared.

"Seest thou no one?"

"No one."

"Thou mistakest; I hear a sigh: look again."

The slave, wondering and grumbling, cast round his heavy eyes, and before one of the altars, whose remains still crowd the narrow space, he beheld a form bending as in meditation.

"I see a figure," said he, "and by the white garments it is a priest."

"O flamen of Isis!" cried Nydia, "servant of the Most Ancient, hear me!"

"Who calls?" said a low and melancholy voice.

"One who has no common tidings to impart to a member of your body: I come to declare and not to ask oracles."

"With whom wouldst thou confer? This is no hour for thy conference; depart, disturb me not: the night is sacred to the gods, the day to men."

"Methinks I know thy voice: thou art he whom I seek; yet I have heard thee speak but once before. Art thou not the priest Apæcides?"

"I am that man," replied the priest, emerging from the altar and approaching the rail.

"Thou art! the gods be praised!" Waving her hand to the slave, she bade him withdraw to a distance; and he, who naturally imagined some superstition connected, perhaps, with the safety of Ione, could alone lead her to the temple, obeyed, and seated himself on the ground at a little distance. "Hush!" said she, speaking quick and low; "art thou indeed Apæcides?"

"If thou knowest me, canst thou not recall my features?"

"I am blind," answered Nydia; "my eyes are in my ear, and *that* recognizes thee: yet swear that thou art he."

"By the gods I swear it, by my right hand, and by the moon!"

“Hush; speak low; bend near; give me thy hand: knowest thou Arbaces? Hast thou laid flowers at the feet of the dead? Ah! thy hand is cold; hark yet! Hast thou taken the awful vow?”

“Who art thou, whence comest thou, pale maiden?” said Apæcides, fearfully. “I know thee not. Thine is not the breast on which this head hath lain. I have never seen thee before.”

“But thou hast heard my voice: no matter, those recollections it should shame us both to recall. Listen; thou hast a sister.”

“Speak, speak! What of her?”

“Thou knowest the banquets of the dead, stranger. It pleases thee, perhaps, to share them. Would it please thee to have thy sister a partaker? Would it please thee that Arbaces was her host?”

“O Gods, he dare not! Girl, if thou mockest me, tremble. I will tear thee limb from limb!”

“I speak the truth; and while I speak, Ione is in the halls of Arbaces,—for the first time his guest. Thou knowest if there be peril in that first time! Farewell; I have fulfilled my charge.”

“Stay! stay!” cried the priest, passing his wan hand over his brow. “If this be true, what—what can be done to save her? They may not admit me. I know not all the mazes of that intricate mansion. O Nemesis! justly am I punished.”

“I will dismiss you slave: be thou my guide and comrade; I will lead thee to the private door of the house; I will whisper to thee the word which admits. Take some weapon: it may be needful.”

“Wait an instant,” said Apæcides, retiring into one of the cells that flank the temple, and reappearing in a few moments wrapped in a large cloak, which was then much worn by all classes, and which concealed his sacred dress. “Now,” he said, grinding his teeth, “if Arbaces hath dared to—but he dare not! he dare not! Why should I suspect him? Is he so base a villain? I will not think it; yet sophist, dark bewilderer that he is! O Gods, protect! Hush! *are* there gods?”

Yes, there is one goddess, at least, whose voice I can command; and that is — Vengeance!”

Muttering these disconnected thoughts, Apæcides, followed by his silent and sightless companion, hastened through the most solitary paths to the house of the Egyptian.

The slave, abruptly dismissed by Nydia, shrugged his shoulders, muttered an adjuration, and, nothing loth, rolled off to his cubiculum.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLITUDE AND SOLILOQUY OF THE EGYPTIAN. — HIS CHARACTER ANALYZED.

WE must go back a few hours in the progress of our story. At the first gray dawn of the day, which Glaucus had already marked with white, the Egyptian was seated, sleepless and alone, on the summit of the lofty and pyramidal tower which flanked his house. A tall parapet around it served as a wall, and conspired, with the height of the edifice and the gloomy trees that girded the mansion, to defy the prying eyes of curiosity or observation. A table, on which lay a scroll filled with mystic figures, was before him. On high, the stars waxed dim and faint, and the shades of night melted from the sterile mountain-tops; only above Vesuvius there rested a deep and massy cloud, which for several days past had gathered darker and more solid over its summit. The struggle of night and day was more visible over the broad ocean, which stretched calm, like a gigantic lake, bounded by the circling shores that, covered with vines and foliage, and gleaming here and there with the white walls of sleeping cities, sloped to the scarce rippling waves.

It was the hour above all others most sacred to the daring science of the Egyptian, — the science which would read our changeful destinies in the stars.

He had filled his scroll, he had noted the moment and the

sign; and, leaning upon his hand, he had surrendered himself to the thoughts which his calculation excited.

“*Again* do the stars forewarn me! Some danger, then, assuredly awaits me!” said he, slowly; “some danger, violent and sudden in its nature. The stars wear for me the same mocking menace which, if our chronicles do not err, they once wore for Pyrrhus, — for him, doomed to strive for all things, to enjoy none, — all attacking, nothing gaining, — battles without fruit, laurels without triumph, fame without success; at last made craven by his own superstitions, and slain like a dog by a tile from the hand of an old woman! Verily, the stars flatter when they give me a type in this fool of war, when they promise to the ardor of my wisdom the same results as to the madness of his ambition, — perpetual exercise, no certain goal; the Sisyphus task, the mountain and the stone, — the stone, a gloomy image, — it reminds me that I am threatened with somewhat of the same death as the Epirote. Let me look again. ‘Beware,’ say the shining prophets, ‘how thou passest under ancient roofs, or besieged walls, or overhanging cliffs; a stone, hurled from above, is charged by the curses of destiny against thee.’ And at no distant date from this comes the peril; but I cannot, of a certainty, read the day and hour. Well! if my glass runs low, the sands shall sparkle to the last. Yet, if I escape this peril, — ay, if I escape, — bright and clear as the moonlight track along the waters glows the rest of my existence. I see honors, happiness, success, shining upon every billow of the dark gulf beneath which I must sink at last. What, then! with such destinies *beyond* the peril, shall I succumb *to* the peril? My soul whispers hope, it sweeps exultingly beyond the boding hour, it revels in the future, its own courage is its fittest omen. If I were to perish so suddenly and so soon, the shadow of death would darken over me, and I should feel the icy presentiment of my doom. My soul would express, in sadness and in gloom, its forecast of the dreary Orcus. But it smiles; it assures me of deliverance.”

As he thus concluded his soliloquy, the Egyptian involuntarily rose. He paced rapidly the narrow space of that star-roofed floor, and, pausing at the parapet, looked again upon

the gray and melancholy heavens. The chills of the faint dawn came refreshingly upon his brow, and gradually his mind resumed its natural and collected calm. He withdrew his gaze from the stars, as, one after one, they receded into the depths of heaven; and his eyes fell over the broad expanse below. Dim in the silenced port of the city rose the masts of the galleys; along that mart of luxury and of labor was stilled the mighty hum. No lights, save here and there from before the columns of a temple, or in the porticos of the voiceless forum, broke the wan and fluctuating light of the struggling morn. From the heart of the torpid city, so soon to vibrate with a thousand passions, there came no sound; the streams of life circulated not: they lay locked under the ice of sleep. From the huge space of the amphitheatre, with its stony seats rising one above the other, — coiled and round as some slumbering monster, — rose a thin and ghastly mist, which gathered darker, and more dark, over the scattered foliage that gloomed in its vicinity. The city seemed as, after the awful change of seventeen ages, it seems now to the traveller, — a City of the Dead.¹

The ocean itself, that serene and tideless sea, lay scarce less hushed, save that from its deep bosom came, softened by the distance, a faint and regular murmur, like the breathing of its sleep; and curving far, as with outstretched arms, into the green and beautiful land, it seemed unconsciously to clasp to its breast the cities sloping to its margin, Stabiæ,² and Herculaneum, and Pompeii, — those children and darlings of the deep. “Ye slumber,” said the Egyptian, as he scowled over the cities, the boast and flower of Campania; “ye slumber! would it were the eternal repose of death! As ye now, jewels in the crown of empire, so once were the cities of the Nile. Their greatness hath perished from them, they sleep amidst ruins, their palaces and their shrines are tombs, the serpent

¹ When Sir Walter Scott visited Pompeii with Sir William Gell, almost his only remark was the exclamation, “The City of the Dead, — the City of the Dead!”

² Stabiæ was indeed no longer a city, but it was still a favorite site for the villas of the rich.

coils in the grass of their streets, the lizard basks in their solitary halls. By that mysterious law of nature, which humbles one to exalt the other, ye have thriven upon their ruins; thou, haughty Rome, hast usurped the glories of Sesostris and Semiramis; thou art a robber, clothing thyself with their spoils! And these, slaves in thy triumph, that I (the last son of forgotten monarchs) survey below, reservoirs of thine all-pervading power and luxury, I curse as I behold. The time shall come when Egypt shall be avenged; when the barbarian's steed shall make his manger in the Golden House of Nero; and thou that hast sown the wind with conquest shalt reap the harvest in the whirlwind of desolation!"

As the Egyptian uttered a prediction which fate so fearfully fulfilled, a more solemn and boding image of ill omen never occurred to the dreams of painter or of poet. The morning light which can pale so wanly even the young cheek of beauty, gave his majestic and stately features almost the colors of the grave, with the dark hair falling massively around them, and the dark robes flowing long and loose, and the arm outstretched from that lofty eminence, and the glittering eyes, fierce with a savage gladness, half prophet and half fiend!

He turned his gaze from the city and the ocean; before him lay the vineyards and the meadows of the rich Campania. The gate and walls — ancient, half Pelasgic — of the city, seemed not to bound its extent. Villas and villages stretched on every side up the ascent of Vesuvius, not nearly then so steep or so lofty as at present. For as Rome itself is built on an exhausted volcano, so in similar security the inhabitants of the South tenanted the green and vine-clad places around a volcano whose fires they believed at rest forever. From the gate stretched the long street of tombs, various in size and architecture, by which, on that side, the city is yet approached. Above all rose the cloud-capped summit of the Dread Mountain, with the shadows, now dark, now light, betraying the mossy caverns and ashy rocks, which testified the past conflagrations, and might have prophesied — but man is blind — that which was to come!

Difficult was it then and there to guess the causes why the

tradition of the place wore so gloomy and stern a hue ; why, in those smiling plains, for miles around — to Baiæ and Misenum — the poets had imagined the entrance and thresholds of their hell, — their Acheron, and their fabled Styx ; why, in those Phlegræ,¹ now laughing with the vine, they placed the battles of the gods, and supposed the daring Titans to have sought the victory of heaven, — save, indeed, that yet, in yon seared and blasted summit, fancy might think to read the characters of the Olympian thunderbolt.

But it was neither the rugged height of the still volcano, nor the fertility of the sloping fields, nor the melancholy avenue of tombs, nor the glittering villas of a polished and luxurious people, that now arrested the eye of the Egyptian. On one part of the landscape the mountain of Vesuvius descended to the plain in a narrow and uncultivated ridge, broken here and there by jagged crags and copses of wild foliage. At the base of this lay a marshy and unwholesome pool ; and the intent gaze of Arbaces caught the outline of some living form moving by the marshes, and stooping ever and anon as if to pluck its rank produce.

“Ho !” said he, aloud, “I have, then, another companion in these unworldly night-watches. The witch of Vesuvius is abroad. What ! doth she, too, as the credulous imagine, — doth she, too, learn the lore of the great stars ? Hath she been uttering foul magic to the moon, or culling (as her pauses betoken) foul herbs from the venomous marsh ? Well, I must see this fellow-laborer. Whoever strives to know, learns that no human lore is despicable. Despicable only you, ye fat and bloated things, slaves of luxury, sluggards in thought, who, cultivating nothing but the barren sense, dream that its poor soul can produce alike the myrtle and the laurel. No, the wise only can enjoy ; to us only *true* luxury is given, when mind, brain, invention, experience, thought, learning, imagination, all contribute like rivers to swell the seas of SENSE ! — Ione !”

As Arbaces uttered that last and charmed word, his thoughts sank at once into a more deep and profound channel. His

¹ Or, *Phlegræi Campi* ; viz., scorched or burned fields.

steps paused ; he took not his eyes from the ground ; once or twice he smiled joyously, and then, as he turned from his place of vigil, and sought his couch, he muttered, " If death frowns so near, I will say at least that I have lived, — I one shall be mine ! "

The character of Arbaces was one of those intricate and varied webs, in which even the mind that sat within it was sometimes confused and perplexed. In him, the son of a fallen dynasty, the outcast of a sunken people, was that spirit of discontented pride which ever rankles in one of a sterner mould, who feels himself inexorably shut from the sphere in which his fathers shone, and to which nature as well as birth no less entitles himself. This sentiment hath no benevolence ; it wars with society, it sees enemies in mankind. But with this sentiment did not go its common companion, poverty. Arbaces possessed wealth which equalled that of most of the Roman nobles ; and this enabled him to gratify to the utmost the passions which had no outlet in business or ambition. Travelling from clime to clime, and beholding still Rome everywhere, he increased both his hatred of society and his passion for pleasure. He was in a vast prison, which, however, he could fill with the ministers of luxury. He could not escape from the prison, and his only object, therefore, was to give it the character of the palace. The Egyptians, from the earliest time, were devoted to the joys of sense ; Arbaces inherited both their appetite for sensuality and the glow of imagination which struck light from its rottenness. But still, unsocial in his pleasures as in his graver pursuits, and brooking neither superior nor equal, he admitted few to his companionship save the willing slaves of his profligacy. He was the solitary lord of a crowded harem ; but, with all, he felt condemned to that satiety which is the constant curse of men whose intellect is above their pursuits, and that which once had been the impulse of passion froze down to the ordinance of custom. From the disappointments of sense he sought to raise himself by the cultivation of knowledge ; but as it was not his object to serve mankind, so he despised that knowledge which is practical and useful. His dark imagination

loved to exercise itself in those more visionary and obscure researches which are ever the most delightful to a wayward and solitary mind, and to which he himself was invited by the daring pride of his disposition and the mysterious traditions of his clime. Dismissing faith in the confused creeds of the heathen world, he reposed the greatest faith in the power of human wisdom. He did not know (perhaps no one in that age distinctly did) the limits which Nature imposes upon our discoveries. Seeing that the higher we mount in knowledge the more wonders we behold, he imagined that Nature not only worked miracles in her ordinary course, but that she might, by the cabala of some master soul, be diverted from that course itself. Thus he pursued science, across her appointed boundaries, into the land of perplexity and shadow. From the truths of astronomy he wandered into astrological fallacy; from the secrets of chemistry he passed into the spectral labyrinth of magic; and he who could be sceptical as to the power of the gods, was credulously superstitious as to the power of man.

The cultivation of magic, carried at that day to a singular height among the would-be wise, was especially Eastern in its origin; it was alien to the early philosophy of the Greeks, nor had it been received by them with favor until Ostanes, who accompanied the army of Xerxes, introduced, amongst the simple credulities of Hellas, the solemn superstitions of Zoroaster. Under the Roman emperors it had become, however, naturalized at Rome (a meet subject for Juvenal's fiery wit). Intimately connected with magic was the worship of Isis, and the Egyptian religion was the means by which was extended the devotion to Egyptian sorcery. The theurgic, or benevolent magic, the goetic, or dark and evil necromancy, were alike in pre-eminent repute during the first century of the Christian era; and the marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius.¹ Kings, courtiers, and sages, all trembled before the professors of the dread science. And not the least remarkable of his tribe was the formidable and profound Arbaces. His fame and his discoveries were known to all the

¹ See note (a) at the end.

cultivators of magic; they even survived himself. But it was not by his real name that he was honored by the sorcerer and the sage: his real name, indeed, was unknown in Italy, for "Arbaces" was not a genuinely Egyptian but a Median appellation, which, in the admixture and unsettlement of the ancient races, had become common in the country of the Nile; and there were various reasons, not only of pride, but of policy (for in youth he had conspired against the majesty of Rome), which induced him to conceal his true name and rank. But neither by the name he had borrowed from the Mede, nor by that which in the colleges of Egypt would have attested his origin from kings, did the cultivators of magic acknowledge the potent master. He received from their homage a more mystic appellation, and was long remembered in Magna Græcia and the Eastern plains by the name of "Hermes, the Lord of the Flaming Belt." His subtle speculations and boasted attributes of wisdom, recorded in various volumes, were among those tokens "of the curious arts" which the Christian converts most joyfully, yet most fearfully, burned at Ephesus, depriving posterity of the proofs of the cunning of the fiend.

The conscience of Arbaces was solely of the intellect; it was awed by no moral laws. If man imposed these checks upon the herd, so he believed that man, by superior wisdom, could raise himself above them. "If [he reasoned] I have the genius to impose laws, have I not the right to command my own creations? Still more, have I not the right to control, to evade, to scorn, the fabrications of yet meaner intellects than my own?" Thus, if he were a villain, he justified his villainy by what ought to have made him virtuous; namely, the elevation of his capacities.

Most men have more or less the passion for power; in Arbaces that passion corresponded exactly to his character. It was not the passion for an external and brute authority. He desired not the purple and the fasces, the insignia of vulgar command. His youthful ambition once foiled and defeated, scorn had supplied its place. His pride, his contempt for Rome, — Rome, which had become the synonym of the

world (Rome, whose haughty name he regarded with the same disdain as that which Rome herself lavished upon the barbarian), did not permit him to aspire to sway over others, for that would render him at once the tool or creature of the emperor. He, the Son of the Great Race of Rameses, — *he* execute the orders of, and receive his power from another! — the mere notion filled him with rage. But in rejecting an ambition that coveted nominal distinctions, he but indulged the more in the ambition to rule the heart. Honoring mental power as the greatest of earthly gifts, he loved to feel that power palpably in himself, by extending it over all whom he encountered. Thus had he ever sought the young, — thus had he ever fascinated and controlled them. He loved to find subjects in men's souls, — to rule over an invisible and immaterial empire! Had he been less sensual and less wealthy, he might have sought to become the founder of a new religion. As it was, his energies were checked by his pleasures. Besides, however, the vague love of this moral sway, (vanity so dear to sages!) he was influenced by a singular and dreamlike devotion to all that belonged to the mystic Land his ancestors had swayed. Although he disbelieved in her deities, he believed in the allegories they represented (or rather he interpreted those allegories anew). He loved to keep alive the *worship* of Egypt, because he thus maintained the shadow and the recollection of her *power*. He loaded, therefore, the altars of Osiris and of Isis with regal donations, and was ever anxious to dignify their priesthood by new and wealthy converts. The vow taken, the priesthood embraced, he usually chose the comrades of his pleasures from those whom he had made his victims, — partly because he thus secured to himself their secrecy, partly because he thus yet more confirmed to himself his peculiar power. Hence the motives of his conduct to Apæcides, strengthened as these were, in that instance, by his passion for Ione.

He had seldom lived long in one place; but as he grew older, he grew more wearied of the excitement of new scenes, and he had sojourned among the delightful cities of Campania for a period which surprised even himself. In fact, his pride

somewhat crippled his choice of residence. His unsuccessful conspiracy excluded him from those burning climes which he deemed of right his own hereditary possession, and which now cowered, supine and sunken, under the wings of the Roman eagle. Rome herself was hateful to his indignant soul; nor did he love to find his riches rivalled by the minions of the court, and cast into comparative poverty by the mighty magnificence of the court itself. The Campanian cities proffered to him all that his nature craved, — the luxuries of an unequalled climate, the imaginative refinements of a voluptuous civilization. He was removed from the sight of a superior wealth; he was without rivals to his riches; he was free from the spies of a jealous court. As long as he was rich, none pried into his conduct. He pursued the dark tenor of his way undisturbed and secure.

It is the curse of sensualists never to love till the pleasures of sense begin to pall; their ardent youth is frittered away in countless desires: their hearts are exhausted. So, ever chasing love, and taught by a restless imagination to exaggerate, perhaps, its charms, the Egyptian had spent all the glory of his years without attaining the object of his desires. The beauty of to-morrow succeeded the beauty of to-day, and the shadows bewildered him in his pursuit of the substance. When, two years before the present date, he beheld Ione, he saw for the first time one whom he imagined he could *love*. He stood then upon that bridge of life from which man sees before him distinctly a wasted youth on the one side and the darkness of approaching age upon the other, — a time in which we are more than ever anxious, perhaps, to secure to ourselves, ere it be yet too late, whatever we have been taught to consider necessary to the enjoyment of a life of which the brighter half is gone.

With an earnestness and a patience which he had never before commanded for his pleasures, Arbaces had devoted himself to win the heart of Ione. It did not content him to love, he desired to be loved. In this hope he had watched the expanding youth of the beautiful Neapolitan; and knowing the influence that the mind possesses over those who are

taught to cultivate the mind, he had contributed willingly to form the genius and enlighten the intellect of Ione, in the hope that she would be thus able to appreciate what he felt would be his best claim to her affection; namely, a character which, however criminal and perverted, was rich in its original elements of strength and grandeur. When he felt that character to be acknowledged, he willingly allowed, nay, encouraged her, to mix among the idle votaries of pleasure, in the belief that her soul, fitted for higher commune, would miss the companionship of his own, and that in comparison with others she would learn to love herself. He had forgot that as the sunflower to the sun, so youth turns to youth, until his jealousy of Glaucus suddenly apprised him of his error. From that moment, though, as we have seen, he knew not the extent of his danger, a fiercer and more tumultuous direction was given to a passion long controlled. Nothing kindles the fire of love like a sprinkling of the anxieties of jealousy; it takes then a wilder, a more resistless flame; it forgets its softness; it ceases to be tender; it assumes something of the intensity, of the ferocity, of hate.

Arbaces resolved to lose no further time upon cautious and perilous preparations; he resolved to place an irrevocable barrier between himself and his rivals; he resolved to possess himself of the person of Ione; not that in his present love, so long nursed and fed by hopes purer than those of passion alone, he would have been contented with that mere possession. He desired the heart, the soul, no less than the beauty of Ione; but he imagined that once separated by a daring crime from the rest of mankind, once bound to Ione by a tie that memory could not break, she would be driven to concentrate her thoughts in him, that his arts would complete his conquest, and that, according to the true moral of the Roman and the Sabine, the empire obtained by force would be cemented by gentler means. This resolution was yet more confirmed in him by his belief in the prophecies of the stars; they had long foretold to him this year, and even the present month, as the epoch of some dread disaster menacing life itself. He was driven to a certain and limited date. He

resolved to crowd, monarch-like, on his funeral pyre all that his soul held most dear. In his own words, if he were to die, he resolved to feel that he had lived, and that Ione should be his own.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT BECOMES OF IONE IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES. — THE FIRST SIGNAL OF THE WRATH OF THE DREAD FOE.

WHEN Ione entered the spacious hall of the Egyptian, the same awe which had crept over her brother impressed itself also upon her; there seemed to her as to him something ominous and warning in the still and mournful faces of those dread Theban monsters, whose majestic and passionless features the marble so well portrayed: —

“Their look with the reach of past ages was wise,
And the soul of eternity thought in their eyes.”

The tall Ethiopian slave grinned as he admitted her, and motioned to her to proceed. Half-way up the hall she was met by Arbaces himself, in festive robes, which glittered with jewels. Although it was broad day without, the mansion, according to the practice of the luxurious, was artificially darkened, and the lamps cast their still and odor-giving light over the rich floors and ivory roofs.

“Beautiful Ione!” said Arbaces, as he bent to touch her hand, “it is you that have eclipsed the day; it is your eyes that light up the halls; it is your breath which fills them with perfumes.”

“You must not talk to me thus,” said Ione, smiling; “you forget that your lore has sufficiently instructed my mind to render these graceful flatteries to my person unwelcome. It was you who taught me to disdain adulation: will you unteach your pupil?”

There was something so frank and charming in the manner of Ione, as she thus spoke, that the Egyptian was more than ever

enamoured, and more than ever disposed to renew the offence he had committed; he, however, answered quickly and gayly, and hastened to renew the conversation.

He led her through the various chambers of a house which seemed to contain to her eyes, inexperienced to other splendor than the minute elegance of Campanian cities, the treasures of the world.

In the walls were set pictures of inestimable art; the lights shone over statues of the noblest age of Greece. Cabinets of gems, each cabinet itself a gem, filled up the interstices of the columns; the most precious woods lined the thresholds and composed the doors; gold and jewels seemed lavished all around. Sometimes they were alone in these rooms; sometimes they passed through silent rows of slaves, who, kneeling as she passed, proffered to her offerings of bracelets, of chains, of gems, which the Egyptian vainly entreated her to receive.

"I have often heard," said she, wonderingly, "that you were rich; but I never dreamed of the amount of your wealth."

"Would I could coin it all," replied the Egyptian, "into one crown, which I might place upon that snowy brow!"

"Alas! the weight would crush me; I should be a second Tarpeia," answered Ione, laughingly.

"But thou dost not disdain riches, O Ione! they know not what life is capable of who are not wealthy. Gold is the great magician of earth: it realizes our dreams, it gives them the power of a god; there is a grandeur, a sublimity, in its possession; it is the mightiest, yet the most obedient of our slaves."

The artful Arbaces sought to dazzle the young Neapolitan by his treasures and his eloquence; he sought to awaken in her the desire to be mistress of what she surveyed; he hoped that she would confound the owner with the possessions, and that the charms of his wealth would be reflected on himself. Meanwhile Ione was secretly somewhat uneasy at the gallantries which escaped from those lips, which, till lately, had seemed to disdain the common homage we pay to beauty; and with that delicate subtlety which woman alone possesses, she

sought to ward off shafts deliberately aimed, and to laugh or to talk away the meaning from his warming language. Nothing in the world is more pretty than that same species of defence; it is the charm of the African necromancer who professed with a feather to turn aside the winds.

The Egyptian was intoxicated and subdued by her grace even more than by her beauty. It was with difficulty that he suppressed his emotions; alas! the feather was only powerful against the summer breezes it would be the sport of the storm.

Suddenly, as they stood in one hall, which was surrounded by draperies of silver and white, the Egyptian clapped his hands, and, as if by enchantment, a banquet rose from the floor; a couch, or throne, with a crimson canopy, ascended simultaneously at the feet of Ione, and at the same instant from behind the curtains swelled invisible and softest music.

Arbaces placed himself at the feet of Ione; and children, young and beautiful as Loves, ministered to the feast.

The feast was over, the music sank into a low and subdued strain, and Arbaces thus addressed his beautiful guest:—

“Hast thou never, in this dark and uncertain world—hast thou never aspired, my pupil, to look beyond; hast thou never wished to put aside the veil of futurity, and to behold on the shores of Fate the shadowy images of things to be? For it is not the past alone that has its ghosts: each event *to come* has also its spectrum, its shade; when the hour arrives, life enters it, the shadow becomes corporeal and walks the world. Thus, in the land beyond the grave are ever two impalpable and spiritual hosts,—the things to be, the things that have been! If by our wisdom we can penetrate that land, we see the one as the other, and learn, as *I* have learned, not alone the mysteries of the dead, but also the destiny of the living.”

“As thou hast learned! Can wisdom attain so far?”

“Wilt thou prove my knowledge, Ione, and behold the representation of thine own fate? It is a drama more striking than those of Æschylus: it is one I have prepared for thee, if thou wilt see the shadows perform their part.”

The Neapolitan trembled; she thought of Glaucus, and

sighed as well as trembled; were their destinies to be united? Half incredulous, half believing, half awed, half alarmed by the words of her strange host, she remained for some moments silent, and then answered, —

“It may revolt, it may terrify; the knowledge of the future will perhaps only embitter the present!”

“Not so, Ione. I have myself looked upon thy future lot, and the ghosts of thy Future bask in the garden of Elysium: amidst the asphodel and the rose they prepare the garlands of thy sweet destiny, and the Fates, so harsh to others, weave only for thee the web of happiness and love. Wilt thou then come and behold thy doom, so that thou mayest enjoy it beforehand?”

Again the heart of Ione murmured “*Glaucus* ;” she uttered a half-audible assent; the Egyptian rose, and taking her by the hand, he led her across the banquet-room; the curtains withdrew, as by magic hands, and the music broke forth in a louder and gladder strain; they passed a row of columns, on either side of which fountains cast aloft their fragrant waters; they descended by broad and easy steps into a garden. The eve had commenced; the moon was already high in heaven, and those sweet flowers that sleep by day, and fill with ineffable odors the airs of night, were thickly scattered amidst alleys cut through the starlit foliage; or, gathered in baskets, lay like offerings at the feet of the frequent statues that gleamed along their path.

“Whither wouldst thou lead me, Arbaces?” said Ione, wonderingly.

“But yonder,” said he, pointing to a small building which stood at the end of the vista. “It is a temple consecrated to the Fates; our rites require such holy ground.”

They passed into a narrow hall, at the end of which hung a sable curtain. Arbaces lifted it; Ione entered, and found herself in total darkness.

“Be not alarmed,” said the Egyptian, “the light will rise instantly.” While he so spoke, a soft and warm and gradual light diffused itself around; as it spread over each object, Ione perceived that she was in an apartment of moderate

size, hung everywhere with black; a couch with draperies of the same hue was beside her. In the centre of the room was a small altar, on which stood a tripod of bronze. At one side, upon a lofty column of granite, was a colossal head of the blackest marble, which, she perceived, by the crown of wheat-ears that encircled the brow, represented the great Egyptian goddess. Arbaces stood before the altar: he had laid his garland on the shrine, and seemed occupied with pouring into the tripod the contents of a brazen vase. Suddenly from that tripod leaped into life a blue, quick, darting, irregular flame; the Egyptian drew back to the side of Ione, and muttered some words in a language unfamiliar to her ear; the curtain at the back of the altar waved tremulously to and fro: it parted slowly, and in the aperture which was thus made, Ione beheld an indistinct and pale landscape, which gradually grew brighter and clearer as she gazed; at length she discovered plainly trees and rivers and meadows, and all the beautiful diversity of the richest earth. At length, before the landscape a dim shadow glided; it rested opposite to Ione; slowly the same charm seemed to operate upon it as over the rest of the scene; it took form and shape, and lo, in its feature and in its form Ione beheld herself!

Then the scene behind the spectre faded away, and was succeeded by the representation of a gorgeous palace; a throne was raised in the centre of its hall, the dim forms of slaves and guards were ranged around it, and a pale hand held over the throne the likeness of a diadem.

A new actor now appeared; he was clothed from head to foot in a dark robe, his face was concealed, he knelt at the feet of the shadowy Ione, he clasped her hand, he pointed to the throne, as if to invite her to ascend it.

The Neapolitan's heart beat violently. "Shall the shadow disclose itself?" whispered a voice beside her, the voice of Arbaces.

"Ah, yes!" answered Ione, softly.

Arbaces raised his hand; the spectre seemed to drop the mantle that concealed its form, and Ione shrieked: it was Arbaces himself that thus knelt before her.

"This is, indeed, thy fate!" whispered again the Egyptian's voice in her ear; "and thou art destined to be the bride of Arbaces."

Ione started; the black curtain closed over the phantasmagoria, and Arbaces himself — the real, the living Arbaces — was at her feet.

"Oh, Ione!" said he, passionately gazing upon her, "listen to one who has long struggled vainly with his love. I adore thee! The Fates do not lie; thou art destined to be mine. I have sought the world around, and found none like thee. From my youth upward I have sighed for such as thou art. I have dreamed till I saw thee: I wake, and I behold thee. Turn not away from me, Ione; think not of me as thou hast thought; I am not that being, cold, insensate, and morose, which I have seemed to thee. Never woman had lover so devoted, so passionate as I will be to Ione. Do not struggle in my clasp: see, I release thy hand. Take it from me if thou wilt; well, be it so! But do not reject me, Ione; do not rashly reject: judge of thy power over him whom thou canst thus transform. I, who never knelt to mortal being, kneel to thee. I, who have commanded fate, receive from thee my own. Ione, tremble not; thou art my queen, my goddess: be my bride! All the wishes thou canst form shall be fulfilled. The ends of the earth shall minister to thee: pomp, power, luxury shall be thy slaves. Arbaces shall have no ambition save the pride of obeying thee. Ione, turn upon me those eyes; shed upon me thy smile. Dark is my soul when thy face is hid from it: shine over me, my sun, my heaven, my daylight! Ione, Ione, do not reject my love!"

Alone, and in the power of this singular and fearful man, Ione was yet not terrified; the respect of his language, the softness of his voice, reassured her, and in her own purity she felt protection. But she was confused, astonished; it was some moments before she could recover the power of reply.

"Rise, Arbaces!" said she at length; and she resigned to him once more her hand, which she as quickly withdrew again when she felt upon it the burning pressure of his lips. "Rise! and if thou art serious, if thy language be in earnest —"

"If!" said he, tenderly.

"Well, then, listen to me; you have been my guardian, my friend, my monitor; for this new character I was not prepared. Think not," she added quickly, as she saw his dark eyes glitter with the fierceness of his passion, — "think not that I scorn, that I am not touched, that I am not honored by this homage; but say, canst thou hear me calmly?"

"Ay, though thy words were lightning, and could blast me!"

"*I love another!*" said Ione, blushing, but in a firm voice.

"By the gods! by hell!" shouted Arbaces, rising to his fullest height; "dare not tell me that, dare not mock me: it is impossible! Whom hast thou seen, whom known? Oh, Ione! it is thy woman's invention, thy woman's art that speaks; thou wouldst gain time. I have surprised, I have terrified thee. Do with me as thou wilt; say that thou lovest not me, but say not that thou lovest another!"

"Alas!" began Ione; and then, appalled before his sudden and unlooked-for violence, she burst into tears.

Arbaces came nearer to her; his breath glowed fiercely on her cheek; he wound his arms round her: she sprang from his embrace. In the struggle a tablet fell from her bosom on the ground; Arbaces perceived, and seized it; it was the letter that morning received from Glaucus. Ione sank upon the couch, half dead with terror.

Rapidly the eyes of Arbaces ran over the writing; the Neapolitan did not dare to gaze upon him. She did not see the deadly paleness that came over his countenance; she marked not his withering frown, nor the quivering of his lip, nor the convulsions that heaved his breast. He read it to the end; and then, as the letter fell from his hand, he said in a voice of deceitful calmness, —

"Is the writer of this the man thou lovest?"

Ione sobbed, but answered not.

"Speak!" he rather shrieked than said.

"It is — it is!"

"And his name — it is written here — his name is Glaucus!"

Ione, clasping her hands, looked round as for succor or escape.

"Then hear me," said Arbaces, sinking his voice into a whisper; "thou shalt go to thy tomb rather than to his arms! What! thinkest thou Arbaces will brook a rival such as this puny Greek? What! thinkest thou that he has watched the fruit ripen to yield it to another? Pretty fool—no! Thou art mine—all—only mine: and thus, thus I seize and claim thee!" As he spoke, he caught Ione in his arms; and in that ferocious grasp was all the energy—less of love than of revenge.

But to Ione despair gave supernatural strength; she again tore herself from him; she rushed to that part of the room by which she had entered; she half withdrew the curtain; he seized her; again she broke away from him and fell, exhausted, and with a loud shriek, at the base of the column which supported the head of the Egyptian goddess. Arbaces paused for a moment, as if to regain his breath, and then once more darted upon his prey.

At that instant the curtain was rudely torn aside; the Egyptian felt a fierce and strong grasp upon his shoulder. He turned; he beheld before him the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale, worn, but menacing countenance of Apæcides. "Ah," he muttered, as he glared from one to the other, "what Fury hath sent ye hither?"

"Atè," answered Glaucus; and he closed at once with the Egyptian. Meanwhile Apæcides raised his sister, now lifeless, from the ground; his strength, exhausted by a mind long overwrought, did not suffice to bear her away, light and delicate though her shape: he placed her, therefore, on the couch, and stood over her with a brandishing knife, watching the contest between Glaucus and the Egyptian, and ready to plunge his weapon in the bosom of Arbaces should he be victorious in the struggle. There is, perhaps, nothing on earth so terrible as the naked and unarmed contest of animal strength, no weapon but those which Nature supplies to rage. Both the antagonists were now locked in each other's grasp, the hand of each seeking the throat of the other, the face drawn back, the fierce eyes

flashing, the muscles strained, the veins swelled, the lips apart, the teeth set; both were strong beyond the ordinary power of men, both animated by relentless wrath; they coiled, they wound around each other; they rocked to and fro, they swayed from end to end of their confined arena, they uttered cries of ire and revenge; they were now before the altar, now at the base of the column where the struggle had commenced: they drew back for breath,—Arbaces leaning against the column, Glaucus a few paces apart.

“O ancient goddess!” exclaimed Arbaces, clasping the column, and raising his eyes toward the sacred image it supported, “protect thy chosen; proclaim thy vengeance against this thing of an upstart creed, who with sacrilegious violence profanes thy resting-place and assails thy servant.”

As he spoke, the still and vast features of the goddess seemed suddenly to glow with life; through the black marble, as through a transparent veil, flushed luminously a crimson and burning hue; around the head played and darted coruscations of vivid lightning; the eyes became like balls of lurid fire, and seemed fixed in withering and intolerable wrath upon the countenance of the Greek. Awed and appalled by this sudden and mystic answer to the prayer of his foe, and not free from the hereditary superstitions of his race, the cheeks of Glaucus paled before that strange and ghastly animation of the marble. His knees knocked together; he stood seized with a divine panic, dismayed, aghast, half unmanned before his foe. Arbaces gave him not breathing-time to recover his stupor. “Die, wretch!” he shouted, in a voice of thunder, as he sprang upon the Greek; “the Mighty Mother claims thee as a living sacrifice!” Taken thus by surprise in the first consternation of his superstitious fears, the Greek lost his footing. The marble floor was as smooth as glass; he slid, he fell. Arbaces planted his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides, taught by his sacred profession as well as by his knowledge of Arbaces, to distrust all miraculous interpositions, had not shared the dismay of his companion. He rushed forward; his knife gleamed in the air; the watchful Egyptian caught his arm as it descended: one wrench of his powerful

hand tore the weapon from the weak grasp of the priest, one sweeping blow stretched him to the earth; with a loud and exultant yell Arbaces brandished the knife on high. Glaucus gazed upon his impending fate with unwinking eyes, and in the stern and scornful resignation of a fallen gladiator: when, at that awful instant, the floor shook under them with a rapid and convulsive throe, a mightier spirit than that of the Egyptian was abroad, — a giant and crushing power, before which sunk into sudden impotence his passion and his arts. It woke, it stirred, — that Dread Demon of the Earthquake, laughing to scorn alike the magic of human guile and the malice of human wrath. As a Titan, on whom the mountains are piled, it roused itself from the sleep of years; it moved on its tortured couch: the caverns below groaned and trembled beneath the motion of its limbs. In the moment of his vengeance and his power the self-prized demigod was humbled to his real clay. Far and wide along the soil went a hoarse and rumbling sound: the curtains of the chamber shook as at the blast of a storm, the altar rocked, the tripod reeled, and, high over the place of contest, the column trembled and waved from side to side, the sable head of the goddess tottered and fell from its pedestal; and as the Egyptian stooped above his intended victim, right upon his bended form, right between the shoulder and the neck, struck the marble mass! The shock stretched him like the blow of death at once, suddenly, without sound or motion, or semblance of life, upon the floor, apparently crushed by the very divinity he had impiously animated and invoked!

“The Earth has preserved her children,” said Glaucus, staggering to his feet. “Blessed be the dread convulsion! Let us worship the providence of the gods!” He assisted Apæcides to rise, and then turned upward the face of Arbaces: it seemed locked as in death; blood gushed from the Egyptian’s lips over his glittering robes; he fell heavily from the arms of Glaucus, and the red stream trickled slowly along the marble. Again the earth shook beneath their feet; they were forced to cling to each other; the convulsion ceased as suddenly as it came; they tarried no longer; Glaucus bore Ione lightly in his arms, and they fled from the unhallowed spot. But scarce had they

entered the garden than they were met on all sides by flying and disordered groups of women and slaves, whose festive and glittering garments contrasted in mockery the solemn terror of the hour. They did not appear to heed the strangers; they were occupied only with their own fears. After the tranquillity of sixteen years, that burning and treacherous soil again menaced destruction; they uttered but one cry, "THE EARTHQUAKE! THE EARTHQUAKE!" and passing unmolested from the midst of them, Apæcides and his companions, without entering the house, hastened down one of the alleys, passed a small open gate, and there, sitting on a little mound over which spread the gloom of the dark-green aloes, the moonlight fell on the bended figure of the blind girl; she was weeping bitterly.

BOOK III.

'Αλλὰ, Σελάνα,

Φαῖνε καλὸν τὴν γὰρ ποταεῖσομαι ἄσυχα, δαίμον,
Τῆ χθόνια, θ' Ἐκάτα, τὰν καὶ σκύλακες τρομέοντι,
Ἐρχομέναν νεκῶν ἀνὰ τ' ἠρία, καὶ μέλαν αἷμα.
Χαῖρ', Ἐκάτα δασπλῆτι, καὶ ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν ὀπάδει,
Φάρμακα ταῦθ' ἔρδοισα χερεῖονα μήτε τι Κίρκας,
Μήτε τι Μηδεΐας, μήτε ξανθῶς Περιμήδας.

THEOCRITUS.

Now sacred moon, the mysteries of my song
To thee and hell-born Hecatè belong, —
Pale Hecatè, who stalks o'er many a tomb,
And adds fresh horror to sepulchral gloom ;
Whilst reeking gore distains the paths of death,
And bloodhounds fly the blasting of her breath.
Hail, Hecatè ! and give my rising spell
Ev'n Perimeda's sorceries to excel :
Bid the strong witchery match ev'n Circe's skill,
And with Medea's venom'd fury fill.

POLWHELE'S *Translation.*

CHAPTER I.

THE FORUM OF THE POMPEIANS.—THE FIRST RUDE MACHINERY
BY WHICH THE NEW ERA OF THE WORLD WAS WROUGHT.

IT was early noon, and the forum was crowded alike with the busy and the idle. As at Paris at this day, so at that time in the cities of Italy, men lived almost wholly out of doors : the public buildings, the forum, the porticos, the baths, the temples themselves might be considered their real homes ; it was no wonder that they decorated so gorgeously these favorite places of resort ; they felt for them a sort of domestic affection as well as a public pride. And animated was, indeed, the aspect of the forum of Pompeii at that time ! Along its broad pavement, composed of large flags of marble, were assembled

various groups, conversing in that energetic fashion which appropriates a gesture to every word, and which is still the characteristic of the people of the south. Here, in seven stalls on one side the colonnade, sat the money-changers, with their glittering heaps before them, and merchants and seamen in various costumes crowding round their stalls. On one side, several men in long togas¹ were seen bustling up to a stately edifice, where the magistrates administered justice; these were the lawyers, active, chattering, joking, and punning, as you may find them at this day in Westminster. In the centre of the space pedestals supported various statues, of which the most remarkable was the stately form of Cicero. Around the court ran a regular and symmetrical colonnade of Doric architecture; and there several, whose business drew them early to the place, were taking the slight morning repast which made an Italian breakfast, talking vehemently on the earthquake of the preceding night as they dipped pieces of bread in their cups of diluted wine. In the open space, too, you might perceive various petty traders exercising the arts of their calling. Here one man was holding out ribbons to a fair dame from the country; another man was vaunting to a stout farmer the excellence of his shoes; a third, a kind of stall-restaurateur, still so common in the Italian cities, was supplying many a hungry mouth with hot messes from his small and itinerant stove, while — contrast strongly typical of the mingled bustle and intellect of the time — close by, a schoolmaster was expounding to his puzzled pupils the elements of the Latin grammar.² A gallery above the portico, which was ascended by small wooden staircases, had also its throng; though, as here the immediate business of the place was mainly carried on, its groups wore a more quiet and serious air.

¹ For the lawyers and the clients, when attending on their patrons, retained the toga after it had fallen into disuse among the rest of the citizens.

² In the Museum at Naples is a picture little known, but representing one side of the forum at Pompeii as then existing, to which I am much indebted in the present description. It may afford a learned consolation to my younger readers to know that the ceremony of *hoisting* (more honored in the breach than the observance) is of high antiquity, and seems to have been performed with all legitimate and public vigor in the forum of Pompeii.

Every now and then the crowd below respectfully gave way as some senator swept along to the Temple of Jupiter (which filled up one side of the forum, and was the senator's hall of meeting), nodding with ostentatious condescension to such of his friends or clients as he distinguished amongst the throng. Mingling amidst the gay dresses of the better orders you saw the hardy forms of the neighboring farmers, as they made their way to the public granaries. Hard by the temple you caught a view of the triumphal arch, and the long street beyond swarming with inhabitants; in one of the niches of the arch a fountain played, cheerily sparkling in the sunbeams; and above its cornice rose the bronzed and equestrian statue of Caligula, strongly contrasting the gay summer skies. Behind the stalls of the money-changers was that building now called the Pantheon; and a crowd of the poorer Pompeians passed through the small vestibule which admitted to the interior, with panniers under their arms, pressing on towards a platform, placed between two columns, where such provisions as the priests had rescued from sacrifice were exposed for sale.

At one of the public edifices appropriated to the business of the city, workmen were employed upon the columns, and you heard the noise of their labor every now and then rising above the hum of the multitude: *the columns are unfinished to this day!*

All, then, united, nothing could exceed in variety the costumes, the ranks, the manners, the occupations of the crowd; nothing could exceed the bustle, the gayety, the animation, the flow and flush of life all around. You saw there all the myriad signs of a heated and feverish civilization, where pleasure and commerce, idleness and labor, avarice and ambition, mingled in one gulf their motley, rushing, yet harmonious streams.

Facing the steps of the Temple of Jupiter, with folded arms, and a knit and contemptuous brow, stood a man of about fifty years of age. His dress was remarkably plain, — not so much from its material, as from the absence of all those ornaments which were worn by the Pompeians of every rank, partly from

the love of show, partly, also, because they were chiefly wrought into those shapes deemed most efficacious in resisting the assaults of magic and the influence of the evil eye.¹ His forehead was high and bald; the few locks that remained at the back of the head were concealed by a sort of cowl, which made a part of his cloak, to be raised or lowered at pleasure, and was now drawn half-way over the head, as a protection from the rays of the sun. The color of his garments was brown, no popular hue with the Pompeians; all the usual admixtures of scarlet or purple seemed carefully excluded. His belt, or girdle, contained a small receptacle for ink, which hooked on to the girdle, a stilus (or implement of writing), and tablets of no ordinary size. What was rather remarkable, the cincture held no purse, which was the almost indispensable appurtenance of the girdle, even when that purse had the misfortune to be empty!

It was not often that the gay and egotistical Pompeians busied themselves with observing the countenances and actions of their neighbors; but there was that in the lip and eye of this bystander so remarkably bitter and disdainful, as he surveyed the religious procession sweeping up the stairs of the temple, that it could not fail to arrest the notice of many.

"Who is yon cynic?" asked a merchant of his companion, a jeweller.

"It is Olinthus," replied the jeweller; "a reputed Nazarene."

The merchant shuddered. "A dread sect!" said he, in a whispered and fearful voice. "It is said that when they meet at nights they always commence their ceremonies by the murder of a new-born babe: they profess a community of goods, too, the wretches! A community of goods! What would become of merchants, or jewellers either, if such notions were in fashion?"

"That is very true," said the jeweller; "besides, they wear no jewels; they mutter imprecations when they see a serpent; and at Pompeii all our ornaments are serpentine."

"Do but observe," said a third, who was a fabricant of bronze, "how yon Nazarene scowls at the piety of the sacri-

¹ See note (a) at the end.

ficial procession. He is murmuring curses on the temple, be sure. Do you know, Celcinus, that this fellow, passing by my shop the other day, and seeing me employed on a statue of Minerva, told me with a frown that, had it been marble, he would have broken it; but the bronze was too strong for him. 'Break a goddess!' said I. 'A goddess!' answered the atheist; 'it is a demon, an evil spirit!' Then he passed on his way cursing. Are such things to be borne? What marvel that the earth heaved so fearfully last night, anxious to reject the atheist from her bosom? An atheist do I say? worse still, a scorner of the Fine Arts! Woe to us fabricants of bronze, if such fellows as this give the law to society!"

"These are the incendiaries that burnt Rome under Nero," groaned the jeweller.

While such were the friendly remarks provoked by the air and faith of the Nazarene, Olinthus himself became sensible of the effect he was producing; he turned his eyes round, and observed the intent faces of the accumulating throng, whispering as they gazed; and surveying them for a moment with an expression, first of defiance and afterwards of compassion, he gathered his cloak round him and passed on, muttering audibly, "Deluded idolaters! did not last night's convulsion warn ye? Alas! how will ye meet the last day?"

The crowd that heard these boding words gave them different interpretations, according to their different shades of ignorance and of fear; all, however, concurred in imagining them to convey some awful imprecation. They regarded the Christian as the enemy of mankind; the epithets they lavished upon him, of which "Atheist" was the most favored and frequent, may serve, perhaps, to warn us, believers of that same creed now triumphant, how we indulge the persecution of opinion Olinthus then underwent, and how we apply to those whose notions differ from our own the terms at that day lavished on the fathers of our faith.

As Olinthus stalked through the crowd, and gained one of the more private places of egress from the forum, he perceived gazing upon him a pale and earnest countenance, which he was not slow to recognize.

Wrapped in a pallium that partially concealed his sacred robes, the young Apæcides surveyed the disciple of that new and mysterious creed, to which at one time he had been half a convert.

“Is *he*, too, an impostor? Does this man, so plain and simple in life, in garb, in mien, — does he too, like Arbaces, make austerity the robe of the sensualist? Does the veil of Vesta hide the vices of the prostitute?”

Olinthus, accustomed to men of all classes, and combining with the enthusiasm of his faith a profound experience of his kind, guessed, perhaps, by the index of the countenance, something of what passed within the breast of the priest. He met the survey of Apæcides with a steady eye, and a brow of serene and open candor.

“Peace be with thee!” said he, saluting Apæcides.

“Peace!” echoed the priest, in so hollow a tone that it went at once to the heart of the Nazarene.

“In that wish,” continued Olinthus, “all good things are combined: without virtue thou canst not have peace. Like the rainbow, Peace rests upon the earth, but its arch is lost in heaven. Heaven bathes it in hues of light; it springs up amidst tears and clouds; it is a reflection of the Eternal Sun; it is an assurance of calm; it is the sign of a great covenant between Man and God. Such peace, O young man, is the smile of the soul; it is an emanation from the distant orb of immortal light. PEACE be with you!”

“Alas!” began Apæcides, when he caught the gaze of the curious loiterers, inquisitive to know what could possibly be the theme of conversation between a reputed Nazarene and a priest of Isis. He stopped short, and then added in a low tone: “We cannot converse here; I will follow thee to the banks of the river: there is a walk which at this time is usually deserted and solitary.”

Olinthus bowed assent. He passed through the streets with a hasty step, but a quick and observant eye. Every now and then he exchanged a significant glance, a slight sign, with some passenger, whose garb usually betokened the wearer to belong to the humbler classes; for Christianity was in this the type of all

other and less mighty revolutions; the grain of mustard-seed was in the hearts of the lowly. Amidst the huts of poverty and labor, the vast stream which afterwards poured its broad waters beside the cities and palaces of earth took its neglected source.

CHAPTER II.

THE NOONDAY EXCURSION ON THE CAMPANIAN SEAS.

"BUT tell me, Glaucus," said Ione, as they glided down the rippling Sarnus in their boat of pleasure, "how camest thou with Apæcides to my rescue from that bad man?"

"Ask Nydia yonder," answered the Athenian, pointing to the blind girl, who sat at a little distance from them, leaning pensively over her lyre; "she must have thy thanks, not we. It seems that she came to my house, and, finding me from home, sought thy brother in his temple; he accompanied her to Arbaces; on their way they encountered me, with a company of friends, whom thy kind letter had given me a spirit cheerful enough to join. Nydia's quick ear detected my voice; a few words sufficed to make me the companion of Apæcides. I told not my associates why I left them. Could I trust thy name to their light tongues and gossiping opinion? Nydia led us to the garden gate, by which we afterwards bore thee; we entered, and were about to plunge into the mysteries of that evil house, when we heard thy cry in another direction. Thou knowest the rest."

Ione blushed deeply. She then raised her eyes to those of Glaucus, and he felt all the thanks she could not utter. "Come hither, my Nydia," said she tenderly to the Thessalian. "Did I not tell thee that thou shouldst be my sister and friend? Hast thou not already been more, — my guardian, my preserver?"

"It is nothing," answered Nydia, coldly, and without stirring.

"Ah, I forgot," continued Ione: "I should come to thee;"

and she moved along the benches till she reached the place where Nydia sat, and flinging her arms caressingly round her, covered her cheeks with kisses.

Nydia was that morning paler than her wont, and her countenance grew even more wan and colorless as she submitted to the embrace of the beautiful Neapolitan. "But how camest thou, Nydia," whispered Ione, "to surmise so faithfully the danger I was exposed to? Didst thou know aught of the Egyptian?"

"Yes, I knew of his vices."

"And how?"

"Noble Ione, I have been a slave to the vicious; those whom I served were his minions."

"And thou hast entered his house, since thou knewest so well that private entrance?"

"I have played on my lyre to Arbaces," answered the Thesalian, with embarrassment.

"And thou hast escaped the contagion from which thou hast saved Ione?" returned the Neapolitan, in a voice too low for the ear of Glaucus.

"Noble Ione, I have neither beauty nor station; I am a child, and a slave, and blind. The despicable are ever safe."

It was with a pained and proud and indignant tone that Nydia made this humble reply; and Ione felt that she only wounded Nydia by pursuing the subject. She remained silent, and the bark now floated into the sea.

"Confess that I was right, Ione," said Glaucus, "in prevailing on thee not to waste this beautiful noon in thy chamber; confess that I was right."

"Thou wert right, Glaucus," said Nydia, abruptly.

"The dear child speaks for thee," returned the Athenian. "But permit me to move opposite to thee, or our light boat will be overbalanced."

So saying, he took his seat exactly opposite to Ione, and leaning forward, he fancied that it was her breath, and not the winds of summer, that flung fragrance over the sea.

"Thou wert to tell me," said Glaucus, "why for so many days thy door was closed to me?"

“Oh, think of it no more,” answered Ione, quickly; “I gave my ear to what I now know was the malice of slander.”

“And my slanderer was the Egyptian?”

Ione’s silence assented to the question.

“His motives are sufficiently obvious.”

“Talk not of him,” said Ione, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out his very thought.

“Perhaps he may be already by the banks of the slow Styx,” resumed Glaucus; “yet in that case we should probably have heard of his death. Thy brother, methinks, hath felt the dark influence of his gloomy soul. When we arrived last night at thy house he left me abruptly. Will he ever vouchsafe to be my friend?”

“He is consumed with some secret care,” answered Ione, tearfully. “Would that we could lure him from himself! Let us join in that tender office.”

“He shall be my brother,” returned the Greek.

“How calmly,” said Ione, rousing herself from the gloom into which her thoughts of Apæcides had plunged her, “how calmly the clouds seem to repose in heaven; and yet you tell me, for I knew it not myself, that the earth shook beneath us last night.”

“It did, and more violently, they say, than it has done since the great convulsion sixteen years ago. The land we live in yet nurses mysterious terror; and the reign of Pluto, which spreads beneath our burning fields, seems rent with unseen commotion. Didst thou not feel the earth quake, Nydia, where thou wert seated last night; and was it not the fear that it occasioned thee that made thee weep?”

“I felt the soil creep and heave beneath me, like some monstrous serpent,” answered Nydia; “but as I saw nothing, I did not fear; I imagined the convulsion to be a spell of the Egyptian’s. They say he has power over the elements.”

“Thou art a Thessalian, my Nydia,” replied Glaucus, “and hast a national right to believe in magic.”

“Magic! — who doubts it?” answered Nydia, simply: “dost thou?”

“Until last night (when a necromantic prodigy did indeed appall me) methinks I was not credulous in any other magic

save that of love!" said Glaucus, in a tremulous voice, and fixing his eyes on Ione.

"Ah!" said Nydia, with a sort of shiver, and she awoke mechanically a few pleasing notes from her lyre; the sound suited well the tranquillity of the waters and the sunny stillness of the noon.

"Play to us, dear Nydia," said Glaucus, — "play, and give us one of thine old Thessalian songs: whether it be of magic or not, as thou wilt; let it, at least, be of love!"

"Of love!" repeated Nydia, raising her large, wandering eyes, that ever thrilled those who saw them with a mingled fear and pity; you could never familiarize yourself to their aspect: so strange did it seem that those dark wild orbs were ignorant of the day, and either so fixed was their deep mysterious gaze, or so restless and perturbed their glance, that you felt, when you encountered them, that same vague and chilling and half-preternatural impression which comes over you in the presence of the insane, — of those who, having a life outwardly like your own, have a life within life, dissimilar, unsearchable, unguessed!

"Will you that I should sing of love?" said she, fixing those eyes upon Glaucus.

"Yes," replied he, looking down.

She moved a little way from the arm of Ione, still cast round her, as if that soft embrace embarrassed; and placing her light and graceful instrument on her knee, after a short prelude she sang the following strain: —

NYDIA'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose,
And the Rose loved one;
For who recks the wind where it blows,
Or loves not the sun?

II.

None knew whence the humble Wind stole,
Poor sport of the skies;
None dreamt that the Wind had a soul,
In its mournful sighs!

III.

Oh, happy Beam! how canst thou prove
 That bright love of thine?
 In thy light is the proof of thy love,
 Thou hast but — to shine!

IV.

How its love can the Wind reveal?
 Unwelcome its sigh;
 Mute — mute to its Rose let it steal, —
 Its proof is — to die!

“Thou singest but sadly, sweet girl,” said Glaucus; “thy youth only feels as yet the dark shadow of Love; far other inspiration doth he wake when he himself bursts and brightens upon us.”

“I sing as I was taught,” replied Nydia, sighing.

“Thy master was love-crossed then; try thy hand at a gayer air. Nay, girl, give the instrument to me.” As Nydia obeyed, her hand touched his, and with that slight touch her breast heaved, her cheek flushed. Ione and Glaucus, occupied with each other, perceived not those signs of strange and premature emotions which preyed upon a heart that, nourished by imagination, dispensed with hope.

And now, broad, blue, bright before them spread that halcyon sea, fair as at this moment, seventeen centuries from that date, I behold it rippling on the same divinest shores. Clime that yet enervates with a soft and Circean spell, that moulds us insensibly, mysteriously, into harmony with thyself, banishing the thought of austerer labor, the voices of wild ambition, the contests and the roar of life; filling us with gentle and subduing dreams, making necessary to our nature that which is its least earthly portion, so that the very air inspires us with the yearning and thirst of love. Whoever visits thee seems to leave earth and its harsh cares behind; to enter by the Ivory Gate into the Land of Dreams. The young and laughing hours of the *Present*, — the Hours, those children of Saturn, which he hungers ever to devour, seem snatched from his grasp. The past, the future, are forgotten; we enjoy but the breathing-time. Flower of the world’s

garden, Fountain of Delight, Italy of Italy, beautiful, benign Campania! vain were, indeed, the Titans, if on this spot they yet struggled for another heaven! Here, if God meant this working-day life for a perpetual holiday, who would not sigh to dwell forever, asking nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, while thy skies shone over him, while thy seas sparkled at his feet, while thine air brought him sweet messages from the violet and the orange, and while the heart, resigned to, beating with, but one emotion, could find the lips and the eyes, which flatter it (vanity of vanities!) that love can defy custom and be eternal?

It was then in this clime, on those seas, that the Athenian gazed upon a face that might have suited the nymph, the spirit of the place: feeding his eyes on the changeful roses of that softest cheek, happy beyond the happiness of common life, loving, and knowing himself beloved.

In the tale of human passion, in past ages, there is something of interest even in the remoteness of the time. We love to feel within us the bond which unites the most distant eras: men, nations, customs perish; *the affections are immortal*; they are the sympathies which unite the ceaseless generations. The past lives again, when we look upon its emotions, — it lives in our own! That which was, ever is! The magician's gift that revives the dead, that animates the dust of forgotten graves, is not in the author's skill, — it is in the heart of the reader!

Still vainly seeking the eyes of Ione, as, half downcast, half averted, they shunned his own, the Athenian, in a low and soft voice, thus expressed the feelings inspired by happier thoughts than those which had colored the song of Nydia.

THE SONG OF GLAUCUS.

I.

As the bark floateth on o'er the summer-lit sea,
 Floats my heart o'er the deeps of its passion for thee;
 All lost in the space, without terror it glides,
 For bright with thy soul is the face of the tides.

Now heaving, now hush'd, is that passionate ocean,
 As it catches thy smile or thy sighs ;
 And the twin-stars¹ that shine on the wanderer's devotion,
 Its guide and its god — are thine eyes !

II.

The bark may go down, should the cloud sweep above,
 For its being is bound to the light of thy love.
 As thy faith and thy smile are its life and its joy,
 So thy frown or thy change are the storms that destroy.
 Ah ! sweeter to sink while the sky is serene,
 If time hath a change for thy heart !
 If to live be to weep over what thou hast been,
 Let me die while I know what thou art !

As the last words of the song trembled over the sea, Ione raised her looks ; they met those of her lover. Happy Nydia, — happy in thy affliction, that thou couldst not see that fascinated and charmed gaze, that said so much, that made the eye the voice of the soul, that promised the impossibility of change !

But though the Thessalian could not detect that gaze, she divined its meaning by their silence, by their sighs. She pressed her hands tightly across her breast, as if to keep down its bitter and jealous thoughts ; and then she hastened to speak, for that silence was intolerable to her.

“After all, O Glaucus,” said she, “there is nothing very mirthful in your strain !”

“Yet I meant it to be so, when I took up thy lyre, pretty one. Perhaps happiness will not permit us to be mirthful.”

“How strange is it,” said Ione, changing a conversation which oppressed her while it charmed, “that for the last several days yonder cloud has hung motionless over Vesuvius ! Yet not indeed motionless, for sometimes it changes its form ; and now methinks it looks like some vast giant, with an arm outstretched over the city. Dost thou see the likeness, or is it only to my fancy ?”

“Fair Ione, I see it also. It is astonishingly distinct. The giant seems seated on the brow of the mountain : the different

¹ In allusion to the Dioscuri, or twin-stars, the guardian deity of the seamen.

shades of the cloud appear to form a white robe that sweeps over its vast breast and limbs ; it seems to gaze with a steady face upon the city below, to point with one hand, as thou sayest, over its glittering streets, and to raise the other — dost thou note it? — towards the higher heaven. It is like the ghost of some huge Titan brooding over the beautiful world he lost ; sorrowful for the past, yet with something of menace for the future.”

“Could that mountain have any connection with the last night’s earthquake? They say that, ages ago, almost in the earliest era of tradition, it gave forth fires as *Ætna* still. Perhaps the flames yet lurk and dart beneath.”

“It is possible,” said *Glaucus*, musingly.

“Thou sayest thou art slow to believe in magic,” said *Nydia*, suddenly. “I have heard that a potent witch dwells amongst the scorched caverns of the mountain, and yon cloud may be the dim shadow of the demon she confers with.”

“Thou art full of the romance of thy native *Thessaly*,” said *Glaucus* ; “and a strange mixture of sense and all conflicting superstitions.”

“We are ever superstitious in the dark,” replied *Nydia*. “Tell me,” she added, after a slight pause, “tell me, O *Glaucus*, do all that are beautiful resemble each other? They say you are beautiful, and *Ione* also. Are your faces then the same? I fancy not; yet it ought to be so.”

“Fancy no such grievous wrong to *Ione*,” answered *Glaucus*, laughing. “But we do not, alas! resemble each other, as the homely and the beautiful sometimes do. *Ione*’s hair is dark, mine light; *Ione*’s eyes are — what color, *Ione*? I cannot see; turn them to me. Oh, are they black? No, they are too soft. Are they blue? No, they are too deep; they change with every ray of the sun, — I know not their color; but mine, sweet *Nydia*, are gray, and bright only when *Ione* shines on them! *Ione*’s cheek is —”

“I do not understand one word of thy description,” interrupted *Nydia*, peevishly. “I comprehend only that you do not resemble each other, and I am glad of it.”

“Why, *Nydia*? ” said *Ione*.

Nydia colored slightly. "Because," she replied coldly, "I have always imagined you under different forms, and one likes to know one is right."

"And what hast thou imagined Glaucus to resemble?" asked Ione, softly.

"Music!" replied Nydia, looking down.

"Thou art right," thought Ione.

"And what likeness hast thou ascribed to Ione?"

"I cannot tell yet," answered the blind girl; "I have not yet known her long enough to find a shape and sign for my guesses."

"I will tell thee, then," said Glaucus, passionately; "she is like the sun that warms, — like the wave that refreshes."

"The sun sometimes scorches, and the wave sometimes drowns," answered Nydia.

"Take then these roses," said Glaucus; "let their fragrance suggest to thee Ione."

"Alas, the roses will fade!" said the Neapolitan, archly.

Thus conversing, they wore away the hours; the lovers, conscious only of the brightness and smiles of love, the blind girl feeling only its darkness, its tortures, — the fierceness of jealousy and its woe!

And now, as they drifted on, Glaucus once more resumed the lyre, and woke its strings, with a careless hand, to a strain so wildly and gladly beautiful that even Nydia was aroused from her reverie, and uttered a cry of admiration.

"Thou seest, my child," cried Glaucus, "that I can yet redeem the character of love's music, and that I was wrong in saying happiness could not be gay. Listen, Nydia! listen, dear Ione! and hear

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.¹

I.

Like a Star in the seas above,
 Like a Dream to the waves of sleep —
 Up, up, THE INCARNATE LOVE,
 She rose from the charmed deep!

¹ Suggested by a picture of Venus rising from the sea, taken from Pompeii, and now in the Museum at Naples.

And over the Cyprian Isle
 The skies shed their silent smile;
 And the Forest's green heart was rife
 With the stir of the gushing life,—
 The life that had leap'd to birth,
 In the veins of the happy earth!
 Hail! oh, hail!
 The dimmest sea-cave below thee,
 The farthest sky-arch above,
 In their innermost stillness know thee:
 And heave with the Birth of Love!
 Gale! soft Gale!
 Thou comest on thy silver winglets,
 From thy home in the tender west;¹
 Now fanning her golden ringlets,
 Now hush'd on her heaving breast.
 And afar on the murmuring sand,
 The Seasons wait hand in hand
 To welcome thee, Birth Divine,
 To the earth which is henceforth thine.

II.

Behold! how she kneels in the shell,
 Bright pearl in its floating cell!
 Behold! how the shell's rose-hues
 The cheek and the breast of snow.
 And the delicate limbs suffuse
 Like a blush, with a bashful glow.
 Sailing on, slowly sailing
 O'er the wild water;
 All hail! as the fond light is hailing
 Her daughter,
 All hail!
 We are thine, all thine evermore:
 Not a leaf on the laughing shore,
 Not a wave on the heaving sea,
 Nor a single sigh
 In the boundless sky,
 But is vow'd evermore to thee!

¹ According to the ancient mythologists, Venus rose from the sea near Cyprus, to which island she was wafted by the Zephyrs. The Seasons waited to welcome her on the sea-shore.

III.

And thou, my beloved one — thou,
 As I gaze on thy soft eyes now,
 Methinks from their depths I view
 The Holy Birth born anew ;
 Thy lids are the gentle cell
 Where the young Love blushing lies :
 See! she breaks from the mystic shell,
 She comes from thy tender eyes!
 Hail! all hail!
 She comes, as she came from the sea,
 To my soul as it looks on thee ;
 She comes, she comes!
 She comes, as she came from the sea,
 To my soul as it looks on thee!
 Hail! all hail!

 CHAPTER III.

THE CONGREGATION.

FOLLOWED by Apæcides, the Nazarene gained the side of the Sarnus. That river, which now has shrunk into a petty stream, then rushed gayly into the sea, covered with countless vessels, and reflecting on its waves the gardens, the vines, the palaces, and the temples of Pompeii. From its more noisy and frequented banks Olinthus directed his steps to a path which ran amidst a shady vista of trees, at the distance of a few paces from the river. This walk was in the evening a favorite resort of the Pompeians, but during the heat and business of the day was seldom visited, save by some groups of playful children, some meditative poet, or some disputative philosophers. At the side farthest from the river, frequent copses of box interspersed the more delicate and evanescent foliage, and these were cut into a thousand quaint shapes, sometimes into the forms of fauns and satyrs, sometimes into the mimicry of Egyptian pyramids, sometimes into the letters that composed the name of a popular or eminent citizen.

Thus the false taste is equally ancient as the pure; and the retired traders of Hackney and Paddington, a century ago, were little aware, perhaps, that in their tortured yews and sculptured box, they found their models in the most polished period of Roman antiquity, in the gardens of Pompeii, and the villas of the fastidious Pliny.

This walk now, as the noonday sun shone perpendicularly through the checkered leaves, was entirely deserted; at least, no other forms than those of Olinthus and the priest infringed upon the solitude. They sat themselves on one of the benches, placed at intervals between the trees, and facing the faint breeze that came languidly from the river, whose waves danced and sparkled before them,—a singular and contrasted pair; the believer in the latest, the priest of the most ancient, worship of the world.

“Since thou leftst me so abruptly,” said Olinthus, “hast thou been happy? Has thy heart found contentment under these priestly robes? Hast thou, still yearning for the voice of God, heard it whisper comfort to thee from the oracles of Isis? That sigh, that averted countenance, give me the answer my soul predicted.”

“Alas!” answered Apæcides, sadly, “thou seest before thee a wretched and distracted man. From my childhood upward I have idolized the dreams of virtue. I have envied the holiness of men who, in caves and lonely temples, have been admitted to the companionship of beings above the world; my days have been consumed with feverish and vague desires, my nights with mocking but solemn visions. Seduced by the mystic prophecies of an impostor, I have indued these robes: my nature (I confess it to thee frankly)—my nature has revolted at what I have seen and been doomed to share in. Searching after truth, I have become but the minister of falsehoods. On the evening in which we last met, I was buoyed by hopes created by that same impostor, whom I ought already to have better known. I have—no matter, no matter! suffice it, I have added perjury and sin to rashness and to sorrow. The veil is now rent forever from my eyes; I behold a villain where I obeyed a demigod; the earth darkens in my sight; I

am in the deepest abyss of gloom ; I know not if there be gods above ; if we are the things of chance ; if beyond the bounded and melancholy present there is annihilation or an hereafter : tell me, then, thy faith ; solve me these doubts, if thou hast indeed the power."

"I do not marvel," answered the Nazarene, "that thou hast thus erred, or that thou art thus sceptic. Eighty years ago there was no assurance to man of God, or of a certain and definite future beyond the grave. New laws are declared to him who has ears ; a heaven, a true Olympus, is revealed to him who has eyes ; heed, then, and listen."

And with all the earnestness of a man believing ardently himself, and zealous to convert, the Nazarene poured forth to Apæcides the assurances of Scriptural promise. He spoke first of the sufferings and miracles of Christ ; he wept as he spoke : he turned next to the glories of the Saviour's ascension, — to the clear predictions of Revelation. He described that pure and unsensual heaven destined to the virtuous, — those fires and torments that were the doom of guilt.

The doubts which spring up to the mind of later reasoners, in the immensity of the sacrifice of God to man, were not such as would occur to an early heathen. He had been accustomed to believe that the gods had lived upon earth, and taken upon themselves the forms of men ; had shared in human passions, in human labors, and in human misfortunes. What was the travail of his own Alcmena's son, whose altars now smoked with the incense of countless cities, but a toil for the human race ? Had not the great Dorian Apollo expiated a mystic sin by descending to the grave ? Those who were the deities of heaven had been the lawgivers or benefactors on earth, and gratitude had led to worship. It seemed therefore to the heathen a doctrine neither new nor strange that Christ had been sent from heaven, that an immortal had indued mortality, and tasted the bitterness of death. And the end for which He thus toiled and thus suffered, — how far more glorious did it seem to Apæcides than that for which the deities of old had visited the nether world, and passed through the gates of death ! Was it not worthy of a God to descend to these dim

valleys, in order to clear up the clouds gathered over the dark mount beyond; to satisfy the doubts of sages; to convert speculation into certainty; by example to point out the rules of life; by revelation to solve the enigma of the grave; and to prove that the soul did not yearn in vain when it dreamed of an immortality? In this last was the great argument of those lowly men destined to convert the earth. As nothing is more flattering to the pride and the hopes of man than the belief in a future state, so nothing could be more vague and confused than the notions of the heathen sages upon that mystic subject. Apæcides had already learned that the faith of the philosophers was not that of the herd; that if they secretly professed a creed in some diviner power, it was not the creed which they thought it wise to impart to the community. He had already learned that even the priest ridiculed what he preached to the people; that the notions of the few and the many were never united. But in this new faith it seemed to him that philosopher, priest, and people, the expounders of the religion and its followers, were alike accordant: they did not speculate and debate upon immortality, they spoke of it as a thing certain and assured; the magnificence of the promise dazzled him; its consolations soothed. For the Christian faith made its early converts among sinners; many of its fathers and its martyrs were those who had felt the bitterness of vice, and who were therefore no longer tempted by its false aspect from the paths of an austere and uncompromising virtue. All the assurances of this healing faith invited to repentance; they were peculiarly adapted to the bruised and sore of spirit; the very remorse which Apæcides felt for his late excesses made him incline to one who found holiness in that remorse, and who whispered of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

“Come,” said the Nazarene, as he perceived the effect he had produced, “come to the humble hall in which we meet, — a select and a chosen few; listen there to our prayers; note the sincerity of our repentant tears; mingle in our simple sacrifice, — not of victims, nor of garlands, but offered by white-robed thoughts upon the altar of the heart. The flowers that we

lay there are imperishable ; they bloom over us when we are no more ; nay, they accompany us beyond the grave, they spring up beneath our feet in heaven, they delight us with an eternal odor ; for they are of the soul ; they partake of its nature : these offerings are temptations overcome and sins repented. Come, oh, come ! lose not another moment ; prepare already for the great, the awful journey from darkness to light, from sorrow to bliss, from corruption to immortality ! This is the day of the Lord the Son, a day that we have set apart for our devotions. Though we meet usually at night, yet some among us are gathered together even now. What joy, what triumph, will be with us all, if we can bring one stray lamb into the sacred fold !”

There seemed to Apæcides, so naturally pure of heart, something ineffably generous and benign in that spirit of conversion which animated Olinthus, — a spirit that found its own bliss in the happiness of others ; that sought in its wide sociality to make companions for eternity. He was touched, softened, and subdued. He was not in that mood which can bear to be left alone ; curiosity, too, mingled with his purer stimulants ; he was anxious to see those rites of which so many dark and contradictory rumors were afloat. He paused a moment, looked over his garb, thought of Arbaces, shuddered with horror, lifted his eyes to the broad brow of the Nazarene, intent, anxious, watchful, — but for *his* benefit, for his salvation ! He drew his cloak round him, so as wholly to conceal his robes, and said, “Lead on ; I follow thee.”

Olinthus pressed his hand joyfully, and then descending to the river side, hailed one of the boats that plied there constantly ; they entered it ; an awning overhead, while it sheltered them from the sun, screened also their persons from observation : they rapidly skimmed the wave. From one of the boats that passed them floated a soft music, and its prow was decorated with flowers ; it was gliding towards the sea.

“So,” said Olinthus, sadly, “unconscious and mirthful in their delusions, sail the votaries of luxury into the great ocean of storm and shipwreck ! We pass them, silent and unnoticed, to gain the land.”

Apæcides, lifting his eyes, caught through the aperture in

the awning a glimpse of the face of one of the inmates of that gay bark: it was the face of Ione. The lovers were embarked on the excursion at which we have been made present. The priest sighed, and once more sank back upon his seat. They reached the shore where, in the suburbs, an alley of small and mean houses stretched towards the bank; they dismissed the boat, landed, and Olinthus, preceding the priest, threaded the labyrinth of lanes, and arrived at last at the closed door of a habitation somewhat larger than its neighbors. He knocked thrice: the door was opened and closed again, as Apæcides followed his guide across the threshold.

They passed a deserted atrium, and gained an inner chamber of moderate size, which, when the door was closed, received its only light from a small window cut over the door itself. But, halting at the threshold of this chamber, and knocking at the door, Olinthus said, "Peace be with you!" A voice from within returned, "Peace with whom?" "The Faithful!" answered Olinthus, and the door opened; twelve or fourteen persons were sitting in a semicircle, silent, and seemingly absorbed in thought, and opposite to a crucifix rudely carved in wood.

They lifted up their eyes when Olinthus entered, without speaking; the Nazarene himself, before he accosted them, knelt suddenly down, and by his moving lips, and his eyes fixed steadfastly on the crucifix, Apæcides saw that he prayed inly. This rite performed, Olinthus turned to the congregation. "Men and brethren," said he, "start not to behold amongst you a priest of Isis: he hath sojourned with the blind, but the Spirit hath fallen on him; he desires to see, to hear, and to understand."

"Let him," said one of the assembly; and Apæcides beheld in the speaker a man still younger than himself, of a countenance equally worn and pallid, of an eye which equally spoke of the restless and fiery operations of a working mind.

"Let him," repeated a second voice; and he who thus spoke was in the prime of manhood. His bronzed skin and Asiatic features bespoke him a son of Syria: he had been a robber in his youth.

“Let him,” said a third voice; and the priest, again turning to regard the speaker, saw an old man with a long gray beard whom he recognized as a slave to the wealthy Diomed.

“Let him,” repeated simultaneously the rest, — men who, with two exceptions, were evidently of the inferior ranks. In these exceptions, Apæcides noted an officer of the guard and an Alexandrian merchant.

“We do not,” recommenced Olinthus, “we do not bind you to secrecy; we impose on you no oaths (as some of our weaker brethren would do) not to betray us. It is true, indeed, that there is no absolute law against us; but the multitude, more savage than their rulers, thirst for our lives. So, my friends, when Pilate would have hesitated, it was *the people* who shouted, ‘Christ to the Cross!’ But we bind you not to our safety — no! Betray us to the crowd! impeach, calumniate, malign us if you will! we are above death; we should walk cheerfully to the den of the lion or the rack of the torturer; we can trample down the darkness of the grave, and what is death to a criminal is eternity to the Christian.”

A low and applauding murmur ran through the assembly.

“Thou comest amongst us as an examiner, mayest thou remain a convert! Our religion? You behold it, — yon cross our sole image, yon scroll the mysteries of our Cære and Eleusis! Our morality? It is in our lives! Sinners we all have been; who now can accuse us of a crime? We have baptized ourselves from the past. Think not that this is of us, it is of God. Approach, Medon,” beckoning to the old slave who had spoken third for the admission of Apæcides, “thou art the sole man amongst us who is not free. But in heaven the last shall be first: so with us. Unfold your scroll, read, and explain.”

Useless would it be for us to accompany the lecture of Medon or the comments of the congregation. Familiar now are those doctrines, then strange and new. Eighteen centuries have left us little to expound upon the lore of Scripture or the life of Christ. To us, too, there would seem little congenial in the doubts that occurred to a heathen priest, and little learned in the answers they received from men uneducated, rude, and

simple, possessing only the knowledge that they were greater than they seemed.

There was one thing that greatly touched the Neapolitan. When the lecture was concluded, they heard a very gentle knock at the door: the password was given, and replied to; the door opened, and two young children, the eldest of whom might have told its seventh year, entered timidly; they were the children of the master of the house, that dark and hardy Syrian, whose youth had been spent in pillage and bloodshed. The eldest of the congregation (it was that old slave) opened to them his arms; they fled to the shelter, they crept to his breast, and his hard features smiled as he caressed them. And then these bold and fervent men, nursed in vicissitude, beaten by the rough winds of life, — men of mailed and impervious fortitude, ready to affront a world, prepared for torment and armed for death, — men who presented all imaginable contrast to the weak nerves, the light hearts, the tender fragility of childhood, crowded round the infants, smoothing their rugged brows and composing their bearded lips to kindly and fostering smiles; and then the old man opened the scroll, and he taught the infants to repeat after him that beautiful prayer which we still dedicate to the Lord and still teach to our children; and then he told them in simple phrase, of God's love to the young, and how not a sparrow falls but His eye sees it. This lovely custom of infant initiation was long cherished by the early Church, in memory of the words which said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and was perhaps the origin of the superstitious calumny which ascribed to the Nazarenes the crime which the Nazarene, when victorious, attributed to the Jew; namely, the decoying children to hideous rites, at which they were secretly immolated.

And the stern paternal penitent seemed to feel in the innocence of his children a return into early life, — life ere yet it sinned: he followed the motion of their young lips with an earnest gaze; he smiled as they repeated, with hushed and reverent looks, the holy words; and when the lesson was done, and they ran, released, and gladly to his knee, he clasped them to his breast, kissed them again and again, and tears flowed

fast down his cheek, — tears, of which it would have been impossible to trace the source, so mingled they were with joy and sorrow, penitence and hate, — remorse for himself and love for them!

Something, I say, there was in this scene which peculiarly affected Apæcides; and, in truth, it is difficult to conceive a ceremony more appropriate to the religion of benevolence, more appealing to the household and every-day affections, striking a more sensitive chord in the human breast.

It was at this time that an inner door opened gently, and a very old man entered the chamber, leaning on a staff. At his presence the whole congregation rose; there was an expression of deep, affectionate respect upon every countenance; and Apæcides, gazing on his countenance, felt attracted towards him by an irresistible sympathy. No man ever looked upon that face without love; for there had dwelt the smile of the Deity, the incarnation of divinest love: and the glory of the smile had never passed away.

“My children, God be with you!” said the old man, stretching his arms; and as he spoke the infants ran to his knee. He sat down, and they nestled fondly to his bosom. It was beautiful to see that mingling of the extremes of life, — the rivers gushing from their early source, the majestic stream gliding to the ocean of eternity! As the light of declining day seems to mingle earth and heaven, making the outline of each scarce visible, and blending the harsh mountain-tops with the sky, even so did the smile of that benign old age appear to hallow the aspect of those around, to blend together the strong distinctions of varying years, and to diffuse over infancy and manhood the light of that heaven into which it must so soon vanish and be lost.

“Father,” said Olinthus, “thou on whose form the miracle of the Redeemer worked, thou who wert snatched from the grave to become the living witness of His mercy and His power, behold! a stranger in our meeting, — a new lamb gathered to the fold!”

“Let me bless him,” said the old man: the throng gave way. Apæcides approached him as by an instinct: he fell on his

knees before him ; the old man laid his hand on the priest's head, and blessed him, but not aloud. As his lips moved, his eyes were upturned, and tears — those tears that good men only shed in the hope of happiness to another — flowed fast down his cheeks.

The children were on either side of the convert ; his heart was theirs ; he had become as one of them, to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STREAM OF LOVE RUNS ON, — WHITHER ?

DAYS are like years in the love of the young, when no bar, no obstacle, is between their hearts ; when the sun shines, and the course runs smooth ; when their love is prosperous and confessed. Ione no longer concealed from Glaucus the attachment she felt for him, and their talk now was only of their love. Over the rapture of the present the hopes of the future glowed like the heaven above the gardens of spring. They went in their trustful thoughts far down the stream of time ; they laid out the chart of their destiny to come ; they suffered the light of to-day to suffuse the morrow. In the youth of their hearts it seemed as if care, and change, and death were as things unknown. Perhaps they loved each other the more because the condition of the world left to Glaucus no aim and no wish but love ; because the distractions common in free States to men's affections existed not for the Athenian ; because his country wooed him not to the bustle of civil life ; because ambition furnished no counterpoise to love : and therefore over their schemes and their projects love only reigned. In the iron age they imagined themselves of the golden, doomed only to live and to love.

To the superficial observer, who interests himself only in characters strongly marked and broadly colored, both the lovers may seem of too slight and commonplace a mould : in the delineation of characters purposely subdued, the reader some-

times imagines that there is a want of character ; perhaps, indeed, I wrong the real nature of these two lovers by not painting more impressively their stronger individualities. But in dwelling so much on their bright and birdlike existence I am influenced almost insensibly by the forethought of the changes that await them, and for which they were so ill-prepared. It was this very softness and gayety of life that contrasted most strongly the vicissitudes of their coming fate. For the oak without fruit or blossom, whose hard and rugged heart is fitted for the storm, there is less fear than for the delicate branches of the myrtle and the laughing clusters of the vine.

They had now advanced far into August ; the next month their marriage was fixed, and the threshold of Glaucus was already wreathed with garlands ; and nightly by the door of Ione he poured forth the rich libations. He existed no longer for his gay companions ; he was ever with Ione. In the mornings they beguiled the sun with music : in the evenings they forsook the crowded haunts of the gay for excursions on the water, or along the fertile and vine-clad plains that lay beneath the fatal mount of Vesuvius. The earth shook no more ; the lively Pompeians forgot even that there had gone forth so terrible a warning of their approaching doom. Glaucus imagined that convulsion, in the vanity of his heathen religion, an especial interposition of the gods, less in behalf of his own safety than that of Ione. He offered up the sacrifices of gratitude at the temples of his faith, and even the altar of Isis was covered with his votive garlands ; as to the prodigy of the animated marble, he blushed at the effect it had produced on him. He believed it, indeed, to have been wrought by the magic of man ; but the result convinced him that it betokened not the anger of a goddess.

Of Arbaces, they heard only that he still lived : stretched on the bed of suffering, he recovered slowly from the effect of the shock he had sustained ; he left the lovers unmolested, but it was only to brood over the hour and the method of revenge.

Alike in their mornings at the house of Ione, and in their evening excursions, Nydia was usually their constant, and

often their sole companion. They did not guess the secret fires which consumed her: the abrupt freedom with which she mingled in their conversation, her capricious and often her peevish moods found ready indulgence in the recollection of the service they owed her, and their compassion for her affliction. They felt an interest in her, perhaps the greater and more affectionate from the very strangeness and waywardness of her nature, her singular alternations of passion and softness, the mixture of ignorance and genius, of delicacy and rudeness, of the quick humors of the child and the proud calmness of the woman. Although she refused to accept of freedom, she was constantly suffered to be free; she went where she listed: no curb was put either on her words or actions; they felt for one so darkly fated, and so susceptible of every wound, the same pitying and compliant indulgence the mother feels for a spoiled and sickly child, dreading to impose authority, even where they imagined it for her benefit. She availed herself of this license by refusing the companionship of the slave whom they wished to attend her. With the slender staff by which she guided her steps, she went now, as in her former unprotected state, along the populous streets; it was almost miraculous to perceive how quickly and how dexterously she threaded every crowd, avoiding every danger, and could find her benighted way through the most intricate windings of the city. But her chief delight was still in visiting the few feet of ground which made the garden of Glaucus, — in tending the flowers that at least repaid her love. Sometimes she entered the chamber where he sat, and sought a conversation, which she nearly always broke off abruptly, for conversation with Glaucus only tended to one subject, *Ione*; and that name from his lips inflicted agony upon her. Often she bitterly repented the service she had rendered to *Ione*; often she said inly, “If she had fallen, Glaucus could have loved her no longer;” and then dark and fearful thoughts crept into her breast.

She had not experienced fully the trials that were in store for her when she had been thus generous. She had never before been present when Glaucus and *Ione* were together;

she had never heard that voice so kind to her, so much softer to another. The shock that crushed her heart with the tidings that Glaucus loved, had at first only saddened and benumbed. By degrees jealousy took a wilder and fiercer shape: it partook of hatred; it whispered revenge. As you see the wind only agitate the green leaf upon the bough, while the leaf which has lain withered and seared on the ground, bruised and trampled upon till the sap and life are gone, is suddenly whirled aloft, now here, now there, without stay and without rest, so the love which visits the happy and the hopeful hath but freshness on its wings: its violence is but sportive. But the heart that hath fallen from the green things of life, that is without hope, that hath no summer in its fibres, is torn and whirled by the same wind that but caresses its brethren; it hath no bough to cling to; it is dashed from path to path, till the winds fall, and it is crushed into the mire forever.

The friendless childhood of Nydia had hardened prematurely her character; perhaps the heated scenes of profligacy through which she had passed, seemingly unscathed, had ripened her passions, though they had not sullied her purity. The orgies of Burbo might only have disgusted, the banquets of the Egyptian might only have terrified, at the moment; but the winds that pass unheeded over the soil leave seeds behind them. As darkness, too, favors the imagination, so, perhaps, her very blindness contributed to feed with wild and delirious visions the love of the unfortunate girl. The voice of Glaucus had been the first that had sounded musically to her ear; his kindness made a deep impression upon her mind; when he had left Pompeii in the former year, she had treasured up in her heart every word he had uttered; and when any one told her that this friend and patron of the poor flower-girl was the most brilliant and the most graceful of the young revellers of Pompeii, she had felt a pleasing pride in nursing his recollection. Even the task which she imposed upon herself, of tending his flowers, served to keep him in her mind; she associated him with all that was most charming to her impressions; and when she had refused to

express what image she fancied Ione to resemble, it was partly, perhaps, that whatever was bright and soft in nature she had already combined with the thought of Glaucus. If any of my readers ever loved at an age which they would now smile to remember, — an age in which fancy forestalled the reason, — let them say whether that love, among all its strange and complicated delicacies, was not, above all other and later passions, susceptible of jealousy? I seek not here the cause; I know that it is commonly the fact.

When Glaucus returned to Pompeii, Nydia had told another year of life; that year, with its sorrows, its loneliness, its trials, had greatly developed her mind and heart: and when the Athenian drew her unconsciously to his breast, deeming her still in soul as in years a child, when he kissed her smooth cheek, and wound his arm round her trembling frame, Nydia felt suddenly, and as by revelation, that those feelings she had long and innocently cherished were of love. Doomed to be rescued from tyranny by Glaucus, doomed to take shelter under his roof, doomed to breathe, but for so brief a time, the same air, and doomed in the first rush of a thousand happy, grateful, delicious sentiments of an overflowing heart, to hear that he loved another; to be commissioned to that other, the messenger, the minister; to feel all at once that utter nothingness which she was, which she ever must be, but which, till then, her young mind had not taught her, — that utter nothingness to him who was all to her, — what wonder that in her wild and passionate soul all the elements jarred discordant; that if love reigned over the whole, it was not the love which is born of the more sacred and soft emotions? Sometimes she dreaded only lest Glaucus should discover her secret; sometimes she felt indignant that it was *not* suspected; it was a sign of contempt; could he imagine that she presumed so far? Her feelings to Ione ebbed and flowed with every hour: now she loved her because *he* did; now she hated her for the same cause. There were moments when she could have murdered her unconscious mistress; moments when she could have laid down life for her. These fierce and tremulous alternations of passion were too severe to be borne long

Her health gave way, though she felt it not; her cheek paled, her step grew feebler, tears came to her eyes more often and relieved her less.

One morning, when she repaired to her usual task in the garden of the Athenian, she found Glaucus under the columns of the peristyle, with a merchant of the town; he was selecting jewels for his destined bride. He had already fitted up her apartment; the jewels he bought that day were placed also within it; they were never fated to grace the fair form of Ione; they may be seen at this day among the dis-interred treasures of Pompeii, in the chambers of the studio at Naples.¹

“Come hither, Nydia; put down thy vase, and come hither. Thou must take this chain from me; stay; there, I have put it on. There, Servilius, does it not become her?”

“Wonderfully!” answered the jeweller; for jewellers were well-bred and flattering men, even at that day. “But when these earrings glitter in the ears of the noble Ione, *then*, by Bacchus! you will see whether my art adds anything to beauty.”

“Ione?” repeated Nydia, who had hitherto acknowledged by smiles and blushes the gift of Glaucus.

“Yes,” replied the Athenian, carelessly toying with the gems; “I am choosing a present for Ione, but there are none worthy of her.”

He was startled as he spoke by an abrupt gesture of Nydia; she tore the chain violently from her neck, and dashed it on the ground.

“How is this? What, Nydia, dost thou not like the bauble? Art thou offended?”

“You treat me ever as a slave and as a child,” replied the Thessalian, with a breast heaving with ill-suppressed sobs; and she turned hastily away to the opposite corner of the garden.

Glaucus did not attempt to follow, or to soothe; he was offended: he continued to examine the jewels and to comment on their fashion; to object to this and to praise that, and

¹ Several bracelets, chains, and jewels were found in the house.

finally to be talked by the merchant into buying all, — the safest plan for a lover, and a plan that any one will do right to adopt, provided always that he can obtain an Ione!

When he had completed his purchase and dismissed the jeweller, he retired into his chamber, dressed, mounted his chariot, and went to Ione. He thought no more of the blind girl or her offence; he had forgotten both the one and the other.

He spent the forenoon with his beautiful Neapolitan, repaired thence to the baths, supped (if, as we have said before, we can justly so translate the three o'clock *cæna* of the Romans) alone, and abroad, for Pompeii had its restaurateurs: and returning home to change his dress ere he again repaired to the house of Ione, he passed the peristyle, but with the absorbed reverie and absent eyes of a man in love, and did not note the form of the poor blind girl, bending exactly in the same place where he had left her. But though he saw her not, her ear recognized at once the sound of his step. She had been counting the moments to his return. He had scarcely entered his favorite chamber, which opened on the peristyle, and seated himself musingly on his couch, when he felt his robe timorously touched, and turning, he beheld Nydia kneeling before him, and holding up to him a handful of flowers, — a gentle and appropriate peace-offering; her eyes, darkly upheld to his own, streamed with tears.

“I have offended thee,” said she, sobbing, “and for the first time. I would die rather than cause thee a moment’s pain: say that thou wilt forgive me. See! I have taken up the chain; I have put it on; I will never part from it: it is thy gift.”

“My dear Nydia,” returned Glaucus, and raising her, he kissed her forehead, “think of it no more! But why, my child, wert thou so suddenly angry? I could not divine the cause?”

“Do not ask!” said she, coloring violently. “I am a thing full of faults and humors; you know I am but a child; you say so often: is it from a child that you can expect a reason for every folly?”

“But, prettiest, you will soon be a child no more; and if

you would have us treat you as a woman you must learn to govern these singular impulses and gales of passion. Think not I chide: no, it is for your happiness only I speak."

"It is true," said Nydia, "I must learn to govern myself. I must hide, I must suppress, my heart. This is a woman's task and duty; methinks her virtue is hypocrisy."

"Self-control is not deceit, my Nydia," returned the Athenian; "and that is the virtue necessary alike to man and to woman; it is the true senatorial toga, the badge of the dignity it covers."

"Self-control! self-control! Well, well, what you say is right! When I listen to you, Glaucus, my wildest thoughts grow calm and sweet, and a delicious serenity falls over me. Advise, ah, guide me ever; my preserver!"

"Thy affectionate heart will be thy best guide, Nydia, when thou hast learned to regulate its feelings."

"Ah! that will be never," sighed Nydia, wiping away her tears.

"Say not so: the first effort is the only difficult one."

"I have made many first efforts," answered Nydia, innocently. "But you, my Mentor, do you find it so easy to control yourself? Can you conceal, can you even regulate your love for Ione?"

"Love! dear Nydia: ah! that is quite another matter," answered the young preceptor.

"I thought so," returned Nydia, with a melancholy smile. "Glaucus, wilt thou take my poor flowers? Do with them as thou wilt: thou canst give them to Ione," added she, with a little hesitation.

"Nay, Nydia," answered Glaucus, kindly, divining something of jealousy in her language, though he imagined it only the jealousy of a vain and susceptible child, "I will not give thy pretty flowers to any one. Sit here and weave them into a garland; I will wear it this night: it is not the first those delicate fingers have woven for me."

The poor girl delightedly sat down beside Glaucus. She drew from her girdle a ball of the many-colored threads, or rather slender ribbons, used in the weaving of garlands, and

which (for it was her professional occupation) she carried constantly with her, and began quickly and gracefully to commence her task. Upon her young cheeks the tears were already dried; a faint but happy smile played round her lips; childlike, indeed, she was sensible only of the joy of the present; she was reconciled to Glaucus; he had forgiven her; she was beside him; he played caressingly with her silken hair; his breath fanned her cheek; Ione, the cruel Ione, was not by; none other demanded, divided, his care. Yes, she was happy and forgetful; it was one of the few moments in her brief and troubled life that it was sweet to treasure, to recall. As the butterfly, allured by the winter sun, basks for a little while in the sudden light ere yet the wind awakes and the frost comes on, which shall blast it before the eve, she rested beneath a beam, which, by contrast with the wonted skies, was not chilling; and the instinct which should have warned her of its briefness, bade her only gladden in its smile.

"Thou hast beautiful locks," said Glaucus. "They were once, I ween well, a mother's delight."

Nydia sighed; it would seem that she had not been born a slave; but she ever shunned the mention of her parentage, and, whether obscure or noble, certain it is that her birth was never known by her benefactors, nor by any one in those distant shores, even to the last. The child of sorrow and of mystery, she came and went as some bird that enters our chamber for a moment; we see it flutter for a while before us: we know not whence it flew or to what region it escapes.

Nydia sighed, and after a short pause, without answering the remark, said, —

"But do I weave too many roses in my wreath, Glaucus? They tell me it is thy favorite flower."

"And ever favored, my Nydia, be it by those who have the soul of poetry: it is the flower of love, of festivals; it is also the flower we dedicate to silence and to death; it blooms on our brows in life, while life be worth the having; it is scattered above our sepulchre when we are no more."

"Ah! would," said Nydia, "instead of this perishable

wreath, that I could take thy web from the hand of the Fates, and insert the roses *there!*”

“Pretty one! thy wish is worthy of a voice so attuned to song: it is uttered in the spirit of song; and, whatever my doom, I thank thee.”

“Whatever thy doom! Is it not already destined to all things bright and fair? My wish was vain. The Fates will be as tender to thee as I should.”

“It might not be so, Nydia, were it not for love! While youth lasts, I may forget my country for a while. But what Athenian, in his graver manhood, can think of Athens as she was, and be contented that *he* is happy, while *she* is fallen, — fallen, and forever?”

“And why forever?”

“As ashes cannot be rekindled, as love once dead can never revive, so freedom departed from a people is never regained. But talk we not of these matters unsuited to thee.”

“To me! oh, thou errest! I, too, have my sighs for Greece; my cradle was rocked at the foot of Olympus; the gods have left the mountain, but their traces may be seen, — seen in the hearts of their worshippers, seen in the beauty of their clime; they tell me it *is* beautiful, and *I* have felt its airs, to which even these are harsh, — its sun, to which these skies are chill. Oh, talk to me of Greece! Poor fool that I am, I can comprehend thee! and methinks, had I yet lingered on those shores, had I been a Grecian maid whose happy fate it was to love and to be loved, I myself could have armed my lover for another Marathon, a new Platæa. Yes, the hand that now weaves the roses should have woven thee the olive crown!”

“If such a day could come!” said Glaucus, catching the enthusiasm of the blind Thessalian, and half rising. “But no! The sun has set, and the night only bids us be forgetful, and in forgetfulness be gay: weave still the roses!”

But it was with a melancholy tone of forced gayety that the Athenian uttered the last words: and sinking into a gloomy reverie, he was only wakened from it, a few minutes afterwards, by the voice of Nydia, as she sang in a low tone the following words, which he had once taught her: —

THE APOLOGY FOR PLEASURE.

I.

Who will assume the bays
 That the hero wore ?
 Wreaths on the Tomb of Days
 Gone evermore !
 Who shall disturb the brave,
 Or one leaf on their holy grave ?
 The laurel is vowed to them,
 Leave the bay on its sacred stem !
 But this, the rose, the fading rose,
 Alike for slave and freeman grows.

II.

If Memory sit beside the dead
 With tombs her only treasure ;
 If Hope is lost and Freedom fled,
 The more excuse for Pleasure.
 Come, weave the wreath, the roses weave.
 The rose at least is ours :
 To feeble hearts our fathers leave,
 In pitying scorn the flowers !

III.

On the summit worn and hoary,
 Of Phyle's solemn hill,
 The tramp of the brave is still !
 And still in the saddening Mart,
 The pulse of that mighty heart,
 Whose very blood was glory !
 Glaucopis forsakes her own,
 The angry gods forget us ;
 But yet, the blue streams along,
 Walk the feet of the silver Song ;
 And the night-bird wakes the moon ;
 And the bees in the blushing noon
 Haunt the heart of the old Hymettus.
 We are fallen, but not forlorn,
 If something is left to cherish ;
 As Love was the earliest born,
 So Love is the last to perish.

IV.

Wreathe then the roses, wreathe,
 The BEAUTIFUL still is ours ;
 While the stream shall flow and the sky shall glow,
 The BEAUTIFUL still is ours !
 Whatever is fair, or soft, or bright,
 In the lap of day or the arms of night,
 Whispers our soul of Greece — of Greece,
 And hushes our care with a voice of peace.
 Wreathe then the roses, wreathe !
 They tell me of earlier hours ;
 And I hear the heart of my country breathe
 From the lips of the stranger's flowers.

CHAPTER V.

NYDIA ENCOUNTERS JULIA. — INTERVIEW OF THE HEATHEN
 SISTER AND CONVERTED BROTHER. — AN ATHENIAN'S NOTION
 OF CHRISTIANITY.

“WHAT happiness to Ione ! what bliss to be ever by the side of Glaucus, to hear his voice ! And *she* too can see him !”

Such was the soliloquy of the blind girl, as she walked alone and at twilight to the house of her new mistress, whither Glaucus had already preceded her. Suddenly she was interrupted in her fond thoughts by a female voice.

“Blind flower-girl, whither goest thou ? There is no panner under thine arm ; hast thou sold all thy flowers ?”

The person thus accosting Nydia was a lady of a handsome but a bold and unmaidenly countenance : it was Julia, the daughter of Diomed. Her veil was half raised as she spoke ; she was accompanied by Diomed himself, and by a slave carrying a lantern before them : the merchant and his daughter were returning home from a supper at one of their neighbors'.

“Dost thou not remember my voice ?” continued Julia.
 “I am the daughter of Diomed the wealthy.”

“Ah! forgive me; yes, I recall the tones of your voice. No, noble Julia, I have no flowers to sell.”

“I heard that thou wert purchased by the beautiful Greek, Glaucus; is that true, pretty slave?” asked Julia.

“I serve the Neapolitan, Ione,” replied Nydia, evasively.

“Ah! and it is true, then —”

“Come, come!” interrupted Diomed, with his cloak up to his mouth, “the night grows cold; I cannot stay here while you prate to that blind girl. Come, let her follow you home, if you wish to speak to her.”

“Do, child,” said Julia, with the air of one not accustomed to be refused; “I have much to ask of thee: come.”

“I cannot this night, it grows late,” answered Nydia. “I must be at home; I am not free, noble Julia.”

“What, the meek Ione will chide thee? Ay, I doubt not she is a second Thalestris. But come, then, to-morrow, do. Remember, I have been thy friend of old.”

“I will obey thy wishes,” answered Nydia; and Diomed again impatiently summoned his daughter. She was obliged to proceed, with the main question she had desired to put to Nydia unasked.

Meanwhile we return to Ione. The interval of time that had elapsed that day between the first and second visit of Glaucus had not been too gayly spent. She had received a visit from her brother. Since the night he had assisted in saving her from the Egyptian, she had not before seen him.

Occupied with his own thoughts, — thoughts of so serious and intense a nature, — the young priest had thought little of his sister; in truth, men perhaps of that fervent order of mind which is ever aspiring *above* earth, are but little prone to the earthlier affections; and it had been long since Apæcidas had sought those soft and friendly interchanges of thought, those sweet confidences which in his earlier youth had bound him to Ione, and which are so natural to that endearing connection which existed between them.

Ione, however, had not ceased to regret his estrangement. She attributed it at present to the engrossing duties of his

severe fraternity. And often, amidst all her bright hopes, and her new attachment to her betrothed, — often, when she thought of her brother's brow prematurely furrowed, his unsmiling lip and bended frame, — she sighed to think that the service of the gods could throw so deep a shadow over that earth which the gods created.

But this day when he visited her there was a strange calmness on his features, a more quiet and self-possessed expression in his sunken eyes, than she had marked for years. This apparent improvement was but momentary; it was a false calm, which the least breeze could ruffle.

“May the gods bless thee, my brother!” said she, embracing him.

“The gods! Speak not thus vaguely; perchance there is but *one* God!”

“My brother!”

“What if the sublime faith of the Nazarene be true? What if God be a monarch, — One, Invisible, Alone? What if these numerous, countless deities, whose altars fill the earth, be but evil demons, seeking to wean us from the true creed? This may be the case, Ione!”

“Alas! can we believe it; or if we believed, would it not be a melancholy faith?” answered the Neapolitan. “What! all this beautiful world made only human, the mountain disenchanted of its Oread, the waters of their Nymph, that beautiful prodigality of faith which makes everything divine, consecrating the meanest flowers, bearing celestial whispers in the faintest breeze, — wouldst thou deny this, and make the earth mere dust and clay? No, Apæcides; all that is brightest in our hearts is that very credulity which peoples the universe with gods.”

Ione answered as a believer in the poesy of the old mythology would answer. We may judge by that reply how obstinate and hard the contest which Christianity had to endure among the heathens. The Graceful Superstition was never silent; every, the most household, action of their lives was entwined with it; it was a portion of life itself, as the flowers are a part of the thyrsus. At every incident they recurred to

a god; every cup of wine was prefaced by a libation; the very garlands on their thresholds were dedicated to some divinity; their ancestors themselves, made holy, presided as Lares over their hearth and hall. So abundant was belief with them, that in their own climes at this hour idolatry has never thoroughly been outrooted. It changes but its objects of worship; it appeals to innumerable saints where once it resorted to divinities; and it pours its crowds, in listening reverence, to oracles at the shrines of Saint Januarius or Saint Stephen instead of to those of Isis or Apollo.

But these superstitions were not to the early Christians the object of contempt so much as of horror. They did not believe, with the quiet scepticism of the heathen philosopher, that the gods were inventions of the priests; nor even, with the vulgar, that, according to the dim light of history, they had been mortals like themselves. They imagined the heathen divinities to be evil spirits; they transplanted to Italy and to Greece the gloomy demons of India and the East; and in Jupiter or in Mars they shuddered at the representative of Moloch or of Satan.¹

Apæcides had not yet adopted formally the Christian faith, but he was already on the brink of it. He already participated the doctrines of Olinthus; he already imagined that the lively imaginations of the heathen were the suggestions of the arch-enemy of mankind. The innocent and natural answer of Ione made him shudder. He hastened to reply vehemently, and yet so confusedly, that Ione feared for his reason more than she dreaded his violence.

“Ah, my brother!” said she, “these hard duties of thine have shattered thy very sense! Come to me, Apæcides, my brother, my own brother; give me thy hand, let me wipe the

¹ In Pompeii a rough sketch of Pluto delineates that fearful deity in the shape we at present ascribe to the devil, and decorates him with the paraphernalia of horns and a tail. But in all probability it was from the mysterious Pan, the haunter of solitary places, the inspirer of vague and soul-shaking terrors, that we took the vulgar notion of the outward likeness of the fiend; it corresponds exactly to the cloven-footed Satan. And in the lewd and profligate rites of Pan, Christians might well imagine they traced the deceptions of the devil.

dew from thy brow ; chide me not now, I understand thee not ; think only that Ione could not offend thee ! ”

“ Ione,” said Apæcides, drawing her towards him, and regarding her tenderly, “ can I think that this beautiful form, this kind heart, may be destined to an eternity of torment ? ”

“ *Dii meliora!* [the gods forbid !] ” said Ione, in the customary form of words by which her contemporaries thought an omen might be averted.

The words, and still more the superstition they implied, wounded the ear of Apæcides. He rose, muttering to himself, turned from the chamber, then, stopping half-way, gazed wistfully on Ione and extended his arms.

Ione flew to them in joy ; he kissed her earnestly, and then he said, —

“ Farewell, my sister ! When we next meet, thou mayst be to me as nothing ; take thou, then, this embrace, — full yet of all the tender reminiscences of childhood, when faith and hope, creeds, customs, interests, objects, were the same to us. Now the tie is to be broken ! ”

With these strange words he left the house.

The great and severest trial of the primitive Christians was indeed this : their conversion separated them from their dearest bonds. They could not associate with beings whose commonest actions, whose commonest forms of speech, were impregnated with idolatry. They shuddered at the blessing of love ; to their ears it was uttered in a demon’s name. This, their misfortune, was their strength ; if it divided them from the rest of the world, it was to unite them proportionally to each other. They were men of iron, who wrought forth the Word of God, and verily the bonds that bound them were of iron also.

Glaucus found Ione in tears ; he had already assumed the sweet privilege to console. He drew from her a recital of her interview with her brother ; but in her confused account of language, itself so confused to one not prepared for it, he was equally at a loss with Ione to conceive the intentions or the meaning of Apæcides.

"Hast thou ever heard much," asked she, "of this new sect of the Nazarenes of which my brother spoke?"

"I have often heard enough of the votaries," returned Glaucus; "but of their exact tenets know I naught, save that in their doctrine there seemeth something preternaturally chilling and morose. They live apart from their kind; they affect to be shocked even at our simple uses of garlands; they have no sympathies with the cheerful amusements of life; they utter awful threats of the coming destruction of the world; they appear, in one word, to have brought their unsmiling and gloomy creed out of the cave of Trophonius. Yet," continued Glaucus, after a slight pause, "they have not wanted men of great power and genius, nor converts, even among the Areopagites of Athens. Well do I remember to have heard my father speak of one strange guest at Athens, many years ago; methinks his name was PAUL. My father was amongst a mighty crowd that gathered on one of our immemorial hills to hear this sage of the East expound; through the wide throng there rang not a single murmur; the jest and the roar, with which our native orators are received, were hushed for him; and when, on the loftiest summit of that hill, raised above the breathless crowd below, stood this mysterious visitor, his mien and his countenance awed every heart, even before a sound left his lips. He was a man, I have heard my father say, of no tall stature, but of noble and impressive mien; his robes were dark and ample; the declining sun — for it was evening — shone aslant upon his form as it rose aloft, motionless and commanding; his countenance was much worn and marked, as of one who had braved alike misfortune and the sternest vicissitude of many climes; but his eyes were bright with an almost unearthly fire; and when he raised his arm to speak, it was with the majesty of a man into whom the spirit of a god hath rushed.

"'Men of Athens,' he is reported to have said, 'I find amongst ye an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Ye worship in ignorance the same Deity I serve. To you *unknown* till now, to you be it now revealed.'

"Then declared that solemn man how this great Maker of

all things, who had appointed unto man his several tribes and his various homes, the Lord of earth and the universal heaven, dwelt not in temples made with hands; that His presence, His spirit, were in the air we breathed; our life and our being were with Him. 'Think you,' he cried, 'that the Invisible is like your statues of gold and marble? Think you that He needeth sacrifice from you, — He who made heaven and earth?' Then spake he of fearful and coming times, of the end of the world, of a second rising of the dead, whereof an assurance had been given to man in the resurrection of the mighty Being whose religion he came to preach.

"When he thus spoke, the long-pent murmur went forth, and the philosophers that were mingled with the people muttered their sage contempt; there might you have seen the chilling frown of the Stoic and the Cynic's sneer;¹ and the Epicurean, who believeth not even in our own Elysium, muttered a pleasant jest, and swept laughing through the crowd: but the deep heart of the people was touched and thrilled; and they trembled, though they knew not why, for verily the stranger had the voice and majesty of a man to whom 'the Unknown God' had committed the preaching of His faith."

Ione listened with rapt attention, and the serious and earnest manner of the narrator betrayed the impression that he himself had received from one who had been amongst the audience that on the hill of the heathen Mars had heard the first tidings of the word of Christ!

¹ "The haughty Cynic scowl'd his grovelling hate,
And the soft garden's rose-encircled child
Smil'd unbelief, and shudder'd as he smil'd."

PRAED: *Prize Poem, "Athens."*

CHAPTER VI.

THE PORTER. — THE GIRL. — AND THE GLADIATOR.

THE door of Diomed's house stood open, and Medon, the old slave, sat at the bottom of the steps by which you ascended to the mansion. That luxurious mansion of the rich merchant of Pompeii is still to be seen just without the gates of the city, at the commencement of the Street of Tombs; it was a gay neighborhood, despite the dead. On the opposite side, but at some yards nearer the gate, was a spacious hostelry, at which those brought by business or by pleasure to Pompeii often stopped to refresh themselves. In the space before the entrance of the inn now stood wagons and carts and chariots, some just arrived, some just quitting, in all the bustle of an animated and popular resort of public entertainment. Before the door, some farmers, seated on a bench by a small circular table, were talking, over their morning cups, on the affairs of their calling. On the side of the door itself was painted gayly and freshly the eternal sign of the checkers.¹ By the roof of the inn stretched a terrace, on which some females, wives of the farmers above mentioned, were, some seated, some leaning over the railing, and conversing with their friends below. In a deep recess, at a little distance, was a covered seat, in which some two or three poorer travellers were resting themselves, and shaking the dust from their garments. On the other side stretched a wide space, originally the burial-ground of a more ancient race than the present denizens of Pompeii, and now converted into the Ustrinum, or place for the burning of the dead. Above this rose the terraces of a gay villa, half hid by trees. The tombs themselves, with their graceful and varied shapes, the flowers and the foliage that surrounded them, made no melancholy feature in the prospect. Hard by the gate of the city, in a

¹ There is another inn within the walls similarly adorned.

small niche, stood the still form of the well-disciplined Roman sentry, the sun shining brightly on his polished crest, and the lance on which he leaned. The gate itself was divided into three arches, the centre one for vehicles, the others for the foot-passengers; and on either side rose the massive walls which girt the city, composed, patched, repaired at a thousand different epochs, according as war, time, or the earthquake had shattered that vain protection. At frequent intervals rose square towers, whose summits broke in picturesque rudeness the regular line of the wall, and contrasted well with the modern buildings gleaming whitely by.

The curving road, which in that direction leads from Pompeii to Herculaneum, wound out of sight amidst hanging vines, above which frowned the sullen majesty of Vesuvius.

"Hast thou heard the news, old Medon?" said a young woman, with a pitcher in her hand, as she paused by Diomed's door to gossip a moment with the slave, ere she repaired to the neighboring inn to fill the vessel, and coquet with the travellers.

"The news! What news?" said the slave, raising his eyes moodily from the ground.

"Why, there passed through the gate this morning, no doubt ere thou wert well awake, such a visitor to Pompeii!"

"Ay," said the slave, indifferently.

"Yes, a present from the noble Pomponianus."

"A present! I thought thou saidst a visitor!"

"It is both visitor and present. Know, O dull and stupid! that it is a most beautiful young tiger, for our approaching games in the amphitheatre. Hear you that, Medon? Oh, what pleasure! I declare I shall not sleep a wink till I see it; they say it has such a roar!"

"Poor fool!" said Medon, sadly and cynically.

"Fool me no fool, old churl! It is a pretty thing, a tiger, especially if we could but find somebody for him to eat. We have now a lion and a tiger: only consider that, Medon; and for want of two good criminals perhaps we shall be forced to see them eat each other. By the bye, your son is a gladiator, a handsome man and a strong; can you not persuade him to

fight the tiger? Do now; you would oblige me mightily: nay, you would be a benefactor to the whole town."

"Vah! vah!" said the slave, with great asperity; "think of thine own danger ere thou thus pratest of my poor boy's death."

"My own danger!" said the girl, frightened and looking hastily round: "avert the omen; let thy words fall on thine own head!" And the girl, as she spoke, touched a talisman suspended round her neck. "'Thine own danger!' What danger threatens me?"

"Had the earthquake but a few nights since no warning?" said Medon. "Has it not a voice? Did it not say to us all, 'Prepare for death; the end of all things is at hand'?"

"Bah, stuff!" said the young woman, settling the folds of her tunic. "Now thou talkest as they say the Nazarenes talk; methinks thou art one of them. Well, I can prate with thee, gray croaker, no more; thou growest worse and worse. *Vale!* O Hercules, send us a man for the lion, and another for the tiger!

'Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row!
Lo, the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmena,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hush'd arena;
Talk while you may: you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death.
Tramp, tramp, how gayly they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!'"

Chanting in a silver and clear voice this feminine ditty, and holding up her tunic from the dusty road, the young woman stepped lightly across to the crowded hostelry.

"My poor son!" said the slave, half aloud, "is it for things like this thou art to be butchered? O faith of Christ, I could worship thee in all sincerity, were it but for the horror which thou inspirest for these bloody lists!"

The old man's head sank dejectedly on his breast. He remained silent and absorbed, but every now and then with the corner of his sleeve he wiped his eyes. His heart was with his son; he did not see the figure that now approached from the gate with a quick step, and a somewhat fierce and reckless

gait and carriage. He did not lift his eyes till the figure paused opposite the place where he sat, and with a soft voice addressed him by the name of —

“Father!”

“My boy! my Lydon! is it indeed thou?” said the old man, joyfully. “Ah, thou wert present to my thoughts.”

“I am glad to hear it, my father,” said the gladiator, respectfully touching the knees and beard of the slave; “and soon may I be always present with thee, not in thought only.”

“Yes, my son, but not in this world,” replied the slave, mournfully.

“Talk not thus, oh, my sire! look cheerfully, for I feel so: I am sure that I shall win the day; and then, the gold I gain buys thy freedom. Oh, my father, it was but a few days since that I was taunted, by one, too, whom I would gladly have undeceived, for he is more generous than the rest of his equals. He is not Roman, he is of Athens; by him I was taunted with the lust of gain, when I demanded what sum was the prize of victory. Alas! he little knew the soul of Lydon!”

“My boy! my boy!” said the old slave, as, slowly ascending the steps, he conducted his son to his own little chamber communicating with the entrance-hall (which in this villa was the peristyle, not the atrium — you may see it now; it is the third door to the right on entering. The first door conducts to the staircase; the second is but a false recess, in which there stood a statue of bronze). “Generous, affectionate, pious as are thy motives,” said Medon, when they were thus secured from observation, “thy deed itself is guilt: thou art to risk thy blood for thy father’s freedom, — that might be forgiven; but the prize of victory is the blood of another. Oh, *that* is a deadly sin; no object can purify it. Forbear! forbear! rather would I be a slave forever, than purchase liberty on such terms!”

“Hush, my father!” replied Lydon, somewhat impatiently; “thou has picked up in this new creed of thine, of which I pray thee not to speak to me, for the gods that gave me

strength denied me wisdom, and I understand not one word of what thou often preachest to me, — thou hast picked up, I say, in this new creed, some singular fantasies of right and wrong. Pardon me if I offend thee : but reflect ! Against whom shall I contend ? Oh, couldst thou know those wretches with whom for thy sake I assort, thou wouldst think I purified earth by removing one of them ! Beasts, whose very lips drop blood ; things, all savage, unprincipled in their very courage ; ferocious, heartless, senseless ; no tie of life can bind them ; they know not fear, it is true, but neither know they gratitude, nor charity, nor love ; they are made but for their own career, to slaughter without pity, to die without dread ! Can thy gods, whosoever they be, look with wrath on a conflict with such as these, and in such a cause ? Oh, my father, wherever the powers above gaze down on earth, they behold no duty so sacred, so sanctifying, as the sacrifice offered to an aged parent by the piety of a grateful son ! ”

The poor old slave, himself deprived of the lights of knowledge, and only late a convert to the Christian faith, knew not with what arguments to enlighten an ignorance at once so dark and yet so beautiful in its error. His first impulse was to throw himself on his son’s breast, his next to start away, to wring his hands ; and in the attempt to reprove, his broken voice lost itself in weeping.

“ And if,” resumed Lydon, — “ if thy Deity (methinks thou wilt own but one !) be indeed that benevolent and pitying Power which thou assertest Him to be, He will know also that thy very faith in Him first confirmed me in that determination thou blamest.”

“ How ! what mean you ? ” said the slave.

“ Why, thou knowest that I, sold in my childhood as a slave, was set free at Rome by the will of my master, whom I had been fortunate enough to please. I hastened to Pompeii to see thee ; I found thee already aged and infirm, under the yoke of a capricious and pampered lord ; thou hadst lately adopted this new faith, and its adoption made thy slavery doubly painful to thee ; it took away all the softening charm of custom, which reconciles us so often to the worst. Didst

thou not complain to me that thou wert compelled to offices that were not odious to thee as a slave, but guilty as a Nazarene? Didst thou not tell me that thy soul shook with remorse when thou wert compelled to place even a crumb of cake before the Lares that watch over yon impluvium; that thy soul was torn by a perpetual struggle? Didst thou not tell me that even by pouring wine before the threshold, and calling on the name of some Grecian deity, thou didst fear thou wert incurring penalties worse than those of Tantalus, an eternity of tortures more terrible than those of the Tartarean fields? Didst thou not tell me this? I wondered, I could not comprehend: nor, by Hercules! can I now; but I was thy son, and my sole task was to compassionate and relieve. Could I hear thy groans, could I witness thy mysterious horrors, thy constant anguish, and remain inactive? No! by the immortal gods! the thought struck me like light from Olympus! I had no money, but I had strength and youth,—these were thy gifts: I could sell these in my turn for thee! I learned the amount of thy ransom; I learned that the usual prize of a victorious gladiator would doubly pay it. I became a gladiator; I linked myself with those accursed men, scorning, loathing, while I joined; I acquired their skill; blessed be the lesson! it shall teach me to free my father!”

“Oh, that thou couldst hear Olinthus!” sighed the old man, more and more affected by the virtue of his son, but not less strongly convinced of the criminality of his purpose.

“I will hear the whole world talk if thou wilt,” answered the gladiator, gayly; “but not till thou art a slave no more. Beneath thy own roof, my father, thou shalt puzzle this dull brain all day long, ay, and all night too, if it give thee pleasure. Oh, such a spot as I have chalked out for thee! It is one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine shops of old Julia Felix, in the sunny part of the city, where thou mayst bask before the door in the day. And I will sell the oil and the wine for thee, my father, and then, please Venus (or if it does not please her, since thou lovest not her name, it is all one to Lydon), then, I say, perhaps thou mayst have a daughter, too, to tend thy

gray hairs, and hear shrill voices at thy knee that shall call thee 'Lydon's father'! Ah! we shall be so happy: the prize can purchase all. Cheer thee! cheer up, my sire! And now I must away; day wears; the lanista waits me. Come! thy blessing!"

As Lydon thus spoke, he had already quitted the dark chamber of his father; and speaking eagerly, though in a whispered tone, they now stood at the same place in which we introduced the porter at his post.

"Oh, bless thee! bless thee, my brave boy!" said Medon, fervently; "and may the great Power that reads all hearts see the nobleness of thine, and forgive its error!"

The tall shape of the gladiator passed swiftly down the path; the eyes of the slave followed its light but stately steps, till the last glimpse was gone; and then, sinking once more on his seat, his eyes again fastened themselves on the ground: his form, mute and unmoving as a thing of stone; his heart—who in our happier age can even imagine its struggles, its commotion?

"May I enter?" said a sweet voice. "Is thy mistress Julia within?"

The slave mechanically motioned to the visitor to enter, but she who addressed him could not see the gesture; she repeated her question timidly, but in a louder voice.

"Have I not told thee?" said the slave, peevishly; "enter."

"Thanks," said the speaker, plaintively; and the slave, roused by the tone, looked up, and recognized the blind flower-girl. Sorrow can sympathize with affliction: he raised himself, and guided her steps to the head of the adjacent staircase (by which you descended to Julia's apartment), where, summoning a female slave, he consigned to her the charge of the blind girl.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DRESSING-ROOM OF A POMPEIAN BEAUTY. — IMPORTANT
CONVERSATION BETWEEN JULIA AND NYDIA.

THE elegant Julia sat in her chamber, with her slaves around her; like the cubiculum which adjoined it, the room was small, but much larger than the usual apartments appropriated to sleep, which were so diminutive that few who have not seen the bed-chambers, even in the gayest mansions, can form any notion of the petty pigeon-holes in which the citizens of Pompeii evidently thought it desirable to pass the night. But, in fact, "bed" with the ancients was not that grave, serious, and important part of domestic mysteries which it is with us. The couch itself was more like a very narrow and small sofa, light enough to be transported easily, and by the occupant himself,¹ from place to place; and it was no doubt constantly shifted from chamber to chamber, according to the caprices of the inmate or the changes of the season; for that side of the house which was crowded in one month, might perhaps be carefully avoided in the next. There was also among the Italians of that period a singular and fastidious apprehension of too much daylight; their darkened chambers, which first appear to us the result of a negligent architecture were the effect of the most elaborate study. In their porticos and gardens they courted the sun whenever it so pleased their luxurious tastes. In the interior of their houses they sought rather the coolness and the shade.

Julia's apartment at that season was in the lower part of the house, immediately beneath the state rooms above, and looking upon the garden, with which it was on a level. The wide door, which was glazed, alone admitted the morning rays; yet her eye, accustomed to a certain darkness, was sufficiently acute to perceive exactly what colors were the most becoming, what shade of the delicate rouge gave the brightest beam to

¹ "Take up thy bed and walk" was (as Sir W. Gell somewhere observes) no metaphorical expression.

her dark glance and the most youthful freshness to her cheek.

On the table, before which she sat, was a small and circular mirror of the most polished steel; round which, in precise order, were ranged the cosmetics and the unguents, the perfumes and the paints, the jewels and the combs, the ribbons and the gold pins, which were destined to add to the natural attractions of beauty the assistance of art and the capricious allurements of fashion. Through the dimness of the room glowed brightly the vivid and various colorings of the wall, in all the dazzling frescos of Pompeian taste. Before the dressing-table, and under the feet of Julia, was spread a carpet, woven from the looms of the East. Near at hand, on another table, was a silver basin and ewer; an extinguished lamp, of most exquisite workmanship, in which the artist had represented a Cupid reposing under the spreading branches of a myrtle-tree; and a small roll of papyrus, containing the softest elegies of Tibullus. Before the door, which communicated with the cubiculum, hung a curtain richly brodered with gold flowers. Such was the dressing-room of a beauty eighteen centuries ago.

The fair Julia leaned indolently back on her seat, while the ornatrix (that is, hairdresser) slowly piled, one above the other, a mass of small curls, dexterously weaving the false with the true, and carrying the whole fabric to a height that seemed to place the head rather at the centre than the summit of the human form.

Her tunic, of a deep amber, which well set off her dark hair and somewhat embrowned complexion, swept in ample folds to her feet, which were cased in slippers, fastened round the slender ankle by white thongs; while a profusion of pearls were embroidered in the slipper itself, which was of purple, and turned slightly upward, as do the Turkish slippers at this day. An old slave, skilled by long experience in all the arcana of the toilet, stood beside the hairdresser, with the broad and studded girdle of her mistress over her arm, and giving, from time to time (mingled with judicious flattery to the lady herself), instructions to the mason of the ascending pile.

“Put that pin rather more to the right; lower, stupid one! Do you not observe how even those beautiful eyebrows are? One would think you were dressing Corinna, whose face is all of one side. Now put in the flowers; what, fool! not that dull pink; you are not suiting colors to the dim cheek of Chloris: it must be the brightest flowers that can alone suit the cheek of the young Julia.”

“Gently!” said the lady, stamping her small foot violently: “you pull my hair as if you were plucking up a weed!”

“Dull thing!” continued the directress of the ceremony. “Do you not know how delicate is your mistress? You are not dressing the coarse horsehair of the widow Fulvia. Now, then, the ribbon; that’s right. Fair Julia, look in the mirror; saw you ever anything so lovely as yourself?”

When, after innumerable comments, difficulties, and delays, the intricate tower was at length completed, the next preparation was that of giving to the eyes the soft languish, produced by a dark powder applied to the lids and brows; a small patch cut in the form of a crescent, skilfully placed by the rosy lips, attracted attention to their dimples, and to the teeth, to which already every art had been applied in order to heighten the dazzle of their natural whiteness.

To another slave, hitherto idle, was now consigned the charge of arranging the jewels, — the earrings of pearl (two to each ear); the massive bracelets of gold; the chain formed of rings of the same metal, to which a talisman cut in crystals was attached; the graceful buckle on the left shoulder, in which was set an exquisite cameo of Psyche; the girdle of purple ribbon, richly wrought with threads of gold and clasped by interlacing serpents; and lastly, the various rings, fitted to every joint of the white and slender fingers. The toilet was now arranged according to the last mode of Rome. The fair Julia regarded herself with a last gaze of complacent vanity, and reclining again upon her seat, she bade the youngest of her slaves, in a listless tone, read to her the enamoured couplets of Tibullus. This lecture was still proceeding, when a female slave admitted Nydia into the presence of the lady of the place.

"*Salve, Julia,*" said the flower-girl, arresting her steps within a few paces from the spot where Julia sat, and crossing her arms upon her breast. "I have obeyed your commands."

"You have done well, flower-girl," answered the lady. "Approach: you may take a seat."

One of the slaves placed a stool by Julia, and Nydia seated herself.

Julia looked hard at the Thessalian for some moments in rather an embarrassed silence. She then motioned her attendants to withdraw, and to close the door. When they were alone, she said, looking mechanically from Nydia, and forgetful that she was with one who could not observe her countenance, —

"You serve the Neapolitan, Ione?"

"I am with her at present," answered Nydia.

"Is she as handsome as they say?"

"I know not," replied Nydia. "How can *I* judge?"

"Ah! I should have remembered. But thou hast ears, if not eyes. Do thy fellow-slaves tell thee she is handsome? Slaves talking with one another forget to flatter even their mistress."

"They tell me that she is beautiful."

"Hem! Say they that she is tall?"

"Yes."

"Why, so am I. Dark-haired?"

"I have heard so."

"So am I. And doth Glaucus visit her much?"

"Daily," returned Nydia, with a half-suppressed sigh.

"Daily, indeed! Does he find her handsome?"

"I should think so, since they are so soon to be wedded."

"Wedded!" cried Julia, turning pale even through the false roses on her cheek, and starting from her couch. Nydia did not, of course, perceive the emotion she had caused. Julia remained a long time silent; but her heaving breast and flashing eyes would have betrayed, to one who *could* have seen, the wound her vanity had sustained.

"They tell me thou art a Thessalian," said she, at last breaking silence.

“And truly!”

“Thessaly is the land of magic and of witches, of talismans and of love-philtres,” said Julia.

“It has ever been celebrated for its sorcerers,” returned Nydia, timidly.

“Knowest thou, then, blind Thessalian, of any love-charms?”

“I!” said the flower-girl, coloring; “*I!* how should I? No, assuredly not!”

“The worse for thee; I could have given thee gold enough to have purchased thy freedom hadst thou been more wise.”

“But what,” asked Nydia, “can induce the beautiful and wealthy Julia to ask that question of her servant? Has she not money, and youth, and loveliness? Are *they* not love-charms enough to dispense with magic?”

“To all but one person in the world,” answered Julia, haughtily; “but methinks thy blindness is infectious, and — but no matter.”

“And that one person?” said Nydia, eagerly.

“Is *not* Glaucus,” replied Julia, with the customary deceit of her sex. “Glaucus — no!”

Nydia drew her breath more freely, and after a short pause Julia recommenced.

“But talking of Glaucus and his attachment to this Neapolitan reminded me of the influence of love-spells, which, for aught I know or care, she may have exercised upon him. Blind girl, I love, and — shall Julia live to say it? — am loved not in return! This humbles, — nay, not *humbles*, but it *stings* my pride. I would see this ingrate at my feet; not in order that I might raise, but that I might spurn him. When they told me thou wert Thessalian, I imagined thy young mind might have learned the dark secrets of thy clime.”

“Alas! no,” murmured Nydia; “would it had!”

“Thanks, at least, for that kindly wish,” said Julia, unconscious of what was passing in the breast of the flower-girl. “But tell me, — thou hearest the gossip of slaves, always prone to these dim beliefs, always ready to apply to sorcery for their own low loves, — hast thou ever heard of any Eastern

magician in this city, who possesses the art of which thou art ignorant? No vain chiromancer, no juggler of the market-place, but some more potent and mighty magician of India or of Egypt?"

"Of Egypt? yes!" said Nydia, shuddering. "What Pompeian has not heard of Arbaces?"

"Arbaces! true," replied Julia, grasping at the recollection. "They say he is a man above all the petty and false impostures of dull pretenders; that he is versed in the learning of the stars, and the secrets of the ancient Nox: why not in the mysteries of love?"

"If there be one magician living whose art is above that of others, it is that dread man," answered Nydia; and she felt her talisman while she spoke.

"He is too wealthy to divine for money!" continued Julia, sneeringly. "Can I not visit him?"

"It is an evil mansion for the young and the beautiful," replied Nydia. "I have heard, too, that he languishes in —"

"An evil mansion!" said Julia, catching only the first sentence. "Why so?"

"The orgies of his midnight leisure are impure and polluted; at least, so says rumor."

"By Ceres, by Pan, and by Cybele! thou dost but provoke my curiosity, instead of exciting my fears," returned the wayward and pampered Pompeian. "I will seek and question him of his lore. If to these orgies love be admitted, — why, the more likely that he knows its secrets!"

Nydia did not answer.

"I will seek him this very day," resumed Julia; "nay, why not this very hour?"

"At daylight, and in his present state, thou hast assuredly the less to fear," answered Nydia, yielding to her own sudden and secret wish to learn if the dark Egyptian were indeed possessed of those spells to rivet and attract love, of which the Thessalian had so often heard.

"And who would dare insult the rich daughter of Diomed?" said Julia, haughtily. "I will go."

"May I visit thee afterwards to learn the result?" asked Nydia, anxiously.

"Kiss me for thy interest in Julia's honor," answered the lady. "Yes, assuredly. This eve we sup abroad; come hither at the same hour to-morrow, and thou shalt know all. I may have to employ thee too; but enough for the present. Stay; take this bracelet for the new thought thou hast inspired me with: remember, if thou servest Julia, she is grateful and she is generous."

"I cannot take thy present," said Nydia, putting aside the bracelet: "but young as I am, I can sympathize unbought with those who love, and love in vain."

"Sayest thou so?" returned Julia. "Thou speakest like a free woman, and thou shalt yet be free: farewell!"

END OF VOLUME I.

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BOOK III.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER VIII.

JULIA SEEKS ARBACES. — THE RESULT OF THAT INTERVIEW.

ARBACES was seated in a chamber which opened on a kind of balcony or portico that fronted his garden. His cheek was pale and worn with the sufferings he had endured, but his iron frame had already recovered from the severest effects of that accident which had frustrated his fell designs in the moment of victory. The air that came fragrantly to his brow revived his languid senses, and the blood circulated more freely than it had done for days through his shrunken veins.

“So, then,” thought he, “the storm of fate has broken and blown over; the evil which my lore predicted, threatening life itself, has chanced — and yet I live! It came as the stars foretold; and now the long, bright, and prosperous career which was to succeed that evil, if I survived it, smiles beyond: I have passed, I have subdued the latest danger of my destiny. Now I have but to lay out the gardens of my future fate, unterrified and secure. First, then, of all my pleasures, even before that of love, shall come revenge! This boy Greek,

who has crossed my passion, thwarted my designs, baffled me even when the blade was about to drink his accursed blood, shall not a second time escape me ! . But for the method of my vengeance ? Of that let me ponder well ! Oh, Até, if thou art indeed a goddess, fill me with thy direst inspiration !” The Egyptian sank into an intent reverie, which did not seem to present to him any clear or satisfactory suggestions. He changed his position restlessly, as he revolved scheme after scheme, which no sooner occurred than it was dismissed ; several times he struck his breast and groaned aloud, with the desire of vengeance, and a sense of his impotence to accomplish it. While thus absorbed, a boy-slave timidly entered the chamber.

A female, evidently of rank from her dress, and that of the single slave who attended her, waited below, and sought an audience with Arbaces.

“ A female !” his heart beat quick. “ Is she young ?”

“ Her face is concealed by her veil ; but her form is slight, yet round as that of youth.”

“ Admit her,” said the Egyptian ; for a moment his vain heart dreamed the stranger might be Ione.

The first glance of the visitor now entering the apartment sufficed to undeceive so erring a fancy. True, she was about the same height as Ione, and perhaps the same age ; true, she was finely and richly formed : but where was that undulating and ineffable grace which accompanied every motion of the peerless Neapolitan, — the chaste and decorous garb, so simple even in the care of its arrangement, the dignified yet bashful step, the majesty of womanhood and its modesty ?

“ Pardon me that I rise with pain,” said Arbaces, gazing on the stranger ; “ I am still suffering from recent illness.”

“ Do not disturb thyself, O great Egyptian !” returned Julia, seeking to disguise the fear she already experienced beneath the ready resort of flattery ; “ and forgive an unfortunate female, who seeks consolation from thy wisdom.”

“ Draw near, fair stranger,” said Arbaces, “ and speak without apprehension or reserve.”

Julia placed herself on a seat beside the Egyptian, and

wonderingly gazed around an apartment whose elaborate and costly luxuries shamed even the ornate enrichment of her father's mansion; fearfully, too, she regarded the hieroglyphical inscriptions on the walls, the faces of the mysterious images which at every corner gazed upon her, the tripod at a little distance, and, above all, the grave and remarkable countenance of Arbaces himself. A long white robe like a veil half covered his raven locks, and flowed to his feet; his face was made even more impressive by its present paleness; and his dark and penetrating eyes seem to pierce the shelter of her veil, and explore the secrets of her vain and unfeminine soul.

"And what," said his low, deep voice, "brings thee, O maiden, to the house of the Eastern stranger?"

"His fame," replied Julia.

"In what?" said he, with a strange and slight smile.

"Canst thou ask, O wise Arbaces? Is not thy knowledge the very gossip theme of Pompeii?"

"Some little lore have I, indeed, treasured up," replied Arbaces; "but in what can such serious and sterile secrets benefit the ear of beauty?"

"Alas!" said Julia, a little cheered by the accustomed accents of adulation, "does not sorrow fly to wisdom for relief, and they who love unrequitedly, are not they the chosen victims of grief?"

"Ha!" said Arbaces, "can unrequited love be the lot of so fair a form, whose modelled proportions are visible even beneath the folds of thy graceful robe? Deign, O maiden, to lift thy veil, that I may see at least if the face correspond in loveliness with the form."

Not unwilling, perhaps, to exhibit her charms, and thinking they were likely to interest the magician in her fate, Julia, after some slight hesitation, raised her veil, and revealed a beauty, which, but for art, had been indeed attractive to the fixed gaze of the Egyptian.

"Thou comest to me for advice in unhappy love," said he; "well, turn that face on the ungrateful one; what other love-charm can I give thee?"

"Oh, cease these courtesies!" said Julia; "it is a love-charm, indeed, that I would ask from thy skill."

"Fair stranger!" replied Arbaces, somewhat scornfully, "love-spells are not among the secrets I have wasted the midnight oil to attain."

"Is it indeed so? Then pardon me, great Arbaces, and farewell!"

"Stay," said Arbaces, who, despite his passion for Ione, was not unmoved by the beauty of his visitor, and had he been in the flush of a more assured health, might have attempted to console the fair Julia by other means than those of supernatural wisdom; "stay; although that I confess I have left the witchery of philtres and potions to those whose trade is in such knowledge, yet am I myself not so dull to beauty but that in earlier youth I may have employed them in my own behalf. I may give thee advice, at least, if thou wilt be candid with me. Tell me then, first, art thou unmarried, as thy dress betokens?"

"Yes," said Julia.

"And, being unblest with fortune, wouldst thou allure some wealthy suitor?"

"I am richer than he who disdains me."

"Strange and more strange! And thou lovest him who loves not thee?"

"I know not if I love him," answered Julia, haughtily; "but I know that I would see myself triumph over a rival; I would see him who rejected me my suitor; I would see her whom he has preferred in her turn despised."

"A natural ambition and a womanly," said the Egyptian, in a tone too grave for irony. "Yet more, fair maiden; wilt thou confide to me the name of thy lover? Can he be Pompeian, and despise wealth, even if blind to beauty?"

"He is of Athens," answered Julia, looking down.

"Ha!" cried the Egyptian, impetuously, as the blood rushed to his cheek; "there is but one Athenian, young and noble, in Pompeii. Can it be Glaucus of whom thou speakest!"

"Ah, betray me not! So indeed they call him."

The Egyptian sank back, gazing vacantly on the averted

face of the merchant's daughter, and muttering inly to himself: this conference, with which he had hitherto only trifled, amusing himself with the credulity and vanity of his visitor, — might it not minister to his revenge?

"I see thou canst assist me not," said Julia, offended by his continued silence; "guard at least my secret. Once more, farewell!"

"Maiden," said the Egyptian, in an earnest and serious tone, "thy suit hath touched me; I will minister to thy will. Listen to me; I have not myself dabbled in these lesser mysteries, but I know one who hath. At the base of Vesuvius, less than a league from the city, there dwells a powerful witch; beneath the rank dews of the new moon, she has gathered the herbs which possess the virtue to chain Love in eternal fetters. Her art can bring thy lover to thy feet. Seek her, and mention to her the name of Arbaces; she fears that name, and will give thee her most potent philtres."

"Alas!" answered Julia, "I know not the road to the home of her whom thou speakest of; the way, short though it be, is long to traverse for a girl who leaves, unknown, the house of her father. The country is entangled with wild vines, and dangerous with precipitous caverns. I dare not trust to mere strangers to guide me; the reputation of women of my rank is easily tarnished; and though I care not who knows that I love Glaucus, I would not have it imagined that I obtained his love by a spell."

"Were I but three days advanced in health," said the Egyptian, rising and walking (as if to try his strength) across the chamber, but with irregular and feeble steps, "I myself would accompany thee. Well, thou must wait."

"But Glaucus is soon to wed that hated Neapolitan."

"Wed!"

"Yes; in the early part of next month."

"So soon! Art thou well advised of this?"

"From the lips of her own slave."

"It shall not be!" said the Egyptian, impetuously. "Fear nothing: Glaucus shall be thine. Yet how, when thou obtainest it, canst thou administer to him this potion?"

“My father has invited him, and, I believe, the Neapolitan also, to a banquet, on the day following to-morrow; I shall then have the opportunity to administer it.”

“So be it!” said the Egyptian, with eyes flashing such fierce joy that Julia’s gaze sank trembling beneath them. “To-morrow eve, then, order thy litter: thou hast one at thy command?”

“Surely — yes,” returned the purse-proud Julia.

“Order thy litter: at two miles’ distance from the city is a house of entertainment, frequented by the wealthier Pompeians, from the excellence of its baths and the beauty of its gardens. There canst thou pretend only to shape thy course; there, ill or dying, I will meet thee by the statue of Silenus, in the copse that skirts the garden, and I myself will guide thee to the witch. Let us wait till, with the evening star, the goats of the herdsmen are gone to rest, when the dark twilight conceals us, and none shall cross our steps. Go home, and fear not. By Hades, swears Arbaces, the sorcerer of Egypt, that I one shall never wed with Glaucus!”

“And that Glaucus shall be mine?” added Julia, filling up the incompleted sentence.

“Thou hast said it!” replied Arbaces; and Julia, half frightened at this unhallowed appointment, but urged on by jealousy and the pique of rivalry, even more than love, resolved to fulfil it.

Left alone, Arbaces burst forth, —

“Bright stars that never lie, ye already begin the execution of your promises, — success in love, and victory over foes, for the rest of my smooth existence. In the very hour when my mind could devise no clew to the goal of vengeance, have ye sent this fair fool for my guide!” He paused in deep thought. “Yes,” said he again, but in a calmer voice, “I could not myself have given to her the poison, that shall be indeed a philtre! his death might be thus tracked to my door. But the witch, ay, *there* is the fit, the natural agent of my designs!”

He summoned one of his slaves, bade him hasten to track the steps of Julia, and acquaint himself with her name and



THE CIVIL FORUM.



condition. This done, he stepped forth into the portico. The skies were serene and clear; but he, deeply read in the signs of their various change, beheld in one mass of cloud, far on the horizon, which the wind began slowly to agitate, that a storm was brooding above.

“It is like my vengeance,” said he, as he gazed; “the sky is clear, but the cloud moves on.”

CHAPTER IX.

A STORM IN THE SOUTH. — THE WITCH’S CAVERN.

IT was when the heats of noon died gradually away from the earth, that Glaucus and Ione went forth to enjoy the cooled and grateful air. At that time various carriages were in use among the Romans; the one most used by the richer citizens, when they required no companion in their excursions, was the *biga*, already described in the early portion of this work; that appropriated to the matrons was termed *carpentum*,¹ which had commonly two wheels; the ancients used also a sort of litter, a vast sedan-chair, more commodiously arranged than the modern, inasmuch as the occupant thereof could lie down at ease, instead of being perpendicularly and stiffly jostled up and down.² There was another carriage, used both for travelling and for excursions in the country; it was commodious, containing three or four persons with ease, having a covering which could be raised at pleasure; and, in short, answering very much the purpose of (though very different in shape from) the modern *britska*. It was a vehicle of this description that the lovers, accompanied by one female slave of Ione, now used in their excursion. About ten miles from the city there was at that day an old ruin, the remains of a temple, evidently Grecian; and as for Glaucus and Ione every-

¹ For public festivals and games they used one more luxurious and costly called *pilentum*, with four wheels.

² But they had also the *sella*, or sedan, in which they sat as we do.

thing Grecian possessed an interest, they had agreed to visit these ruins: it was thither they were now bound.

Their road lay among vines and olive-groves, till, winding more and more towards the higher ground of Vesuvius, the path grew rugged; the mules moved slowly, and with labor; and at every opening in the wood they beheld those gray and horrent caverns indenting the parched rock, which Strabo has described, but which the various revolutions of time and the volcano have removed from the present aspect of the mountain. The sun, sloping towards his descent, cast long and deep shadows over the mountain; here and there they still heard the rustic reed of the shepherd amongst copses of the beech-wood and wild oak. Sometimes they marked the form of the silk-haired and graceful capella, with its wreathing horn and bright gray eye, which, still beneath Ausonian skies, recalls the eclogues of Maro, browsing half-way up the hills; and the grapes, already purple with the smiles of the deepening summer, glowed out from the arched festoons which hung pendent from tree to tree. Above them light clouds floated in the serene heavens, sweeping so slowly athwart the firmament that they scarcely seemed to stir; while on their right they caught ever and anon glimpses of the waveless sea, with some light bark skimming its surface, and the sunlight breaking over the deep in those countless and softest hues so peculiar to that delicious sea.

“How beautiful,” said Glaucus, in a half-whispered tone, “is that expression by which we call Earth our Mother! With what a kindly equal love she pours her blessings upon her children! and even to those sterile spots to which Nature has denied beauty, she yet contrives to dispense her smiles: witness the arbutus and the vine, which she wreathes over the arid and burning soil of yon extinct volcano. Ah! in such an hour and scene as this, well might we imagine that the laughing face of the Faun should peep forth from those green festoons; or that we might trace the steps of the Mountain Nymph through the thickest mazes of the glade. But the Nymphs ceased, beautiful Ione, when *thou* wert created!”

There is no tongue that flatters like a lover's; and yet, in

the exaggeration of his feelings flattery seems to him commonplace. Strange and prodigal exuberance, which soon exhausts itself by overflowing!

They arrived at the ruins; they examined them with that fondness with which we trace the hallowed and household vestiges of our own ancestry; they lingered there till Hesperus appeared in the rosy heavens; and then returning homeward in the twilight, they were more silent than they had been; for in the shadow and beneath the stars they felt more oppressively their mutual love.

It was at this time that the storm which the Egyptian had predicted began to creep invisibly over them. At first, a low and distant thunder gave warning of the approaching conflict of the elements, and then rapidly rushed above the dark ranks of the serried clouds. The suddenness of storms in that climate is something almost preternatural, and might well suggest to early superstition the notion of a divine agency; a few large drops broke heavily among the boughs that half overhung their path, and then, swift and intolerably bright, the forked lightning darted across their very eyes, and was swallowed up by the increasing darkness.

“Swifter, good Carrucarius!” cried Glaucus to the driver; “the tempest comes on apace.”

The slave urged on the mules; they went swift over the uneven and stony road; the clouds thickened, near and more near broke the thunder, and fast rushed the dashing rain.

“Dost thou fear?” whispered Glaucus, as he sought excuse in the storm to come nearer to Ione.

“Not with thee,” said she, softly.

At that instant the carriage, fragile and ill-contrived (as, despite their graceful shapes, were, for practical uses, most of such inventions at that time), struck violently into a deep rut over which lay a log of fallen wood; the driver, with a curse, stimulated his mules yet faster for the obstacle, the wheel was torn from the socket, and the carriage suddenly upset.

Glaucus, quickly extricating himself from the vehicle, hastened to assist Ione, who was fortunately unhurt; with some difficulty they raised the carruca (or carriage), and found that

it ceased any longer even to afford them shelter; the springs that fastened the covering were snapped asunder, and the rain poured fast and fiercely into the interior.

In this dilemma, what was to be done? They were yet some distance from the city; no house, no aid, seemed near.

"There is," said the slave, "a smith about a mile off; I could seek him, and he might fasten at least the wheel to the *carruca*: but, Jupiter! how the rain beats! my mistress will be wet before I come back."

"Run thither at least," said Glaucus; "we must find the best shelter we can till you return."

The lane was overshadowed with trees, beneath the amplest of which Glaucus drew Ione. He endeavored, by stripping his own cloak, to shield her yet more from the rapid rain; but it descended with a fury that broke through all puny obstacles; and suddenly, while Glaucus was yet whispering courage to his beautiful charge, the lightning struck one of the trees immediately before them, and split with a mighty crash its huge trunk in twain. This awful incident apprized them of the danger they braved in their present shelter; and Glaucus looked anxiously round for some less perilous place of refuge. "We are now," said he, "half-way up the ascent of Vesuvius; there ought to be some cavern or hollow in the vine-clad rocks, could we but find it, in which the deserting Nymphs have left a shelter." While thus saying, he moved from the trees, and, looking wistfully towards the mountain, discovered through the advancing gloom a red and tremulous light at no considerable distance. "That must come," said he, "from the hearth of some shepherd or vine-dresser; it will guide us to some hospitable retreat. Wilt thou stay here, while I—yet no; that would be to leave thee to danger."

"I will go with you cheerfully," said Ione. "Open as the space seems, it is better than the treacherous shelter of these boughs."

Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus, accompanied by the trembling female slave, advanced towards the light, which yet burned red and steadfastly. At length the space was no longer open; wild vines entangled their steps, and hid from

them, save by imperfect intervals, the guiding beam. But faster and fiercer came the rain, and the lightning assumed its most deadly and blasting form; they were still, therefore, impelled onward, hoping at last, if the light eluded them, to arrive at some cottage or some friendly cavern. The vines grew more and more intricate; the light was entirely snatched from them; but a narrow path, which they trod with labor and pain, guided only by the constant and long-lingering flashes of the storm, continued to lead them towards its direction. The rain ceased suddenly; precipitous and rough crags of scorched lava frowned before them, rendered more fearful by the lightning that illumined the dark and dangerous soil. Sometimes the blaze lingered over the iron-gray heaps of scoria, covered in part with ancient mosses or stunted trees, as if seeking in vain for some gentler product of earth more worthy of its ire; and sometimes leaving the whole of that part of the scene in darkness, the lightning, broad and sheeted, hung redly over the ocean, tossing far below, until its waves seemed glowing into fire; and so intense was the blaze, that it brought vividly into view even the sharp outline of the more distant windings of the bay, from the eternal Misenum, with its lofty brow, to the beautiful Sorentum and the giant hills behind.

Our lovers stopped in perplexity and doubt, when suddenly as the darkness that gloomed between the fierce flashes of lightning once more wrapped them round, they saw near, but high before them, the mysterious light. Another blaze, in which heaven and earth were reddened, made visible to them the whole expanse: no house was near, but just where they had beheld the light, they thought they saw in the recess of a cavern the outline of a human form. The darkness once more returned; the light, no longer paled beneath the fires of heaven, burned forth again: they resolved to ascend towards it; they had to wind their way among vast fragments of stone, here and there overhung with wild bushes; but they gained nearer and nearer to the light, and at length they stood opposite the mouth of a kind of cavern, apparently formed by huge splinters of rock that had fallen transversely athwart each

other; and, looking into the gloom, each drew back involuntarily with a superstitious fear and chill.

A fire burned in a far recess of the cave, and over it was a small caldron; on a tall and thin column of iron stood a rude lamp; over that part of the wall, at the base of which burned the fire, hung in many rows as if to dry, a profusion of herbs and weeds. A fox, couched before the fire, gazed upon the strangers with its bright and red eye, its hair bristling, and a low growl stealing from between its teeth; in the centre of the cave was an earthen statue, which had three heads of a singular and fantastic cast: they were formed by the real skulls of a dog, a horse, and a boar; a low tripod stood before this wild representation of the popular Hecate.

But it was not these appendages and appliances of the cave that thrilled the blood of those who gazed fearfully therein, — it was the face of its inmate. Before the fire, with the light shining full upon her features, sat a woman of considerable age. Perhaps in no country are there seen so many hags as in Italy, — in no country does beauty so awfully change in age to hideousness the most appalling and revolting. But the old woman now before them was not one of these specimens of the extreme of human ugliness; on the contrary, her countenance betrayed the remains of a regular but high and aquiline order of feature: with stony eyes turned upon them, with a look that met and fascinated theirs, they beheld in that fearful countenance the very image of a corpse, — the same, the glazed and lustreless regard, the blue and shrunken lips, the drawn and hollow jaw, the dead, lank hair of a pale gray, the livid, green, ghastly skin, which seemed all surely tinged and tainted by the grave!

“It is a dead thing!” said Glaucus.

“Nay, it stirs, — it is a ghost or *larva*,” faltered Ione, as she elung to the Athenian’s breast.

“Oh, away, away!” groaned the slave; “it is the Witch of Vesuvius!”

“Who are ye?” said a hollow and ghostly voice. “And what do ye here?”

The sound, terrible and deathlike as it was, suiting well

the countenance of the speaker, and seeming rather the voice of some bodiless wanderer of the Styx than living mortal, would have made Ione shrink back into the pitiless fury of the storm; but Glaucus, though not without some misgiving, drew her into the cavern.

"We are storm-beaten wanderers from the neighboring city," said he, "and decoyed hither by yon light; we crave shelter and the comfort of your hearth."

As he spoke, the fox rose from the ground and advanced towards the strangers, showing from end to end its white teeth, and deepening in its menacing growl.

"Down, slave!" said the witch; and at the sound of her voice the beast dropped at once, covering its face with its brush, and keeping only its quick vigilant eye fixed upon the invaders of its repose. "Come to the fire if ye will!" said she, turning to Glaucus and his companions. "I never welcome living thing, save the owl, the fox, the toad, and the viper, so I cannot welcome ye; but come to the fire without welcome: why stand upon form?"

The language in which the hag addressed them was a strange and barbarous Latin, interlarded with many words of some more rude and ancient dialect. She did not stir from her seat, but gazed stonily upon them as Glaucus now released Ione of her outer wrapping garments, and making her place herself on a log of wood, which was the only other seat he perceived at hand, fanned with his breath the embers into a more glowing flame. The slave, encouraged by the boldness of her superiors, divested herself also of her long *palla*, and crept timorously to the opposite corner of the hearth.

"We disturb you, I fear," said the silver voice of Ione, in conciliation.

The witch did not reply; she seemed like one who has awakened for a moment from the dead, and has then relapsed once more into the eternal slumber.

"Tell me," said she, suddenly, and after a long pause, "are ye brother and sister?"

"No," said Ione, blushing.

"Are ye married?"

"Not so," replied Glaucus.

"Ho, lovers! ha! ha! ha!" and the witch laughed so loud and so long that the caverns rang again.

The heart of Ione stood still at that strange mirth. Glaucus muttered a rapid counterspell to the omen, and the slave turned as pale as the cheek of the witch herself.

"Why dost thou laugh, old crone?" said Glaucus, somewhat sternly, as he concluded his invocation.

"Did I laugh?" said the hag, absently.

"She is in her dotage," whispered Glaucus: as he said this, he caught the eye of the hag fixed upon him with a malignant and vivid glare.

"Thou liest!" said she, abruptly.

"Thou art an uncourteous welcomer," returned Glaucus.

"Hush! provoke her not, dear Glaucus!" whispered Ione.

"I will tell thee why I laughed when I discovered ye were lovers," said the old woman. "It was because it is a pleasure to the old and withered to look upon young hearts like yours, and to know the time will come when you will loathe each other, — loathe — loathe — ha! ha! ha!"

It was now Ione's turn to pray against the unpleasing prophecy.

"The gods forbid!" said she. "Yet, poor woman, thou knowest little of love, or thou wouldst know that it never changes."

"Was I young once, think ye," returned the hag, quickly; "and am I old, and hideous, and deathly now? Such as is the form, so is the heart." With these words she sank again into a stillness profound and fearful, as if the cessation of life itself.

"Hast thou dwelt here long?" said Glaucus, after a pause, feeling uncomfortably oppressed beneath a silence so appalling.

"Ah, long! — yes."

"It is but a drear abode."

"Ha! thou mayst well say that: Hell is beneath us!" replied the hag, pointing her bony finger to the earth. "And I will tell thee a secret: the dim things below are preparing wrath for ye above, — you, the young, and the thoughtless, and the beautiful."

“Thou utterest but evil words, ill becoming the hospitable,” said Glaucus; “and in future I will brave the tempest rather than thy welcome.”

“Thou wilt do well. None should ever seek me, save the wretched!”

“And why the wretched?” asked the Athenian.

“I am the witch of the mountain,” replied the sorceress, with a ghastly grin; “my trade is to give hope to the hopeless: for the crossed in love, I have philtres; for the avaricious, promises of treasure; for the malicious, potions of revenge; for the happy and the good, I have only what life has,—curses! Trouble me no more.”

With this the grim tenant of the cave relapsed into a silence so obstinate and sullen, that Glaucus in vain endeavored to draw her into farther conversation. She did not evince, by any alteration of her locked and rigid features, that she even heard him. Fortunately, however, the storm, which was brief as violent, began now to relax; the rain grew less and less fierce; and at last, as the clouds parted, the moon burst forth in the purple opening of heaven, and streamed clear and full into that desolate abode. Never had she shone, perhaps, on a group more worthy of the painter’s art—the young, the all-beautiful Ione, seated by that rude fire, her lover already forgetful of the presence of the hag, at her feet, gazing upward to her face, and whispering sweet words; the pale and affrighted slave at a little distance, and the ghastly hag resting her deadly eyes upon them: yet seemingly serene and fearless (for the companionship of love hath such power) were these beautiful beings, things of another sphere, in that dark and unholy cavern, with its gloomy quaintness of appurtenance. The fox regarded them from his corner with his keen and fiery eye: and as Glaucus now turned towards the witch, he perceived for the first time, just under her seat, the bright gaze and crested head of a large snake. Whether it was that the vivid coloring of the Athenian’s cloak, thrown over the shoulders of Ione, attracted the reptile’s anger, its crest began to glow and rise, as if menacing and preparing itself to spring upon the Neapolitan; Glaucus caught quickly at one of the half-burned

logs upon the hearth, and, as if enraged at the action, the snake came forth from its shelter, and with a loud hiss raised itself on end till its height nearly approached that of the Greek.

"Witch!" cried Glaucus, "command thy creature, or thou wilt see it dead."

"It has been despoiled of its venom!" said the witch, aroused at his threat; but ere the words had left her lip, the snake had sprung upon Glaucus; quick and watchful, the agile Greek leaped lightly aside, and struck so fell and dexterous a blow on the head of the snake, that it fell prostrate and writhing among the embers of the fire.

The hag sprung up, and stood confronting Glaucus with a face which would have befitted the fiercest of the Furies, so utterly dire and wrathful was its expression; yet even in horror and ghastliness preserving the outline and trace of beauty, and utterly free from that coarse grotesque at which the imaginations of the North have sought the source of terror.

"Thou hast," said she, in a slow and steady voice, which belied the expression of her face, so much was it passionless and calm, — "thou hast had shelter under my roof, and warmth at my hearth; thou hast returned evil for good; thou hast smitten and haply slain the thing that loved me and was mine: nay, more, the creature, above all others, consecrated to gods and deemed venerable by man;¹ now hear thy punishment. By the moon, who is the guardian of the sorceress, by Orcus, who is the treasurer of wrath, I curse thee, and thou art cursed! May thy love be blasted, may thy name be blackened, may the infernals mark thee, may thy heart wither and scorch, may thy last hour recall to thee the prophet voice of the Saga of Vesuvius! And thou —" she added, turning sharply towards Ione, and raising her right arm, when Glaucus burst impetuously on her speech.

"Hag!" cried he, "forbear! Me thou hast cursed, and I commit myself to the gods; I defy and scorn thee! but

¹ A peculiar sanctity was attached by the Romans (as, indeed, by perhaps every ancient people) to serpents, which they kept tame in their houses, and often introduced at their meals.

breathe but one word against yon maiden, and I will convert the oath on thy foul lips to thy dying groan. Beware!"

"I have done," replied the hag, laughing wildly; "for in thy doom is she who loves thee accursed. And not the less, that I heard *her* lips breathe thy name, and know by what word to commend thee to the demons. *Glaucus*, thou art doomed!" So saying, the witch turned from the Athenian, and kneeling down beside her wounded favorite, which she dragged from the hearth, she turned to them her face no more.

"O *Glaucus*!" said Ione, greatly terrified, "what have we done? Let us hasten from this place; the storm has ceased. Good mistress, forgive him; recall thy words; he meant but to defend himself: accept this peace-offering to unsay the said;" and Ione, stooping, placed her purse on the hag's lap.

"Away!" said she, bitterly, — "away! The oath once woven the Fates only can untie. Away!"

"Come, dearest!" said *Glaucus*, impatiently. "Thinkest thou that the gods above us or below hear the impotent ravings of dotage? Come!"

Long and loud rang the echoes of the cavern with the dread laugh of the Saga. She deigned no further reply.

The lovers breathed more freely when they gained the open air: yet the scene they had witnessed, the words and the laughter of the witch, still fearfully dwelt with Ione; and even *Glaucus* could not thoroughly shake off the impression they bequeathed. The storm had subsided, save, now and then, a low thunder muttered at the distance amidst the darker clouds, or a momentary flash of lightning affronted the sovereignty of the moon. With some difficulty they regained the road, where they found the vehicle already sufficiently repaired for their departure, and the carrucarius calling loudly upon Hercules to tell him where his charge had vanished.

Glaucus vainly endeavored to cheer the exhausted spirits of Ione, and scarce less vainly to recover the elastic tone of his own natural gayety. They soon arrived before the gate of the city: as it opened to them, a litter borne by slaves impeded the way.

"It is too late for egress," cried the sentinel to the inmate of the litter.

"Not so," said a voice, which the lovers started to hear; it was a voice they well recognized. "I am bound to the villa of Marcus Polybius. I shall return shortly. I am Arbaces the Egyptian."

The scruples of him of the gate were removed, and the litter passed close beside the carriage that bore the lovers.

"Arbaces, at this hour! — scarce recovered too, methinks! Whither and for what can he leave the city?" said Glaucus.

"Alas!" replied Ione, bursting into tears, "my soul feels still more and more the omen of evil. Preserve us, O ye Gods! or at least," she murmured inly, "preserve my Glaucus!"

CHAPTER X.

THE LORD OF THE BURNING BELT AND HIS MINION. — FATE
WRITES HER PROPHECY IN RED LETTERS, BUT WHO SHALL
READ THEM?

ARBACES had tarried only till the cessation of the tempest allowed him, under cover of night, to seek the Saga of Vesuvius.

Borne by those of his trustier slaves in whom in all more secret expeditions he was accustomed to confide, he lay extended along his litter, and resigning his sanguine heart to the contemplation of vengeance gratified and love possessed. The slaves in so short a journey moved very little slower than the ordinary pace of mules; and Arbaces soon arrived at the commencement of a narrow path, which the lovers had not been fortunate enough to discover, but which, skirting the thick vines, led at once to the habitation of the witch. Here he rested the litter; and bidding his slaves conceal themselves and the vehicle among the vines from the observation of any chance passenger, he mounted alone, with steps still feeble but supported by a long staff, the drear and sharp ascent.

Not a drop of rain fell from the tranquil heaven; but the moisture dripped mournfully from the laden boughs of the vine, and now and then collected in tiny pools in the crevices and hollows of the rocky way.

“Strange passions these for a philosopher,” thought Arbaces, “that lead one like me just new from the bed of death, and lapped even in health amidst the roses of luxury, across such nocturnal paths as this; but Passion and Vengeance treading to their goal can make an Elysium of a Tartarus.” High, clear, and melancholy shone the moon above the road of that dark wayfarer, glassing herself in every pool that lay before him, and sleeping in shadow along the sloping mount. He saw before him the same light that had guided the steps of his intended victims, but, no longer contrasted by the blackened clouds, it shone less redly clear.

He paused, as at length he approached the mouth of the cavern, to recover breath; and then, with his wonted collected and stately mien, he crossed the unhallowed threshold.

The fox sprang up at the ingress of this new-comer, and by a long howl announced another visitor to his mistress.

The witch had resumed her seat, and her aspect of grave-like and grim repose. By her feet, upon a bed of dry weeds which half covered it, lay the wounded snake; but the quick eye of the Egyptian caught its scales glittering in the reflected light of the opposite fire, as it writhed, — now contracting, now lengthening, its folds, in pain and unsated anger.

“Down, slave!” said the witch, as before, to the fox; and, as before, the animal dropped to the ground, mute, but vigilant.

“Rise, servant of Nox and Erebus!” said Arbaces, commandingly; “a superior in thine art salutes thee! Rise, and welcome him.”

At these words the hag turned her gaze upon the Egyptian’s towering form and dark features. She looked long and fixedly upon him, as he stood before her in his Oriental robe, and folded arms, and steadfast and haughty brow. “Who art thou,” she said at last, “that callest thyself greater in art than the Saga of the Burning Fields, and the daughter of the perished Etrurian race?”

"I am he," answered Arbaces, "from whom all cultivators of magic, from north to south, from east to west, from the Ganges and the Nile to the vales of Thessaly and the shores of the yellow Tiber, have stooped to learn."

"There is but one such man in these places," answered the witch, "whom the men of the outer world, unknowing his loftier attributes and more secret fame, call Arbaces the Egyptian; to us of a higher nature and deeper knowledge, his rightful appellation is Hermes of the Burning Girdle."

"Look again," returned Arbaces; "I am he."

As he spoke he drew aside his robe, and revealed a cincture seemingly of fire, that burned around his waist, clasped in the centre by a plate whereon was engraven some sign apparently vague and unintelligible, but which was evidently not unknown to the Saga. She rose hastily, and threw herself at the feet of Arbaces. "I have seen then," said she, in a voice of deep humility, "the Lord of the Mighty Girdle; vouchsafe my homage."

"Rise," said the Egyptian, "I have need of thee."

So saying, he placed himself on the same log of wood on which Ione had rested before, and motioned to the witch to resume her seat.

"Thou sayest," said he, as she obeyed, "that thou art a daughter of the ancient Etrurian¹ tribes, the mighty walls of whose rock-built cities yet frown above the robber race that hath seized upon their ancient reign. Partly came those tribes from Greece, partly were they exiles from a more burning and primeval soil. In either case art thou of Egyptian lineage, for the Grecian masters of the aboriginal helot were among the restless sons whom the Nile banished from her bosom. Equally then, O Saga! thy descent is from ancestors that swore allegiance to mine own. By birth as by knowledge, art thou the subject of Arbaces. Hear me, then, and obey!"

The witch bowed her head.

¹ The Etrurians (it may be superfluous to mention) were celebrated for their enchantments. Arbaces is wrong in assuming their Egyptian origin, but the Egyptians arrogated the ancestry of almost every one of the more illustrious races, and there are not wanting modern schoolmen who too credulously support the claim.

"Whatever art we possess in sorcery," continued Arbaces, "we are sometimes driven to natural means to attain our object. The ring¹ and the crystal,² and the ashes³ and the herbs,⁴ do not give unerring divinations; neither do the higher mysteries of the moon yield even the possessor of the girdle a dispensation from the necessity of employing ever and anon human measures for a human object. Mark me, then: thou art deeply skilled, methinks, in the secrets of the more deadly herbs; thou knowest those which arrest life, which burn and scorch the soul from out her citadel, or freeze the channels of young blood into that ice which no sun can melt. Do I overrate thy skill? Speak, and truly!"

"Mighty Hermes, such lore is indeed mine own. Deign to look at these ghostly and corpse-like features: they have waned from the hues of life merely by watching over the rank herbs which simmer night and day in yon caldron."

The Egyptian moved his seat from so unblest or so unhealthful a vicinity as the witch spoke.

"It is well," said he; "thou hast learned that maxim of all the deeper knowledge which saith, 'Despise the body to make wise the mind.' But to thy task. There cometh to thee by to-morrow's starlight a vain maiden, seeking of thine art a love-charm to fascinate from another the eyes that should utter but soft tales to her own; instead of thy philtres, give the maiden one of thy most powerful poisons. Let the lover breathe his vows to the Shades."

The witch trembled from head to foot.

"Oh, pardon! pardon! dread master," said she, falteringly, "but this I dare not. The law in these cities is sharp and vigilant; they will seize, they will slay me."

"For what purpose, then, thy herbs and thy potions, vain Saga?" said Arbaces, sneeringly.

The witch hid her loathsome face with her hands.

"Oh, years ago," said she, in a voice unlike her usual tones, so plaintive was it and so soft, "I was not the thing that I am now! I loved, I fancied myself beloved."

¹ Δακτυλομαντεία.
Λεπτομαντεία.

² Κρυσταλλομαντεία.
⁴ Βοτανομαντεία.

“And what connection hath thy love, witch, with my commands?” said Arbaces, impetuously.

“Patience,” resumed the witch; “patience, I implore. I loved! Another and less fair than I—yes, by Nemesis! less fair—allured from me my chosen. I was of that dark Etrurian tribe to whom most of all were known the secrets of the gloomier magic. My mother was herself a Saga: she shared the resentment of her child; from her hands I received the potion that was to restore me his love; and from her also the poison that was to destroy my rival. Oh, crush me, dread walls! my trembling hands mistook the phials, my lover fell indeed at my feet; but dead! dead! Since then, what has been life to me? I became suddenly old; I devoted myself to the sorceries of my race; still by an irresistible impulse I curse myself with an awful penance; still I seek the most noxious herbs; still I concoct the poisons; still I imagine that I am to give them to my hated rival; still I pour them into the phial; still I fancy that they shall blast her beauty to the dust; still I wake and see the quivering body, the foaming lips, the glazing eyes of my Aulus,—murdered, and by me!”

The skeleton frame of the witch shook beneath strong convulsions.

Arbaces gazed upon her with a curious though contemptuous eye.

“And this foul thing has yet human emotions!” thought he; “she still cowers over the ashes of the same fire that consumes Arbaces. Such are we all! Mystic is the tie of those mortal passions that unite the greatest and the least.”

He did not reply till she had somewhat recovered herself, and now sat rocking to and fro in her seat, with glassy eyes fixed on the opposite flame, and large tears rolling down her livid cheeks.

“A grievous tale is thine, in truth,” said Arbaces. “But these emotions are fit only for our youth: age should harden our hearts to all things but ourselves; as every year adds a scale to the shell-fish, so should each year wall and incrust the heart. Think of those frenzies no more! And now, listen to me again. By the revenge that was dear to thee I command

thee to obey me! it is for vengeance that I seek thee! This youth whom I would sweep from my path has crossed me, despite my spells: this thing of purple and broidery, of smiles and glances, soulless and mindless, with no charm but that of beauty — accursed be it! — this insect, this Glaucus, I tell thee, by Orcus and by Nemesis, he must die!”

And working himself up at every word, the Egyptian, forgetful of his debility, of his strange companion, of everything but his own vindictive rage, strode, with large and rapid steps, the gloomy cavern.

“Glaucus! saidst thou, mighty master?” said the witch, abruptly; and her dim eye glared at the name with all that fierce resentment at the memory of small affronts so common amongst the solitary and the shunned.

“Ay, so he is called; but what matters the name? Let it not be heard as that of a living man three days from this date!”

“Hear me,” said the witch, breaking from a short reverie into which she was plunged after this last sentence of the Egyptian. “Hear me! I am thy thing and thy slave! Spare me! If I give to the maiden thou speakest of that which would destroy the life of Glaucus, I shall be surely detected; the dead ever find avengers. Nay, dread man! if thy visit to me be tracked, if thy hatred to Glaucus be known, thou mayest have need of thy archest magic to protect thyself!”

“Ha!” said Arbaces, stopping suddenly short; and as a proof of that blindness with which passion darkens the eyes even of the most acute, this was the first time that the risk he himself ran by this method of vengeance had occurred to a mind ordinarily wary and circumspect.

“But,” continued the witch, “if instead of that which shall arrest the heart, I give that which shall sear and blast the brain, which shall make him who quaffs it unfit for the uses and career of life, an abject, raving, benighted thing, smiting sense to drivelling, youth to dotage, will not thy vengeance be equally sated, thy object equally attained?”

“Oh, witch! no longer the servant, but the sister, the equal of Arbaces, how much brighter is woman’s wit, even in ven-

geance, than ours! How much more exquisite than death is such a doom!"

"And," continued the hag, gloating over her fell scheme, "in this is but little danger; for by ten thousand methods, which men forbear to seek, can our victim become mad. He may have been among the vines and seen a nymph,¹ or the vine itself may have had the same effect; ha, ha! they never inquire too scrupulously into these matters in which the gods may be agents. And let the worst arrive, let it be known that it is a love-charm, why, madness is a common effect of philtres, and even the fair she that gave it finds indulgence in the excuse. Mighty Hermes, have I ministered to thee cunningly?"

"Thou shalt have twenty years' longer date for this," returned Arbaces. "I will write anew the epoch of thy fate on the face of the pale stars; thou shalt not serve in vain the Master of the Flaming Belt. And here, Saga, carve thee out, by these golden tools, a warmer cell in this dreary cavern; one service to me shall countervail a thousand divinations by sieve and shears to the gaping rustics." So saying, he cast upon the floor a heavy purse, which clinked not unmusically to the ear of the hag, who loved the consciousness of possessing the means to purchase comforts she disdained. "Farewell," said Arbaces; "fail not; outwatch the stars in concocting thy beverage; thou shalt lord it over thy sisters at the Walnut Tree,² when thou tellest them that thy patron and thy friend is Hermes the Egyptian. To-morrow night we meet again."

He stayed not to hear the valediction or the thanks of the witch: with a quick step he passed into the moonlit air, and hastened down the mountain.

The witch, who followed his steps to the threshold, stood long at the entrance of the cavern, gazing fixedly on his receding form; and as the sad moonlight streamed upon her shad-

¹ To see a nymph was to become mad, according to classic and popular superstition.

² The celebrated and immemorial rendezvous of the witches at Benevento. The winged serpent attached to it, long an object of idolatry in those parts, was probably consecrated by Egyptian superstitions.

owy form and deathlike face, emerging from the dismal rocks, it seemed as if one, gifted indeed by supernatural magic, had escaped from the dreary Orcus, and the foremost of its ghostly throng stood at its black portals, vainly summoning his return, or vainly sighing to rejoin him. The hag, then slowly re-entering the cave, droningly picked up the heavy purse, took the lamp from its stand, and, passing to the remotest depth of her cell, a black and abrupt passage, which was not visible save at a near approach, closed round as it was with jutting and sharp crags, yawned before her; she went several yards along this gloomy path, which sloped gradually downwards, as if towards the bowels of the earth, and, lifting a stone, deposited her treasure in a hole beneath, which, as the lamp pierced its secrets, seemed already to contain coins of various value, wrung from the credulity or gratitude of her visitors.

"I love to look at you," said she, apostrophizing the moneys; "for when I see you I feel that I am indeed of power. And I am to have twenty years' longer life to increase your store! O thou great Hermes!"

She replaced the stone, and continued her path onward for some paces, when she stopped before a deep, irregular fissure in the earth. Here, as she bent, strange, rumbling, hoarse, and distant sounds might be heard, while ever and anon, with a loud and grating noise, which, to use a homely but faithful simile, seemed to resemble the grinding of steel upon wheels, volumes of streaming and dark smoke issued forth, and rushed spirally along the cavern.

"The Shades are noisier than their wont," said the hag, shaking her gray locks; and looking into the cavity, she beheld, far down, glimpses of a long streak of light, intensely but darkly red. "Strange!" she said, shrinking back; "it is only within the last two days that dull, deep light hath been visible. What can it portend?"

The fox, who had attended the steps of his fell mistress, uttered a dismal howl, and ran cowering back to the inner cave; a cold shuddering seized the hag herself at the cry of the animal, which, causeless as it seemed, the superstitious of the time considered deeply ominous. She muttered her

placatory charm, and tottered back into her cavern, where, amidst her herbs and incantations, she prepared to execute the orders of the Egyptian.

“He called me dotard,” said she, as the smoke curled from the hissing caldron; “when the jaws drop, and the grinders fall, and the heart scarce beats, it is a pitiable thing to dote; but when,” she added, with a savage and exulting grin, “the young, and the beautiful, and the strong are suddenly smitten into idiocy, — ah, *that* is terrible! Burn flame, simmer herb, swelter toad; I cursed him, and he shall be cursed!”

On that night, and at the same hour which witnessed the dark and unholy interview between Arbaces and the Saga, Apæcides was baptized.

CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS OF EVENTS — THE PLOT THICKENS — THE WEB IS
WOVEN, BUT THE NET CHANGES HANDS.

“AND you have the courage, then, Julia, to seek the Witch of Vesuvius this evening; in company, too, with that fearful man?”

“Why, Nydia,” replied Julia, timidly; “dost thou really think there is anything to dread? These old hags, with their enchanted mirrors, their trembling sieves, and their moon-gathered herbs, are, I imagine, but crafty impostors, who have learned, perhaps, nothing but the very charm for which I apply to their skill, and which is drawn but from the knowledge of the field’s herbs and simples. Wherefore should I dread?”

“Dost thou not fear thy companion?”

“What, Arbaces? By Dian, I never saw lover more courteous than that same magician! And were he not so dark, he would be even handsome.”

Blind as she was, Nydia had the penetration to perceive that Julia’s mind was not one that the gallantries of Arbaces were

likely to terrify. She therefore dissuaded her no more, but nursed in her excited heart the wild and increasing desire to know if sorcery had indeed a spell to fascinate love to love.

"Let me go with thee, noble Julia," said she, at length; "my presence is no protection, but I should like to be beside thee to the last."

"Thine offer pleases me much," replied the daughter of Diomed. "Yet how canst thou contrive it? We may not return until late; they will miss thee."

"Ione is indulgent," replied Nydia. "If thou wilt permit me to sleep beneath thy roof, I will say that thou, an early patroness and friend, hast invited me to pass the day with thee, and sing thee my Thessalian songs; her courtesy will readily grant to thee so light a boon."

"Nay, ask for thyself!" said the haughty Julia. "*I* stoop to request no favor from the Neapolitan!"

"Well, be it so. I will take my leave now, make my request, which I know will be readily granted, and return shortly."

"Do so; and thy bed shall be prepared in my own chamber."

With that, Nydia left the fair Pompeian.

On her way back to Ione she was met by the chariot of Glaucus, on whose fiery and curveting steeds was riveted the gaze of the crowded street.

He kindly stopped for a moment to speak to the flower-girl.

"Blooming as thine own roses, my gentle Nydia! And how is thy fair mistress? Recovered, I trust, from the effects of the storm?"

"I have not seen her this morning," answered Nydia, "but —"

"But what? Draw back; the horses are too near thee."

"But think you Ione will permit me to pass the day with Julia, the daughter of Diomed? She wishes it, and was kind to me when I had few friends."

"The gods bless thy grateful heart! I will answer for Ione's permission."

"Then I may stay over the night, and return to-morrow?" said Nydia, shrinking from the praise she so little merited.

"As thou and fair Julia please. Commend me to her; and

hark ye, Nydia, when thou hearest her speak, note the contrast of her voice with that of the silver-toned Ione. *Vale!*"

His spirits entirely recovered from the effects of the past night, his locks waving in the wind, his joyous and elastic heart bounding with every spring of his Parthian steeds, a very prototype of his country's god, full of youth and of love, — Glaucus was borne rapidly to his mistress.

Enjoy while ye may the present: who can read the future?

As the evening darkened, Julia, reclined within her litter, which was capacious enough also to admit her blind companion, took her way to the rural baths indicated by Arbaces. To her natural levity of disposition, her enterprise brought less of terror than of pleasurable excitement; above all, she glowed at the thought of her coming triumph over the hated Neapolitan.

A small but gay group was collected round the door of the villa as her litter passed by it to the private entrance of the baths appropriated to the women.

"Methinks, by this' dim light," said one of the bystanders, "I recognize the slaves of Diomed."

"True, Clodius," said Sallust: "it is probably the litter of his daughter Julia. She is rich, my friend; why dost thou not proffer thy suit to her?"

"Why, I had once hoped that Glaucus would have married her. She does not disguise her attachment; and then, as he gambles freely and with ill-success —"

"The sesterces would have passed to thee, wise Clodius. A wife is a good thing — when it belongs to another man!"

"But," continued Clodius, "as Glaucus is, I understand, to wed the Neapolitan, I think I must even try my chance with the rejected maid. After all, the lamp of Hymen will be gilt, and the vessel will reconcile one to the odor of the flame. I shall only protest, my Sallust, against Diomed's making *thee* trustee to his daughter's fortune."¹

¹ It was an ancient Roman law that no one should make a woman his heir. This law was evaded by the parent's assigning his fortune to a friend in trust for his daughter, but the trustee might keep it if he liked. The law had, however, fallen into disuse before the date of this story.

“Ha! ha! let us within, my *commissator*; the wine and the garlands wait us.”

Dismissing her slaves to that part of the house set apart for their entertainment, Julia entered the baths with Nydia, and declining the offers of the attendants, passed by a private door into the garden behind.

“She comes by appointment, be sure,” said one of the slaves.

“What is that to thee?” said a superintendent, sourly; “she pays for the baths, and does not waste the saffron. Such appointments are the best of the trade. Hark! do you not hear the widow Fulvia clapping her hands? Run, fool,—run!”

Julia and Nydia, avoiding the more public part of the garden, arrived at the place specified by the Egyptian. In a small circular plot of grass the stars gleamed upon the statue of Silenus; the merry god reclined upon a fragment of rock, the lynx of Bacchus at his feet, and over his mouth he held, with extended arm, a bunch of grapes, which he seemingly laughed to welcome ere he devoured.

“I see not the magician,” said Julia, looking round; when, as she spoke, the Egyptian slowly emerged from the neighboring foliage, and the light fell palely over his sweeping robes.

“*Salve*, sweet maiden! But ha! whom hast thou here? We must have no companions!”

“It is but the blind flower-girl, wise magician,” replied Julia; “herself a Thessalian.”

“Oh, Nydia!” said the Egyptian; “I know her well.”

Nydia drew back and shuddered.

“Thou hast been at my house, methinks!” said he, approaching his voice to Nydia’s ear; “thou knowest the oath! Silence and secrecy, now as then, or beware! Yet,” he added, musingly to himself, “why confide more than is necessary, even in the blind? Julia, canst thou trust thyself alone with me? Believe me, the magician is less formidable than he seems.”

As he spoke he gently drew Julia aside.

“The witch loves not many visitors at once,” said he; “leave Nydia here till your return; she can be of no assistance to us: and for protection, your own beauty suffices, — your own beauty and your own rank; yes, Julia, I know thy name and birth. Come, trust thyself with me, fair rival of the youngest of the Naiads!”

The vain Julia was not, as we have seen, easily affrighted; she was moved by the flattery of Arbaces, and she readily consented to suffer Nydia to await her return; nor did Nydia press her presence. At the sound of the Egyptian’s voice all her terror of him returned: she felt a sentiment of pleasure at learning she was not to travel in his companionship.

She returned to the bath-house, and in one of the private chambers waited their return. Many and bitter were the thoughts of this wild girl as she sat there in her eternal darkness. She thought of her own desolate fate, far from her native land, far from the bland cares that once assuaged the April sorrows of childhood, deprived of the light of day, with none but strangers to guide her steps, accursed by the one soft feeling of her heart, loving and without hope, save the dim and unholy ray which shot across her mind, as her Thessalian fancies questioned of the force of spells and the gifts of magic.

Nature had sown in the heart of this poor girl the seeds of virtue never destined to ripen. The lessons of adversity are not always salutary; sometimes they soften and amend, but as often they indurate and pervert. If we consider ourselves more harshly treated by fate than those around us, and do not acknowledge in our own deeds the justice of the severity, we become too apt to deem the world our enemy, to ease ourselves in defiance, to wrestle against our *softer self*, and to indulge the darker passions which are so easily fermented by the sense of injustice. Sold early into slavery, sentenced to a sordid task-master, exchanging her situation only yet more to embitter her lot, — the kindlier feelings, naturally profuse in the breast of Nydia, were nipped and blighted. Her sense of right and wrong was confused by a passion to which she had so madly surrendered herself; and the same intense and tragic

emotions which we read of in the women of the classic age, — a Myrrha, a Medea, — and which hurried and swept away the whole soul when once delivered to love, ruled and rioted in her breast.

Time passed; a light step entered the chamber where Nydia yet indulged her gloomy meditations.

“Oh, thanked be the immortal gods!” said Julia, “I have returned; I have left that terrible cavern! Come, Nydia! let us away forthwith!”

It was not till they were seated in the litter that Julia again spoke.

“Oh!” said she, tremblingly, “such a scene! such fearful incantations! and the dead face of the hag! — But let us talk not of it. I have obtained the potion; she pledges its effect. My rival shall be suddenly indifferent to his eye, and I, I alone, the idol of Glaucus.”

“Glaucus!” exclaimed Nydia.

“Ay! I told thee, girl, at first, that it was *not* the Athenian whom I loved; but I see now that I may trust thee wholly, — it *is* the beautiful Greek!”

What then were Nydia's emotions! She had connived, she had assisted, in tearing Glaucus from Ione, but only to transfer, by all the power of magic, his affections yet more hopelessly to another. Her heart swelled almost to suffocation; she gasped for breath. In the darkness of the vehicle Julia did not perceive the agitation of her companion; she went on rapidly dilating on the promised effect of her acquisition, and on her approaching triumph over Ione, every now and then abruptly digressing to the horror of the scene she had quitted, — the unmoved mien of Arbaces, and his authority over the dreadful Saga.

Meanwhile Nydia recovered her self-possession; a thought flashed across her: she slept in the chamber of Julia, she might possess herself of the potion.

They arrived at the house of Diomed, and descended to Julia's apartment, where the night's repast awaited them.

“Drink, Nydia, thou must be cold; the air was chill to night; as for me, my veins are yet ice.”

And Julia unhesitatingly quaffed deep draughts of the spiced wine.

"Thou hast the potion," said Nydia; "let me hold it in my hands. How small the phial is! Of what color is the draught?"

"Clear as crystal," replied Julia, as she retook the philtre; "thou couldst not tell it from this water. The witch assures me it is tasteless. Small though the phial, it suffices for a life's fidelity: it is to be poured into any liquid; and Glaucus will only know what he has quaffed by the effect."

"Exactly like this water in appearance?"

"Yes, sparkling and colorless as this. How-bright it seems! it is as the very essence of moonlit dews. Bright thing! how thou shinest on my hopes through thy crystal vase!"

"And how is it sealed?"

"But by one little stopper: I withdraw it now; the draught gives no odor. Strange, that that which speaks to neither sense should thus command all!"

"Is the effect instantaneous?"

"Usually; but sometimes it remains dormant for a few hours."

"Oh, how sweet is this perfume!" said Nydia, suddenly, as she took up a small bottle on the table and bent over its fragrant contents.

"Thinkest thou so? The bottle is set with gems of some value. Thou wouldst not have the bracelet yesternorn; wilt thou take the bottle?"

"It ought to be such perfumes as these that should remind one who cannot see of the generous Julia. If the bottle be not too costly —"

"Oh, I have a thousand costlier ones; take it, child!"

Nydia bowed her gratitude, and placed the bottle in her vest.

"And the draught would be equally efficacious, whoever adminsters it?"

"If the most hideous hag beneath the sun bestowed it, such is its asserted virtue that Glaucus would deem her beautiful, and none but her!"

Julia, warmed by wine, and the reaction of her spirits, was now all animation and delight: she laughed loud and talked on a hundred matters; nor was it till the night had advanced far towards morning that she summoned her slaves and undressed.

When they were dismissed, she said to Nydia, —

“I will not suffer this holy draught to quit my presence till the hour comes for its uses. Lie under my pillow, bright spirit, and give me happy dreams!”

So saying, she placed the potion under her pillow. Nydia's heart beat violently.

“Why dost thou drink that unmixed water, Nydia? Take the wine by its side.”

“I am fevered,” replied the blind girl, “and the water cools me. I will place this bottle by my bedside; it refreshes in these summer nights, when the dews of sleep fall not on our lips. Fair Julia, I must leave thee very early, — so Ione bids, — perhaps before thou art awake; accept therefore now my congratulations.”

“Thanks: when next we meet you may find Glaucus at my feet.”

They had retired to their couches, and Julia, worn out by the excitement of the day, soon slept. But anxious and burning thoughts rolled over the mind of the wakeful Thessalian. She listened to the calm breathing of Julia; and her ear, accustomed to the finest distinctions of sound, speedily assured her of the deep slumber of her companion.

“Now befriend me, Venus!” said she, softly.

She rose gently, and poured the perfume from the gift of Julia upon the marble floor; she rinsed it several times carefully with the water that was beside her, and then easily finding the bed of Julia (for night to her was as day), she pressed her trembling hand under the pillow and seized the potion. Julia stirred not; her breath regularly fanned the burning cheek of the blind girl. Nydia, then, opening the phial, poured its contents into the bottle, which easily contained them; and then refilling the former reservoir of the potion with that limpid water which Julia had assured her it so

resembled, she once more placed the phial in its former place. She then stole again to her couch and waited — with what thoughts! — the dawning day.

The sun had risen: Julia slept still; Nydia noiselessly dressed herself, placed her treasure carefully in her vest, took up her staff, and hastened to quit the house.

The porter, Medon, saluted her kindly as she descended the steps that led to the street; she heard him not; her mind was confused and lost in the whirl of tumultuous thoughts, each thought a passion. She felt the pure morning air upon her cheek, but it cooled not her scorching veins.

“Glaucus,” she murmured, “all the love-charms of the wildest magic could not make thee love me as I love thee. Ioue! ah; away hesitation! away remorse! Glaucus, my fate is in thy smile; and thine! O hope! O joy! O transport! *thy* fate is in these hands!”

BOOK IV.

Philtre nocent animis, vimque furoris habent. — OVID.

Philtres are baneful to the reasoning mind,
And have the strength of madness.

CHAPTER I.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ZEAL OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. — TWO MEN COME TO A PERILOUS RESOLVE. — WALLS HAVE EARS, — PARTICULARLY SACRED WALLS.

WHOEVER regards the early history of Christianity will perceive how necessary to its triumph was that fierce spirit of zeal, which, fearing no danger, accepting no compromise, inspired its champions and sustained its martyrs. In a dominant church the genius of intolerance *betrays* its cause; in a weak and a persecuted church, the same genius mainly *supports*. It was necessary to scorn, to loathe, to abhor the creeds of other men, in order to conquer the temptations which they presented; it was necessary rigidly to believe not only that the Gospel was the true faith, but the *sole* true faith that saved, in order to nerve the disciple to the austerity of its doctrine, and to encourage him to the sacred and perilous chivalry of converting the Polytheist and the Heathen. The sectarian sternness which confined virtue and heaven to a chosen few, which saw demons in other gods, and the penalties of hell in another religion, made the believer naturally anxious to convert all to whom he felt the ties of human affection; and the circle thus traced by benevolence to man was yet more widened by a desire for the glory of God. It was for the honor of the Christian faith that the Christian boldly forced its tenets upon the scepticism of some, the

repugnance of others, the sage contempt of the philosopher, the pious shudder of the people: his very intolerance supplied him with his fittest instruments of success; and the soft Heathen began at last to imagine there must indeed be something holy in a zeal wholly foreign to his experience, which stopped at no obstacle, dreaded no danger, and even at the torture or on the scaffold referred a dispute far other than the calm differences of speculative philosophy to the tribunal of an Eternal Judge. It was thus that the same fervor which made the Churchman of the middle age a bigot without mercy, made the Christian of the early days a hero without fear.

Of these more fiery, daring, and earnest natures, not the least ardent was Olinthus. No sooner had Apæcides been received by the rites of baptism into the bosom of the Church, than the Nazarene hastened to make him conscious of the impossibility to retain the office and robes of priesthood. He could not, it was evident, profess to worship God, and continue even outwardly to honor the idolatrous altars of the Fiend.

Nor was this all: the sanguine and impetuous mind of Olinthus beheld in the power of Apæcides the means of divulging to the deluded people the juggling mysteries of the oracular Isis. He thought Heaven had sent this instrument of his design in order to disabuse the eyes of the crowd, and prepare the way, perchance, for the conversion of a whole city. He did not hesitate then to appeal to all the new-kindled enthusiasm of Apæcides, to arouse his courage, and to stimulate his zeal. They met, according to previous agreement, the evening after the baptism of Apæcides, in the grove of Cybele, which we have before described.

“At the next solemn consultation of the oracle,” said Olinthus, as he proceeded in the warmth of his address, “advance yourself to the railing, proclaim aloud to the people the deception they endure, invite them to enter, to be themselves the witness of the gross but artful mechanism of imposture thou hast described to me. Fear not: the Lord, who protected Daniel, shall protect thee; *we*, the community of

Christians, will be amongst the crowd; *we* will urge on the shrinking; and in the first flush of the popular indignation and shame, I myself, upon those very altars, will plant the palm-branch typical of the Gospel, and to my tongue shall descend the rushing Spirit of the living God."

Heated and excited as he was, this suggestion was not unpleasing to Apæcides. He was rejoiced at so early an opportunity of distinguishing his faith in his new sect, and to his holier feelings were added those of a vindictive loathing at the imposition he had himself suffered, and a desire to avenge it. In that sanguine and elastic *overbound* of obstacles (the rashness necessary to all who undertake venturesome and lofty actions), neither Olinthus nor the proselyte perceived the impediments to the success of their scheme, which might be found in the reverent superstition of the people themselves, who would probably be loth, before the sacred altars of the great Egyptian goddess, to believe even the testimony of her priest against her power.

Apæcides then assented to this proposal with a readiness which delighted Olinthus. They parted with the understanding that Olinthus should confer with the more important of his Christian brethren on his great enterprise, should receive their advice and the assurances of their support on the eventful day. It so chanced that one of the festivals of Isis was to be held on the second day after this conference. The festival proffered a ready occasion for the design. They appointed to meet once more on the next evening at the same spot; and in that meeting were finally to be settled the order and details of the disclosure for the following day.

It happened that the latter part of this conference had been held near the sacellum, or small chapel, which I have described in the early part of this work; and so soon as the forms of the Christian and the priest had disappeared from the grove, a dark and ungainly figure emerged from behind the chapel.

"I have tracked you with some effect, my brother flamen," soliloquized the eavesdropper; "you, the priest of Isis, have not for mere idle discussion conferred with this gloomy

Christian. Alas! that I could not hear all your precious plot: enough! I find, at least, that you meditate revealing the sacred mysteries, and that to-morrow you meet again at this place to plan the how and the when. May Osiris sharpen my ears then to detect the whole of your unheard-of audacity! When I have learned more, I must confer at once with Arbaces. We will frustrate you, my friends, deep as you think yourselves. At present, my breast is a locked treasury of your secret."

Thus muttering, Calenus, for it was he, wrapped his robe round him, and strode thoughtfully homeward.

CHAPTER II.

A CLASSIC HOST, COOK, AND KITCHEN. — APÆCIDES SEEKS IONE. — THEIR CONVERSATION.

It was then the day for Diomed's banquet to the most select of his friends. The graceful Glaucus, the beautiful Ione, the official Pansa, the high-born Clodius, the immortal Fulvius, the exquisite Lepidus, the epicurean Sallust, were not the only honorers of his festival. He expected also an invalid senator from Rome (a man of considerable repute and favor at court) and a great warrior from Herculaneum, who had fought with Titus against the Jews, and having enriched himself prodigiously in the wars, was always told by his friends that his country was eternally indebted to his disinterested exertions! The party, however, extended to a yet greater number; for although, critically speaking, it was at one time thought inelegant among the Romans to entertain less than three or more than nine at their banquets, yet this rule was easily disregarded by the ostentatious. And we are told, indeed, in history, that one of the most splendid of these entertainers usually feasted a select party of three hundred. Diomed, however, more modest, contented himself with doubling the number of the Muses. His party consisted of eighteen, — no unfashionable number in the present day.

It was the morning of Diomed's banquet, and Diomed himself, though he greatly affected the gentleman and the scholar, retained enough of his mercantile experience to know that a master's eye makes a ready servant. Accordingly, with his tunic ungirdled on his portly stomach, his easy slippers on his feet, a small wand in his hand, wherewith he now directed the gaze and now corrected the back, of some duller menial, he went from chamber to chamber of his costly villa.

He did not disdain even a visit to that sacred apartment in which the priests of the festival prepare their offerings. On entering the kitchen, his ears were agreeably stunned by the noise of dishes and pans, of oaths and commands. Small as this indispensable chamber seems to have been in all the houses of Pompeiii, it was nevertheless usually fitted up with all that amazing variety of stoves and shapes, stewpans and saucepans, cutters and moulds, without which a cook of spirit, no matter whether he be an ancient or a modern, declares it utterly impossible that he can give you anything to eat. And as fuel was then, as now, dear and scarce in those regions, great seems to have been the dexterity exercised in preparing as many things as possible with as little fire. An admirable contrivance of this nature may be still seen in the Neapolitan Museum; namely, a portable kitchen, about the size of a folio volume, containing stoves for four dishes, and an apparatus for heating water or other beverages.

Across the small kitchen fitted many forms which the quick eye of the master did not recognize.

"Oh! oh!" grumbled he to himself, "that cursed Congrio hath invited a whole legion of cooks to assist him. They won't serve for nothing, and this is another item in the total of my day's expenses. By Bacchus! thrice lucky shall I be if the slaves do not help themselves to some of the drinking-vessels: ready, alas, are their hands, capacious are their tunics! *Me miserum!*"

The cooks, however, worked on, seemingly heedless of the apparition of Diomed.

"Ho, Euclio, your egg-pan! What, is this the largest? it only holds thirty-three eggs: in the houses *I* usually serve, the smallest egg-pan holds fifty, if need be!"

“The unconscionable rogue!” thought Diomed; “he talks of eggs as if they were a sesterce a hundred!”

“By Mercury!” cried a pert little culinary disciple, scarce in his novitiate, “whoever saw such antique sweetmeat shapes as these? — it is impossible to do credit to one’s art with such rude materials. Why, Sallust’s commonest sweetmeat shape represents the whole siege of Troy, — Hector and Paris and Helen, with little Astyanax and the Wooden Horse into the bargain!”

“Silence, fool!” said Congrio, the cook of the house, who seemed to leave the chief part of the battle to his allies. “My master, Diomed, is not one of those expensive good-for-nothings who must have the last fashion, cost what it will!”

“Thou liest, base slave!” cried Diomed, in a great passion; “and thou costest me already enough to have ruined Lucullus himself! Come out of thy den; I want to talk to thee.”

The slave, with a sly wink at his confederates, obeyed the command.

“Man of three letters,”¹ said Diomed, with his face of solemn anger, “how didst thou dare to invite all those rascals into my house? I see thief written in every line of their faces.”

“Yet I assure you, master, that they are men of most respectable character, — the best cooks of the place; it is a great favor to get them. But for *my* sake —”

“Thy sake, unhappy Congrio!” interrupted Diomed; “and by what purloined moneys of mine, by what reserved filchings from marketing, by what goodly meats converted into grease and sold in the suburbs, by what false charges for bronzes marred and earthenware broken, hast thou been enabled to make them serve thee for *thy* sake?”

“Nay, master, do not impeach my honesty! May the gods desert me if —”

“Swear not!” again interrupted the choleric Diomed, “for then the gods will smite thee for a perjurer, and I shall lose my cook on the eve of dinner. But enough of this at present: keep a sharp eye on thy ill-favored assistants, and tell me no tales to-morrow of vases broken and cups miraculously van-

¹ The common witty objurgation, from the trilateral word “*fur*” (thief)

ished, or thy whole back shall be one pain. And hark thee! thou knowest thou hast made me pay for those Phrygian *attagens*¹ enough, by Hercules! to have feasted a sober man for a year together; see that they be not one iota over-roasted. The last time, O Congrio, that I gave a banquet to my friends, when thy vanity did so boldly undertake the becoming appearance of a Melian crane, thou knowest it came up like a stone from Ætna, as if all the fires of Phlegethon had been scorching out its juices. Be modest this time, Congrio, — wary and modest. Modesty is the nurse of great actions: and in all other things, as in this, if thou wilt not spare thy master's purse, at least consult thy master's glory."

"There shall not be such a cœna seen at Pompeii since the days of Hercules."

"Softly, softly; thy cursed boasting again! But I say, Congrio, yon *homunculus*, yon pygmy assailant of my cranes, yon pert-tongued neophite of the kitchen, — was there aught but insolence on his tongue when he maligned the comeliness of my sweetmeat shapes? I would not be out of the fashion, Congrio."

"It is but the custom of us cooks," replied Congrio, gravely, "to undervalue our tools, in order to increase the effect of our art. The sweetmeat shape is a fair shape, and a lovely; but I would recommend my master at the first occasion to purchase some new ones of a —"

"That will suffice," exclaimed Diomed, who seemed resolved never to allow his slave to finish his sentences. "Now, resume thy charge; shine, eclipse thyself. Let men envy Diomed his cook, let the slaves of Pompeii style thee Congrio the great! Go! Yet stay; thou hast not spent all the moneys I gave thee for the marketing?"

"*All!*" Alas! the nightingales' tongues and the Roman *tomacula*,² and the oysters from Britain, and sundry other

¹ The *attagen* of Phrygia or Ionia (the bird thus *anglicised* in the plural) was held in peculiar esteem by the Romans. "*Attagen carnis suavissimæ.*" (*Athen.*, lib. ix. cap. 8, 9.) It was a little bigger than a partridge.

² "*— candiduli divina tomacula porci.*" (*Juvenal*, x. l. 355.) A rich and delicate species of sausage.

things too numerous now to recite, are yet left unpaid for. But what matter? Every one trusts the *Archimagirus*² of Diomed the wealthy!"

"Oh, unconscionable prodigal! what waste! what profusion! I am ruined! But go! hasten! inspect! taste! perform! surpass thyself! Let the Roman senator not despise the poor Pompeian. Away, slave; and remember, the Phrygian *attagens*."

The chief disappeared within his natural domain, and Diomed rolled back his portly presence to the more courtly chambers. All was to his liking; the flowers were fresh, the fountains played briskly, the mosaic pavements were smooth as mirrors.

"Where is my daughter Julia?" he asked.

"At the bath."

"Ah, that reminds me! time wanes! and I must bathe also."

Our story returns to Apæcides. On awaking that day from the broken and feverish sleep which had followed his adoption of a faith so strikingly and sternly at variance with that in which his youth had been nurtured, the young priest could scarcely imagine that he was not yet in a dream; he had crossed the fatal river, — the past was henceforth to have no sympathy with the future; the two worlds were distinct and separate, that which had been, from that which was to be. To what a bold and adventurous enterprise he had pledged his life! — to unveil the mysteries in which he had participated, to desecrate the altars he had served, to denounce the goddess whose ministering robe he wore! Slowly he became sensible of the hatred and the horror he should provoke amongst the pious, even if successful; if frustrated in his daring attempt, what penalties might he not incur for an offence hitherto unheard of, — for which no specific law, derived from experience, was prepared, and which, for that very reason, precedents, dragged from the sharpest armory of obsolete and inapplicable legislation, would probably be distorted to meet! His friends, the sister of his youth, — could he expect

¹ Archimagirus was the lofty title of the chief cook.

justice, though he might receive compassion from them? This brave and heroic act would by their heathen eyes be regarded, perhaps, as a heinous apostasy, — at the best as a pitiable madness.

He dared, he renounced everything in this world in the hope of securing that eternity in the next which had so suddenly been revealed to him. While these thoughts on the one hand invaded his breast, on the other hand his pride, his courage, and his virtue mingled with reminiscences of revenge for deceit, of indignant disgust at fraud, conspired to raise and to support him.

The conflict was sharp and keen; but his new feelings triumphed over his old, and a mighty argument in favor of wrestling with the sanctities of old opinions and hereditary forms might be found in the conquest over both, achieved by that humble priest. Had the early Christians been more controlled by “the solemn plausibilities of custom,” — less of democrats in the pure and lofty acceptance of that perverted word, — Christianity would have perished in its cradle!

As each priest in succession slept several nights together in the chambers of the temple, the term imposed on Apæcides was not yet completed; and when he had risen from his couch, attired himself as usual in his robes, and left his narrow chamber, he found himself before the altars of the temple.

In the exhaustion of his late emotions he had slept far into the morning, and the vertical sun already poured its fervid beams over the sacred place.

“*Salve*, Apæcides!” said a voice, whose natural asperity was smoothed by long artifice into an almost displeasing softness of tone. “Thou art late abroad; has the goddess revealed herself to thee in visions?”

“Could she reveal her true self to the people, Calenus, how incenseless would be these altars!”

“That,” replied Calenus, “may possibly be true; but the deity is wise enough to hold commune with none but priests.”

“A time may come when she will be unveiled without her own acquiescence.”

"It is not likely: she has triumphed for countless ages. And that which has so long stood the test of time rarely succumbs to the lust of novelty. But hark ye, young brother! these sayings are indiscreet."

"It is not for thee to silence them," replied Apæcides, haughtily.

"So hot! yet I will not quarrel with thee. Why, my Apæcides, has not the Egyptian convinced thee of the necessity of our dwelling together in unity? Has he not convinced thee of the wisdom of deluding the people and enjoying ourselves? If not, O brother, he is not that great magician he is esteemed."

"Thou, then, hast shared his lessons?" said Apæcides, with a hollow smile.

"Ay! but I stood less in need of them than thou. Nature had already gifted me with the love of pleasure and the desire of gain and power. Long is the way that leads the voluptuary to the severities of life; but it is only one step from pleasant sin to sheltering hypocrisy. Beware the vengeance of the goddess, if the shortness of that step be disclosed!"

"Beware, thou, the hour when the tomb shall be rent and the rottenness exposed," returned Apæcides, solemnly. "Vale!"

With these words he left the flamen to his meditations. When he got a few paces from the temple, he turned to look back. Calenus had already disappeared in the entry room of the priests, for it now approached the hour of that repast which, called *prandium* by the ancients, answers in point of date to the breakfast of the moderns. The white and graceful fane gleamed brightly in the sun. Upon the altars before it rose the incense and bloomed the garlands. The priest gazed long and wistfully upon the scene; it was the last time that it was ever beheld by him.

He then turned and pursued his way slowly towards the house of Ione; for before possibly the last tie that united them was cut in twain, before the uncertain peril of the next day was incurred, he was anxious to see his last surviving relative, his fondest as his earliest friend.

He arrived at her house, and found her in the garden with Nydia.

"This is kind, Apæcides," said Ione, joyfully; "and how eagerly have I wished to see thee! what thanks do I not owe thee! How churlish hast thou been to answer none of my letters, to abstain from coming hither to receive the expressions of my gratitude! Oh, thou hast assisted to preserve thy sister from dishonor! What, what can she say to thank thee, now thou art come at last?"

"My sweet Ione, thou owest me no gratitude, for thy cause was mine. Let us avoid that subject—let us not recur to that impious man,—how hateful to both of us! I may have a speedy opportunity to teach the world the nature of his pretended wisdom and hypocritical severity. But let us sit down, my sister; I am wearied with the heat of the sun; let us sit in yonder shade, and for a little while longer be to each other what we have been."

Beneath a wide plane-tree, with the cistus and the arbutus clustering round them, the living fountain before, the green-sward beneath their feet; the gay cicada, once so dear to Athens, rising merrily ever and anon amidst the grass; the butterfly, beautiful emblem of the soul, dedicated to Psyche, and which has continued to furnish illustrations to the Christian bard, rich in the glowing colors caught from Sicilian skies,¹ hovering above the sunny flowers, itself like a winged flower,—in this spot and this scene the brother and the sister sat together for the last time on earth. You may tread now on the same place; but the garden is no more, the columns are shattered, the fountain hath ceased to play. Let the traveller search amongst the ruins of Pompeii for the house of Ione. Its remains are yet visible; but I will not betray them to the gaze of commonplace tourists. He who is more sensitive than the herd will discover them easily: when he has done so, let him keep the secret.

They sat down, and Nydia, glad to be alone, retired to the farther end of the garden.

"Ione, my sister," said the young convert, "place your

¹ In Sicily are found, perhaps, the most beautiful varieties of the butterfly.

hand upon my brow; let me feel your cool touch. Speak to me, too, for your gentle voice is like a breeze that hath freshness as well as music. Speak to me, but *forbear to bless me!* Utter not one word of those forms of speech which our childhood was taught to consider sacred!"

"Alas! and what then shall I say? Our language of affection is so woven with that of worship, that the words grow chilled and trite if I banish from them allusion to our gods."

"*Our gods!*" murmured Apæcides with a shudder: "thou slightest my request already."

"Shall I speak then to thee only of Isis?"

"The Evil Spirit! No, rather be dumb forever, unless at least thou canst—but away, away this talk! Not now will we dispute and cavil; not now will we judge harshly of each other; thou regarding me as an apostate, and I all sorrow and shame for thee as an idolater. No, my sister, let us avoid such topics and such thoughts. In thy sweet presence a calm falls over my spirit; for a little while I forget. As I thus lay my temples on thy bosom, as I thus feel thy gentle arm embrace me, I think that we are children once more, and that the heaven smiles equally upon both. For oh, if hereafter I escape, no matter what peril; and it be permitted me to address thee on one sacred and awful subject, should I find thine ear closed and thy heart hardened, what hope for myself could countervail the despair for thee? In thee, my sister, I behold a likeness made beautiful, made noble, of myself. Shall the mirror live forever and the form itself be broken as the potter's clay? Ah, no—no—thou wilt listen to me yet! Dost thou remember how we went into the fields by Baiæ, hand in hand together, to pluck the flowers of spring? Even so, hand in hand, shall we enter the Eternal Garden, and crown ourselves with imperishable asphodel!"

Wondering and bewildered by words she could not comprehend, but excited even to tears by the plaintiveness of their tone, Ione listened to these outpourings of a full and oppressed heart. In truth Apæcides himself was softened much beyond his ordinary mood, which to outward seeming was usually either sullen or impetuous. For the noblest

desires are of a jealous nature ; they engross, they absorb the soul, and often leave the splenetic humors stagnant and unheeded at the surface. Unheeding the petty things around us, we are deemed morose ; impatient at earthly interruption to the diviner dreams, we are thought irritable and churlish. For as there is no chimera vainer than the hope that one human heart shall find sympathy in another, so none ever interpret us with justice ; and none, no, not our nearest and our dearest ties, forbear with us in mercy ! When we are dead and repentance comes too late, both friend and foe may wonder to think how little there was in us to forgive !

“I will talk to thee then of our early years,” said Ione. “Shall yon blind girl sing to thee of the days of childhood ? Her voice is sweet and musical, and she hath a song on that theme which contains none of those allusions it pains thee to hear.”

“Dost thou remember the words, my sister ?” asked Apæcides.

“Methinks yes ; for the tune, which is simple, fixed them on my memory.”

“Sing to me then thyself. My ear is not in unison with unfamiliar voices ; and thine, Ione, full of household associations, has ever been to me more sweet than all the hireling melodies of Lycia or of Crete. Sing to me !”

Ione beckoned to a slave that stood in the portico, and sending for her lute, sang, when it arrived, to a tender and simple air, the following verses : —

REGRET FOR CHILDHOOD.

I.

It is not that our earlier Heaven
Escapes its April showers,
Or that to childhood's heart is given
No snake amidst the flowers.
Ah ! twined with grief
Each brightest leaf
That's wreath'd us by the Hours !

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

Young though we be, the Past may sting,
 The Present feed its sorrow,
But hope shines bright on everything
 That waits us with the morrow.
 Like sunlit glades,
 The dimmest shades
 Some rosy beam can borrow.

II.

It is not that our later years
 Of cares are woven wholly,
But smiles less swiftly chase the tears,
 And wounds are healed more slowly ;
 And memory's vow
 To lost ones now,
 Makes joys too bright, unholy ;
 And ever fled the Iris bow
 That smiled when clouds were o'er us.
 If storms should burst, uncheered we go,
 A drearier waste before us ;—
 And with the toys
 Of childish joys
 We've broke the staff that bore us !

Wisely and delicately had Ione chosen that song, sad though its burden seemed ; for when we are deeply mournful, discordant above all others is the voice of mirth : the fittest spell is that borrowed from melancholy itself, for dark thoughts can be softened down when they cannot be brightened ; and so they lose the precise and rigid outline of their truth, and their colors melt into the ideal. As the leech applies in remedy to the internal sore some outward irritation, which, by a gentler wound, draws away the venom of that which is more deadly, thus in the rankling festers of the mind our art is to divert to a milder sadness on the surface the pain that gnaweth at the core. And so with Apæcides, yielding to the influence of the silver voice that reminded him of the past, and told but of half the sorrow born to the present, he forgot his more immediate and fiery sources of anxious thought. He spent hours in making Ione alternately sing to and converse with him ; and when he rose to leave her, it was with a calmed and lulled mind.

"Ione," said he, as he pressed her hand, "should you hear my name blackened and maligned, will you credit the aspersion?"

"Never, my brother, never!"

"Dost thou not imagine, according to thy belief, that the evil-doer is punished hereafter, and the good rewarded?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"Dost thou think, then, that he who is truly good should sacrifice every selfish interest in his zeal for virtue?"

"He who does so is the equal of the gods."

"And thou believest that according to the purity and courage with which he thus acts shall be his portion of bliss beyond the grave?"

"So we are taught to hope."

"Kiss me, my sister. One question more. Thou art to be wedded to Glaucus, — perchance that marriage may separate us more hopelessly; but not of this speak I now, — thou art to be married to Glaucus; dost thou love him? Nay, my sister, answer me by words."

"Yes!" murmured Ione, blushing.

"Dost thou feel that for his sake thou couldst renounce pride, brave dishonor, and incur death? I have heard that when women really love, it is to that excess."

"My brother, all this could I do for Glaucus, and feel that it were not a sacrifice. There is no sacrifice to those who love, in what is borne for the one we love."

"Enough! Shall woman feel thus for man, and man feel less devotion to his God?"

He spoke no more. His whole countenance seemed instinct and inspired with a divine life; his chest swelled proudly; his eyes glowed; on his forehead was writ the majesty of a man who can dare be noble. He turned to meet the eyes of Ione, — earnest, wistful, fearful; he kissed her fondly, strained her warmly to his breast, and in a moment more he had left the house.

Long did Ione remain in the same place, mute and thoughtful. The maidens again and again came to warn her of the deepening noon, and her engagement to Diomed's banquet.

At length she woke from her reverie, and prepared not with the pride of beauty, but listless and melancholy, for the festival. One thought alone reconciled her to the promised visit, — she should meet Glaucus; she could confide to him her alarm and uneasiness for her brother.

CHAPTER III.

A FASHIONABLE PARTY AND A DINNER À LA MODE IN POMPEII.

MEANWHILE Sallust and Glaucus were slowly strolling towards the house of Diomed. Despite the habits of his life, Sallust was not devoid of many estimable qualities. He would have been an active friend, a useful citizen, in short, an excellent man, if he had not taken it into his head to be a philosopher. Brought up in the schools in which Roman plagiarism worshipped the echo of Grecian wisdom, he had imbued himself with those doctrines by which the later Epicureans corrupted the simple maxims of their great master. He gave himself altogether up to pleasure, and imagined there was no sage like a boon companion. Still, however, he had a considerable degree of learning, wit, and good-nature; and the hearty frankness of his very vices seemed like virtue itself beside the utter corruption of Clodius and the prostrate effeminacy of Lepidus, and therefore Glaucus liked him the best of his companions; and he, in turn, appreciating the nobler qualities of the Athenian, loved him almost as much as a cold *muræna*, or a bowl of the best Falernian.

“This is a vulgar old fellow, this Diomed,” said Sallust; “but he has some good qualities — in his cellar.”

“And some charming ones — in his daughter.”

“True, Glaucus; but you are not much moved by them, methinks. I fancy Clodius is desirous to be your successor.”

“He is welcome. At the banquet of Julia’s beauty, no guest, be sure, is considered a *musca*.”¹

¹ Unwelcome and uninvited guests were called *muscæ*, or flies.

"You are severe; but she has, indeed, something of the Corinthian about her: they will be well matched, after all! What good-natured fellows we are to associate with that gambling good-for-nought."

"Pleasure unites strange varieties," answered Glaucus. "He amuses me —"

"And flatters; but then he pays himself well. He powders his praise with gold-dust."

"You often hint that he plays unfairly; think you so really?"

"My dear Glaucus, a Roman noble has his dignity to keep up; dignity is very expensive; Clodius must cheat like a scoundrel in order to live like a gentleman."

"Ha, ha! Well, of late I have renounced the dice. Ah, Sallust, when I am wedded to Ione, I trust I may yet redeem a youth of follies. We are both born for better things than those in which we sympathize now; born to render our worship in nobler temples than the sty of Epicurus."

"Alas!" returned Sallust, in rather a melancholy tone, "what do we know more than this, — life is short, beyond the grave all is dark? There is no wisdom like that which says 'enjoy.'"

"By Bacchus! I doubt sometimes if we *do* enjoy the utmost of which life is capable."

"I am a moderate man," returned Sallust, "and do not ask 'the utmost.' We are like malefactors, and intoxicate ourselves with wine and myrrh as we stand on the brink of death; but if we did not do so, the abyss would look very disagreeable. I own that I was inclined to be gloomy until I took so heartily to drinking; that is a new life, my Glaucus."

"Yes, but it brings us next morning to a new death."

"Why, the next morning is unpleasant, I own; but then, if it were not so, one would never be inclined to read. I study betimes; because, by the gods! I am generally unfit for anything else till noon!"

"Fie, Scythian!"

"Pshaw! the fate of Pentheus to him who denies Bacchus."

“Well, Sallust, with all your faults, you are the best profligate I ever met; and verily, if I were in danger of life, you are the only man in all Italy who would stretch out a finger to save me.”

“Perhaps *I* should not, if it were in the middle of supper. But, in truth, we Italians are fearfully selfish.”

“So are all men who are not free,” said Glaucus, with a sigh, “Freedom alone makes men sacrifice to each other.”

“Freedom, then, must be a very fatiguing thing to an Epicurean,” answered Sallust. “But here we are at our host’s.”

As Diomed’s villa is one of the most considerable in point of size of any yet discovered at Pompeii, and is, moreover, built much according to the specific instructions for a suburban villa laid down by the Roman architect, it may not be uninteresting briefly to describe the plan of the apartments through which our visitors passed.

They entered, then, by the same small vestibule at which we have before been presented to the aged Medon, and passed at once into a colonnade, technically termed the peristyle; for the main difference between the suburban villa and the town mansion consisted in placing in the first the said colonnade, in exactly the same place as that which in the town mansion was occupied by the atrium. In the centre of the peristyle was an open court, which contained the impluvium.

From this peristyle descended a staircase to the offices; another narrow passage on the opposite side communicated with a garden; various small apartments surrounded the colonnade, appropriated probably to country visitors. Another door to the left on entering communicated with a small triangular portico, which belonged to the baths; and behind was the wardrobe, in which were kept the vests of the holiday suits of the slaves, and perhaps of the master. Seventeen centuries afterwards were found those relics of ancient finery, calcined and crumbling; kept longer, alas! than their thrifty lord foresaw.

Return we to the peristyle, and endeavor now to present to the reader a *coup d’œil* of the whole suite of apartments, which immediately stretched before the steps of the visitors.

Let him then first imagine the columns of the portico, hung with festoons of flowers; the columns themselves in the lower part painted red, and the walls around glowing with various frescos; then looking beyond a curtain, three parts drawn aside, the eye caught the tablinum or saloon (which was closed at will by glazed doors, now slid back into the walls). On either side of this tablinum were small rooms, one of which was a kind of cabinet of gems; and these apartments, as well as the tablinum, communicated with a long gallery, which opened at either end upon terraces; and between the terraces, and communicating with the central part of the gallery, was a hall, in which the banquet was that day prepared. All these apartments, though almost on a level with the street, were one story above the garden; and the terraces communicating with the gallery were continued into corridors, raised above the pillars which to the right and left skirted the garden below.

Beneath, and on a level with the garden, ran the apartments we have already described as chiefly appropriated to Julia.

In the gallery, then, just mentioned, Diomed received his guests.

The merchant affected greatly the man of letters, and therefore he also affected a passion for everything Greek; he paid particular attention to Glaucus.

"You will see, my friend," said he, with a wave of his hand, "that I am a little classical here — a little Cecropian — eh? The hall in which we shall sup is borrowed from the Greeks. It is an *Œcus Cyzicene*. Noble Sallust, they have not, I am told, this sort of apartment in Rome."

"Oh," replied Sallust, with a half smile, "you Pompeians combine all that is most eligible in Greece and in Rome; may you, Diomed, combine the viands as well as the architecture!"

"You shall see — you shall see, my Sallust," replied the merchant. "We have a taste at Pompeii, and we have also money."

"They are two excellent things," replied Sallust. "But, behold, the lady Julia!"

The main difference, as I have before remarked, in the manner of life observed among the Athenians and Romans, was,

that with the first the modest women rarely or never took part in entertainments ; with the latter they were the common ornaments of the banquet ; but when they were present at the feast, it usually terminated at an early hour.

Magnificently robed in white, interwoven with pearls and threads of gold, the handsome Julia entered the apartment.

Scarcely had she received the salutation of the two guests, ere Pansa and his wife, Lepidus, Clodius, and the Roman senator, entered almost simultaneously ; then came the widow Fulvia ; then the poet Fulvius, like to the widow in name if in nothing else ; the warrior from Herculaneum, accompanied by his umbra, next stalked in ; afterwards, the less eminent of the guests. Ione yet tarried.

It was the mode among the courteous ancients to flatter whenever it was in their power : accordingly it was a sign of ill-breeding to seat themselves immediately on entering the house of their host. After performing the salutation, which was usually accomplished by the same cordial shake of the right hand which we ourselves retain, and sometimes by the yet more familiar embrace, they spent several minutes in surveying the apartment, and admiring the bronzes, the pictures, or the furniture, with which it was adorned,—a mode very impolite according to our refined English notions, which place good breeding in indifference. We would not for the world express much admiration of another man's house, for fear it should be thought we had never seen anything so fine before !

“A beautiful statue this of Bacchus !” said the Roman senator.

“A mere trifle !” replied Diomed.

“What charming paintings !” said Fulvia.

“Mere trifles !” answered the owner.

“Exquisite candelabra !” cried the warrior.

“Exquisite !” echoed his umbra.

“Trifles ! trifles !” reiterated the merchant.

Meanwhile, Glaucus found himself by one of the windows of the gallery, which communicated with the terraces, and the fair Julia by his side.

"Is it an Athenian virtue, Glaucus," said the merchant's daughter, "to shun those whom we once sought?"

"Fair Julia, no!"

"Yet methinks it is one of the qualities of Glaucus."

"Glaucus never shuns a *friend!*" replied the Greek, with some emphasis on the last word.

"May Julia rank among the number of his friends?"

"It would be an honor to the emperor to find a friend in one so lovely."

"You evade my question," returned the enamoured Julia. "But tell me, is it true that you admire the Neapolitan Ione?"

"Does not beauty constrain our admiration?"

"Ah, subtle Greek, still do you fly the meaning of my words! But say, shall Julia be indeed your friend?"

"If she will so favor me, blessed be the gods! The day in which I am thus honored shall be ever marked in white."

"Yet even while you speak, your eye is restless; your color comes and goes; you move away involuntarily; you are impatient to join Ione."

For at that moment Ione had entered, and Glaucus had indeed betrayed the emotion noticed by the jealous beauty.

"Can admiration to one woman make me unworthy the friendship of another? Sanction not so, O Julia, the libels of the poets on your sex!"

"Well, you are right, or I will learn to think so. Glaucus, yet one moment. You are to wed Ione; is it not so?"

"If the Fates permit, such is my blessed hope."

"Accept, then, from me, in token of our new friendship, a present for your bride. Nay, it is the custom of friends, you know, always to present to bride and bridegroom some such little marks of their esteem and favoring wishes."

"Julia, I cannot refuse any token of friendship from one like you. I will accept the gift as an omen from Fortune herself."

"Then, after the feast, when the guests retire, you will descend with me to my apartment, and receive it from my hands. Remember!" said Julia as she joined the wife of Pansa, and left Glaucus to seek Ione.

The widow Fulvia and the spouse of the ædile were engaged in high and grave discussion.

"Oh, Fulvia, I assure you that the last account from Rome declares that the frizzling mode of dressing the hair is growing antiquated; they only now wear it built up in a tower, like Julia's, or arranged as a helmet, — the *Galerian* fashion, like mine, you see: it has a fine effect, I think. I assure you Vespius [Vespius was the name of the Herculaneum hero] admires it greatly."

"And nobody wears the hair like yon Neapolitan, in the Greek way."

"What, parted in front, with the knot behind? Oh, no; how ridiculous it is! it reminds one of the statue of Diana! Yet this Ione is handsome, eh?"

"So the men say; but then she is rich: she is to marry the Athenian. I wish her joy. He will not be long faithful, I suspect; those foreigners are very faithless."

"Oh, Julia," said Fulvia, as the merchant's daughter joined them; "have you seen the tiger yet?"

"No!"

"Why, all the ladies have been to see him. He is so handsome!"

"I hope we shall find some criminal or other for him and the lion," replied Julia. "Your husband [turning to Pansa's wife] is not so active as he should be in this matter."

"Why, really, the laws are too mild," replied the dame of the helmet. "There are so few offences to which the punishment of the arena can be awarded; and then, too, the gladiators are growing effeminate! The stoutest bestiarii declare they are willing enough to fight a boar or a bull; but as for a lion or a tiger, they think the game too much in earnest."

"They are worthy of a mitre,"¹ replied Julia, in disdain.

"Oh, have you seen the new house of Fulvius, the dear poet?" said Pansa's wife.

"No; is it handsome?"

"Very! such good taste. But they say, my dear, that he

¹ Mitres were worn sometimes by men, and considered a great mark of effeminacy.

has such improper pictures! He won't show them to the women: how ill-bred!"

"Those poets are always odd," said the widow. "But he is an interesting man; what pretty verses he writes! We improve very much in poetry: it is impossible to read the old stuff now."

"I declare I am of your opinion," returned the lady of the helmet. "There is so much more force and energy in the modern school."

The warrior sauntered up to the ladies.

"It reconciles me to peace," said he, "when I see such faces."

"Oh, you heroes are ever flatterers!" returned Fulvia, hastening to appropriate the compliment specially to herself.

"By this chain, which I received from the emperor's own hand," replied the warrior, playing with a short chain which hung round the neck like a collar, instead of descending to the breast, according to the fashion of the peaceful, — "by this chain you wrong me! I am a blunt man; a soldier should be so."

"How do you find the ladies of Pompeii generally?" said Julia.

"By Venus, most beautiful! They favor me a little, it is true, and that inclines my eyes to double their charms."

"We love a warrior," said the wife of Pansa.

"I see it: by Hercules! it is even disagreeable to be too celebrated in these cities. At Herculaneum they climb the roof of my atrium to catch a glimpse of me through the compluvium; the admiration of one's citizens is pleasant at first, but burdensome afterwards."

"True, true, O Vespius!" cried the poet, joining the group: "I find it so myself."

"You!" said the stately warrior, scanning the small form of the poet with ineffable disdain. "In what legion have you served?"

"You may see my spoils, my exuviae, in the forum itself," returned the poet, with a significant glance at the women. "I have been among the tent-companions, the *contubernales*, of the great Mantuan himself."

"I know no general from Mantua," said the warrior, gravely. "What campaign have you served?"

"That of Helicon."

"I never heard of it."

"Nay, Vespian, he does but joke," said Julia, laughing.

"Joke! By Mars, am I a man to be joked?"

"Yes; Mars himself was in love with the mother of jokes," said the poet, a little alarmed. "Know, then, O Vespian, that I am the poet Fulvius! It is I who make warriors immortal!"

"The gods forbid!" whispered Sallust to Julia. "If Vespian were made immortal, what a specimen of tiresome braggadocio would be transmitted to posterity!"

The soldier looked puzzled; when, to the infinite relief of himself and his companions, the signal for the feast was given.

As we have already witnessed at the house of Glaucus the ordinary routine of a Pompeian entertainment, the reader is spared any second detail of the courses, and the manner in which they were introduced.

Diomed, who was rather ceremonious, had appointed a nomenclator, or appointer of places, to each guest.

The reader understands that the festive board was composed of three tables, — one at the centre, and one at each wing. It was only at the outer side of these tables that the guests reclined; the inner space was left untenanted, for the greater convenience of the waiters or ministri. The extreme corner of one of the wings was appropriated to Julia as the lady of the feast; that next her, to Diomed. At one corner of the centre table was placed the *ædile*; at the opposite corner, the Roman senator; these were the posts of honor. The other guests were arranged so that the young (gentleman or lady) should sit next each other, and the more advanced in years be similarly matched. An agreeable provision enough, but one which must often have offended those who wished to be thought still young.

The chair of Ione was next to the couch of Glaucus.¹ The

¹ In formal parties the women sat in chairs, — the men reclined. It was only in the bosom of families that the same ease was granted to both sexes; the reason is obvious.

seats were veneered with tortoise-shell, and covered with quilts stuffed with feathers, and ornamented with costly embroideries. The modern ornaments of epergne or plateau were supplied by images of the gods, wrought in bronze, ivory, and silver. The sacred salt-cellar and the familiar Lares were not forgotten. Over the table and the seats a rich canopy was suspended from the ceiling. At each corner of the table were lofty candelabra, — for though it was early noon, the room was darkened, — while from tripods, placed in different parts of the room, distilled the odor of myrrh and frankincense; and upon the abacus, or sideboard, large vases and various ornaments of silver were ranged, much with the same ostentation (but with more than the same taste) that we find displayed at a modern feast.

The custom of grace was invariably supplied by that of libations to the gods; and Vesta, as queen of the household gods, usually received first that graceful homage.

This ceremony being performed, the slaves showered flowers upon the couches and the floor, and crowned each guest with rosy garlands, intricately woven with ribbons, tied by the rind of the linden-tree, and each intermingled with the ivy and the amethyst, — supposed preventives against the effect of wine; the wreaths of the women only were exempted from these leaves, for it was not the fashion for them to drink wine *in public*. It was then that the president Diomed thought it advisable to institute a *basileus*, or director of the feast, an important office, sometimes chosen by lot, sometimes, as now, by the master of the entertainment.

Diomed was not a little puzzled as to his election. The invalid senator was too grave and too infirm for the proper fulfilment of his duty: the ædile Pansa was adequate enough to the task; but then, to choose the next in official rank to the senator, was an affront to the senator himself. While deliberating between the merits of the others, he caught the mirthful glance of Sallust, and, by a sudden inspiration, named the jovial epicure to the rank of director, or *arbiter bibendi*.

Sallust received the appointment with becoming humility.

“I shall be a merciful king,” said he, “to those who drink

deep; to a recusant, Minos himself shall be less inexorable. Beware!"

The slaves handed round basins of perfumed water, by which lavation the feast commenced: and now the table groaned under the initiatory course.

The conversation, at first desultory and scattered, allowed Ione and Glaucus to carry on those sweet whispers which are worth all the eloquence in the world. Julia watched them with flashing eyes.

"How soon shall her place be mine?" thought she.

But Clodius, who sat at the centre table, so as to observe well the countenance of Julia, guessed her pique, and resolved to profit by it. He addressed her across the table in set phrases of gallantry; and as he was of high birth and of a showy person, the vain Julia was not so much in love as to be insensible to his attentions.

The slaves, in the interim, were constantly kept upon the alert by the vigilant Sallust, who chased one cup by another with a celerity which seemed as if he were resolved upon exhausting those capacious cellars which the reader may yet see beneath the house of Diomed. The worthy merchant began to repent his choice, as amphora after amphora was pierced and emptied. The slaves, all under the age of manhood (the youngest being about ten years old, — it was they who filled the wine; the eldest, some five years older, mingled it with water), seemed to share in the zeal of Sallust; and the face of Diomed began to glow as he watched the provoking complacency with which they seconded the exertions of the king of the feast.

"Pardon me, O senator!" said Sallust; "I see you flinch; your purple hem cannot save you: drink!"

"By the gods!" said the senator, coughing, "my lungs are already on fire; you proceed with so miraculous a swiftness, that Phaeton himself was nothing to you. I am infirm, O pleasant Sallust; you must exonerate me."

"Not I, by Vesta! I am an impartial monarch: drink!"

The poor senator, compelled by the laws of the table, was forced to comply. Alas! every cup was bringing him nearer and nearer to the Stygian pool.

“Gently, gently, my king!” groaned Diomed; “we already begin to —”

“Treason!” interrupted Sallust; “no stern Brutus here! no interference with royalty!”

“But our female guests —”

“Love a toper! Did not Ariadne dote upon Bacchus?”

The feast proceeded; the guests grew more talkative and noisy; the dessert or last course was already on the table; and the slaves bore round water with myrrh and hyssop for the finishing lavation. At the same time a small circular table that had been placed in the space opposite the guests suddenly, and as by magic, seemed to open in the centre, and cast up a fragrant shower, sprinkling the table and the guests; while as it ceased the awning above them was drawn aside, and the guests perceived that a rope had been stretched across the ceiling, and that one of those nimble dancers for which Pompeii was so celebrated, and whose descendants add so charming a grace to the festivities of Astley’s or Vauxhall, was now treading his airy measures right over their heads.

This apparition, removed but by a cord from one’s pericranium, and indulging the most vehement leaps, apparently with the intention of alighting upon that cerebral region, would probably be regarded with some terror by a party in Mayfair; but our Pompeian revellers seemed to behold the spectacle with delighted curiosity, and applauded in proportion as the dancer appeared with the most difficulty to miss falling upon the head of whatever guest he particularly selected to dance above. He paid the senator, indeed, the peculiar compliment of literally falling from the rope, and catching it again with his hand, just as the whole party imagined the skull of the Roman was as much fractured as ever that of the poet whom the eagle took for a tortoise. At length, to the great relief of at least Ione, who had not much accustomed herself to this entertainment, the dancer suddenly paused, as a strain of music was heard from without. He danced again still more wildly; the air changed, the dancer paused again; no, it could not dissolve the charm which was supposed to possess him! He represented one who by a

strange disorder is compelled to dance, and whom only a certain air of music can cure.¹ At length the musician seemed to hit on the right tune; the dancer gave one leap, swung himself down from the rope, alighted on the floor, and vanished.

One art now yielded to another; and the musicians who were stationed without on the terrace struck up a soft and mellow air, to which were sung the following words, made almost indistinct by the barrier between and the exceeding lowness of the minstrelsy: —

FESTIVE MUSIC SHOULD BE LOW.

I.

Hark! through these flowers our music sends its greeting
 To your loved halls, where Psilas² shuns the day;
 When the young god his Cretan nymph was meeting,
 He taught Pan's rustic pipe this gliding lay:
 Soft as the dews of wine
 Shed in this banquet hour,
 The rich libation of Sound's stream divine,
 O reverent harp, to Aphrodite pour!

II.

Wild rings the trump o'er ranks to glory marching;
 Music's sublimer bursts for war are meet;
 But sweet lips murmuring under wreaths o'erarching
 Find the low whispers like their own most sweet.
 Steal, my lull'd music, steal
 Like woman's half-heard tone,
 So that whoe'er shall hear, shall think to feel
 In thee the voice of lips that love his own.

At the end of that song Ione's cheek blushed more deeply than before, and Glaucus had contrived, under cover of the table, to steal her hand.

"It is a pretty song," said Fulvius, patronizingly.

"Ah, if *you* would oblige us!" murmured the wife of Pansa.

"Do you wish Fulvius to sing?" asked the king of the feast, who had just called on the assembly to drink the health of the Roman senator, a cup to each letter of his name.

"Can you ask?" said the matron, with a complimentary glance at the poet.

¹ A dance still retained in Campania.

² Bacchus.

Sallust snapped his fingers, and whispering the slave who came to learn his orders, the latter disappeared, and returned in a few moments with a small harp in one hand and a branch of myrtle in the other.

The slave approached the poet, and with a low reverence presented to him the harp.

“Alas! I cannot play,” said the poet.

“Then you must sing to the myrtle. It is a Greek fashion: Diomed loves the Greeks; I love the Greeks; you love the Greeks; we all love the Greeks; and between you and me this is not the only thing we have stolen from them. However, I introduce this custom, — I, the king: sing, subject, sing!”

The poet, with a bashful smile, took the myrtle in his hands, and after a short prelude sang as follows, in a pleasant and well-tuned voice: —

THE CORONATION OF THE LOVES.¹

I.

The merry Loves one holiday
 Were all at gambols madly;
 But Loves too long can seldom play
 Without behaving sadly.
 They laugh'd, they toy'd, they romp'd about,
 And then for change they all fell out.
 Fie, fie! how can they quarrel so?
 My Lesbia — ah, for shame, love!
 Methinks 't is scarce an hour ago
 When we did just the same, love.

II.

The Loves, 'tis thought, were free till then,
 They had no king or laws, dear;
 But gods, like men, should subject be,
 Say all the ancient saws, dear.
 And so our crew resolved, for quiet,
 To choose a king to curb their riot.
 A kiss: ah! what a grievous thing
 For both, methinks, 't would be, child,
 If I should take some prudish king,
 And cease to be so free, child!

¹ Suggested by two Pompeian pictures in the Museum at Naples, which represented a dove and a helmet enthroned by Cupids.

III.

Among their toys a casque they found, —
 It was the helm of Ares;
 With horrent plumes the crest was crown'd, —
 It frightened all the Lares.
 So fine a king was never known :
 They placed the helmet on the throne.
 My girl, since Valor wins the world,
 They chose a mighty master ;
 But thy sweet flag of smiles unfurled
 Would win the world much faster !

IV.

The Casque soon found the Loves too wild
 A troop for him to school them ;
 For warriors know how *one* such child
 Has aye contrived to fool them.
 They plagued him so, that in despair
 He took a wife the plague to share.
 If kings themselves thus find the strife
 Of earth, unshared, severe, girl,
 Why, just to halve the ills of life,
 Come, take your partner here, girl.

V.

Within that room the Bird of Love
 The whole affair had eyed then ;
 The monarch hail'd the royal dove,
 And placed her by his side then :
 What mirth amidst the Loves was seen :
 "Long live," they cried, "our King and Queen."
 Ah, Lesbia, would that thrones were mine,
 And crowns to deck that brow, love !
 And yet I know that heart of thine
 For me is throne enow, love !

VI.

The urchins hoped to tease the mate
 As they had teased the hero ;
 But when the Dove in judgment sate
 They found her worse than Nero !
 Each look a frown, each word a law ;
 The little subjects shook with awe.
 In thee I find the same deceit, —
 Too late, alas ! a learner !
 For where a mien more gently sweet,
 And where a tyrant sterner ?

This song, which greatly suited the gay and lively fancy of the Pompeians, was received with considerable applause, and the widow insisted on crowning her namesake with the very branch of myrtle to which he had sung. It was easily twisted into a garland, and the immortal Fulvius was crowned amidst the clapping of hands and shouts of *Io triumphe!* The song and the harp now circulated round the party, a new myrtle branch being handed about, stopping at each person who could be prevailed upon to sing.¹

The sun began now to decline, though the revellers, who had worn away several hours, perceived it not in their darkened chamber; and the senator, who was tired, and the warrior, who had to return to Herculaneum, rising to depart, gave the signal for the general dispersion. "Tarry yet a moment, my friends," said Diomed; "if you will go so soon, you must at least take a share in our concluding game."

So saying, he motioned to one of the ministri, and whispering him the slave went out, and presently returned with a small bowl containing various tablets carefully sealed, and apparently exactly similar. Each guest was to purchase one of these at the nominal price of the lowest piece of silver: and the sport of this lottery (which was the favorite diversion of Augustus, who introduced it) consisted in the inequality, and sometimes the incongruity, of the prizes, the nature and amount of which were specified within the tablets. For instance, the poet, with a wry face, drew one of his own poems (no physician ever less willingly swallowed his own draught); the warrior drew a case of bodkins, which gave rise to certain novel witticisms relative to Hercules and the distaff; the widow Fulvia obtained a large drinking-cup; Julia, a gentleman's buckle; and Lepidus, a lady's patch-box. The most appropriate lot was drawn by the gambler Clodius, who reddened with anger on being presented to a set of cogged dice.² A

¹ According to Plutarch (*Sympos. lib. i.*) it seems that the branch of myrtle or laurel was not carried round in order, but passed from the first person on one couch to the first on another, and then from the second on the one to the second on the other, and so on.

² Several cogged dice were found in Pompeii. Some of the virtues may be modern, but it is quite clear that all the vices are ancient.

certain damp was thrown upon the gayety which these various lots created by an accident that was considered ominous; Glaucus drew the most valuable of all the prizes, — a small marble statue of Fortune, of Grecian workmanship: on handing it to him the slave suffered it to drop, and it broke in pieces.

A shiver went round the assembly, and each voice cried spontaneously on the gods to avert the omen.

Glaucus alone, though perhaps as superstitious as the rest, affected to be unmoved.

“Sweet Neapolitan,” whispered he tenderly to Ione, who had turned pale as the broken marble itself, “I *accept* the omen. It signifies that in obtaining thee, Fortune can give no more, — she breaks *her* image when she blesses me with *thine*.”

In order to divert the impression which this incident had occasioned in an assembly which, considering the civilization of the guests, would seem miraculously superstitious if at the present day in a country party we did not often see a lady grow hypochondriacal on leaving a room last of thirteen, Sallust, now crowning his cup with flowers, gave the health of their host. This was followed by a similar compliment to the emperor; and then, with a parting cup to Mercury to send them pleasant slumbers, they concluded the entertainment by a last libation, and broke up the party.

Carriages and litters were little used in Pompeii, partly owing to the extreme narrowness of the streets, partly to the convenient smallness of the city. Most of the guests replacing their sandals, which they had put off in the banquet-room, and induing their cloaks, left the house on foot attended by their slaves.

Meanwhile, having seen Ione depart, Glaucus, turning to the staircase which led down to the rooms of Julia, was conducted by a slave to an apartment in which he found the merchant's daughter already seated.

“Glaucus,” said she, looking down, “I see that you really love Ione; she is indeed beautiful.”

“Julia is charming enough to be generous,” replied the

Greek. "Yes, I love Ione; amidst all the youth who court you, may you have one worshipper as sincere."

"I pray the gods to grant it! See, Glaucus, these pearls are the present I destine to your bride: may Juno give her health to wear them!"

So saying, she placed a case in his hand, containing a row of pearls of some size and price. It was so much the custom for persons about to be married to receive these gifts, that Glaucus could have little scruple in accepting the necklace, though the gallant and proud Athenian inly resolved to requite the gift by one of thrice its value. Julia then, stopping short his thanks, poured forth some wine into a small bowl.

"You have drunk many toasts with my father," said she, smiling, — "one now with me. Health and fortune to your bride!"

She touched the cup with her lips and then presented it to Glaucus. The customary etiquette required that Glaucus should drain the whole contents; he accordingly did so. Julia, unknowing the deceit which Nydia had practised upon her, watched him with sparkling eyes; although the witch had told her that the effect *might* not be immediate, she yet sanguinely trusted to an expeditious operation in favor of her charms. She was disappointed when she found Glaucus coldly replace the cup, and converse with her in the same unmoved but gentle tone as before; and though she detained him as long as she decorously could do, no change took place in his manner.

"But to-morrow," thought she, exultingly recovering her disappointment, — "to-morrow, alas for Glaucus!"

Alas for him, indeed!

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY HALTS FOR A MOMENT AT AN EPISODE.

RESTLESS and anxious, Apæcides consumed the day in wandering through the most sequestered walks in the vicinity of the city. The sun was slowly setting as he paused beside a lonely part of the Sarnus, ere yet it wound amidst the evidences of luxury and power. Only through openings in the woods and vines were caught glimpses of the white and gleaming city, in which was heard in the distance no din, no sound, nor "busiest hum of men." Amidst the green banks crept the lizard and the grasshopper, and here and there in the brake some solitary bird burst into sudden song, as suddenly stilled. There was deep calm around, but not the calm of night; the air still breathed of the freshness and life of day; the grass still moved to the stir of the insect horde; and on the opposite bank the graceful and white capella passed browsing through the herbage, and paused at the wave to drink.

As Apæcides stood musingly gazing upon the waters, he heard beside him the low bark of a dog.

"Be still, poor friend," said a voice at hand; "the stranger's step harms not thy master." The convert recognized the voice, and, turning, he beheld the old mysterious man whom he had seen in the congregation of the Nazarenes.

The old man was sitting upon a fragment of stone covered with ancient mosses; beside him were his staff and scrip; at his feet lay a small shaggy dog, the companion in how many a pilgrimage perilous and strange.

The face of the old man was as balm to the excited spirit of the neophyte; he approached, and craving his blessing, sat down beside him.

"Thou art provided as for a journey, father," said he: "wilt thou leave us yet?"

"My son," replied the old man, "the days in store for me

on earth are few and scanty ; I employ them as becomes me, travelling from place to place, comforting those whom God has gathered together in His name, and proclaiming the glory of His Son, as testified to His servant."

"Thou hast looked, they tell me, on the face of Christ?"

"And the face revived me from the dead. Know, young proselyte to the true faith, that I am he of whom thou readest in the scroll of the Apostle. In the far Judea, and in the city of Nain, there dwelt a widow, humble of spirit and sad of heart, for of all the ties of life one son alone was spared to her ; and she loved him with a melancholy love, for he was the likeness of the lost. And the son died. The reed on which she leaned was broken, the oil was dried up in the widow's cruse. They bore the dead upon his bier ; and near the gate of the city, where the crowd were gathered, there came a silence over the sounds of woe, for the Son of God was passing by. The mother, who followed the bier, wept, not noisily, but all who looked upon her saw that her heart was crushed. And the Lord pitied her, and He touched the bier, and said, 'I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE.' And the dead man woke and looked upon the face of the Lord. Oh that calm and solemn brow, that unutterable smile, that careworn and sorrowful face, lighted up with a God's benignity, — it chased away the shadows of the grave ! I rose, I spoke, I was living, and in my mother's arms ; yes, *I* am the dead revived ! The people shouted, the funeral horns rung forth merrily : there was a cry, 'God has visited His people !' I heard them not ; I felt, I saw — nothing, but the face of the Redeemer !"

The old man paused, deeply moved ; and the youth felt his blood creep and his hair stir. He was in the presence of one who had known the Mystery of Death !

"Till that time," renewed the widow's son, "I had been as other men, — thoughtless, not abandoned ; taking no heed but of the things of love and life ; nay, I had inclined to the gloomy faith of the earthly Sadducee ! But, raised from the dead, from awful and desert dreams that these lips never dare reveal, recalled upon earth to testify the powers of Heaven, once more mortal, the witness of immortality, I drew a new

being from the grave. O faded, O lost Jerusalem! Him from whom came my life, I beheld adjudged to the agonized and parching death! Far in the mighty crowd I saw the light rest and glimmer over the cross; I heard the hooting mob, I cried aloud, I raved, I threatened; none heeded me; I was lost in the whirl and the roar of thousands! But even then, in my agony and His own, methought the glazing eye of the Son of Man sought me out; His lip smiled, as when it conquered death; it hushed me, and I became calm. He who had defied the grave for another, what was the grave to Him? The sun shone aslant the pale and powerful features, and then died away! Darkness fell over the earth; how long it endured, I know not. A loud cry came through the gloom,—a sharp and bitter cry!—and all was silent.

“But who shall tell the terrors of the night? I walked along the city; the earth reeled to and fro, and the houses trembled to their base; the living had deserted the streets, but *not the dead*: through the gloom I saw them glide,—the dim and ghastly shapes, in the cerements of the grave, with horror and woe and warning on their unmoving lips and lightless eyes. They swept by me, as I passed; they glared upon me; I had been their brother, and they bowed their heads in recognition; they had risen to tell the living that the dead *can* rise!”

Again the old man paused, and when he resumed, it was in a calmer tone.

“From that night I resigned all earthly thought but that of serving HIM. A preacher and a pilgrim, I have traversed the remotest corners of the earth, proclaiming His Divinity and bringing new converts to His fold. I come as the wind, and as the wind depart; sowing, as the wind sows, the seeds that enrich the world.

“Son, on earth we shall meet no more. Forget not this hour. What are the pleasures and the pomps of life? As the lamp shines, so life glitters for an hour; but the soul’s light is the star that burns forever in the heart of illimitable space.”

It was then that their conversation fell upon the general and sublime doctrines of immortality; it soothed and elevated the

young mind of the convert, which yet clung to many of the damps and shadows of that cell of faith which he had so lately left; it was the air of heaven breathing on the prisoner released at last. There was a strong and marked distinction between the Christianity of the old man and that of Olinthus; that of the first was more soft, more gentle, more divine. The hard heroism of Olinthus had something in it fierce and intolerant; it was necessary to the part he was destined to play; it had in it more of the courage of the martyr than the charity of the saint. It aroused, it excited, it nerved, rather than subdued and softened. But the whole heart of that divine old man was bathed in love; the smile of the Deity had burned away from it the leaven of earthlier and coarser passions, and left to the energy of the hero all the meekness of the child.

“And now,” said he, rising at length, as the sun’s last ray died in the west, “now, in the cool of twilight, I pursue my way towards the Imperial Rome. There yet dwell some holy men who like me have beheld the face of Christ; and them would I see before I die.”

“But the night is chill for thine age, my father, and the way is long, and the robber haunts it; rest thee till to-morrow.”

“Kind son, what is there in this scrip to tempt the robber? And the Night and the Solitude!—*these* make the ladder round which angels cluster, and beneath which my spirit can dream of God. Oh, none can know what the pilgrim feels as he walks on his holy course, nursing no fear, and dreading no danger, for God is with him! He hears the winds murmur glad tidings; the woods sleep in the shadow of Almighty wings; the stars are the Scriptures of Heaven, the tokens of love, and the witnesses of immortality. Night is the pilgrim’s day.” With these words the old man pressed Apæcides to his breast, and taking up his staff and scrip, the dog bounded cheerily before him, and with slow steps and downcast eyes he went his way.

The convert stood watching his bended form till the trees shut the last glimpse from his view; and then, as the stars broke forth, he woke from the musings with a start, reminded of his appointment with Olinthus.

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILTRE, — ITS EFFECT.

WHEN Glaucus arrived at his own home, he found Nydia seated under the portico of his garden. In fact, she had sought his house in the mere chance that he *might* return at an early hour; anxious, fearful, anticipative, she resolved upon seizing the earliest opportunity of availing herself of the love-charm, while at the same time she half hoped the opportunity might be deferred.

It was then, in that fearful burning mood, her heart beating, her cheek flushing, that Nydia awaited the possibility of Glaucus's return before the night. He crossed the portico just as the first stars began to rise, and the heaven above had assumed its most purple robe.

"Ho, my child, wait you for me?"

"Nay, I have been tending the flowers, and did but linger a little while to rest myself."

"It has been warm," said Glaucus, placing himself also on one of the seats beneath the colonnade.

"Very."

"Wilt thou summon Davus? The wine I have drunk heats me, and I long for some cooling drink."

Here at once, suddenly and unexpectedly, the very opportunity that Nydia awaited presented itself; of himself, at his own free choice, he afforded to her that occasion. She breathed quick. "I will prepare for you myself," said she, "the summer draught that Ione loves, — of honey and weak wine cooled in snow."

"Thanks," said the unconscious Glaucus. "If Ione love it, enough; it would be grateful were it poison."

Nydia frowned, and then smiled; she withdrew for a few moments, and returned with the cup containing the beverage. Glaucus took it from her hand. What would not Nydia have given then for one hour's prerogative of sight, to have watched

her hopes ripening to effect; to have seen the first dawn of the imagined love; to have worshipped with more than Persian adoration the rising of that sun which her credulous soul believed was to break upon her dreary night! Far different, as she stood then and there, were the thoughts, the emotions of the blind girl, from those of the vain Pompeian under a similar suspense. In the last, what poor and frivolous passions had made up the daring whole! What petty pique, what small revenge, what expectation of a paltry triumph, had swelled the attributes of that sentiment she dignified with the name of love! But in the wild heart of the Thesalian all was pure, uncontrolled, unmodified passion; erring, unwomanly, frenzied, but debased by no elements of a more sordid feeling. Filled with love as with life itself, how could she resist the occasion of winning love in return?

She leaned for support against the wall, and her face, before so flushed, was now white as snow, and with her delicate hands clasped convulsively together, her lips apart, her eyes on the ground, she waited the next words Glaucus should utter.

Glaucus had raised the cup to his lips, he had already drained about a fourth of its contents, when his eye suddenly glancing upon the face of Nydia, he was so forcibly struck by its alteration, by its intense and painful and strange expression, that he paused abruptly, and still holding the cup near his lips, exclaimed, —

“Why, Nydia! Nydia! I say, art thou ill or in pain? Nay, thy face speaks for thee. What ails my poor child?” As he spoke, he put down the cup and rose from his seat to approach her, when a sudden pang shot coldly to his heart, and was followed by a wild, confused, dizzy sensation at the brain. The floor seemed to glide from under him; his feet seemed to move on air; a mighty and unearthly gladness rushed upon his spirit; he felt too buoyant for the earth; he longed for wings, nay, it seemed in the buoyancy of his new existence as if he possessed them. He burst involuntarily into a loud and thrilling laugh. He clapped his hands, he bounded aloft, he was as a Pythoness inspired; suddenly as it

came, this preternatural transport passed, though only partially, away. He now felt his blood rushing loudly and rapidly through his veins; it seemed to swell, to exult, to leap along, as a stream that has burst its bounds and hurries to the ocean. It throbbed in his ear with a mighty sound; he felt it mount to his brow; he felt the veins in the temples stretch and swell as if they could no longer contain the violent and increasing tide; then a kind of darkness fell over his eyes,—darkness, but not entire; for through the dim shade he saw the opposite walls glow out, and the figures painted thereon seemed, ghost-like, to creep and glide. What was most strange, he did not feel himself *ill*; he did not sink or quail beneath the dread frenzy that was gathering over him. The novelty of the feelings seemed bright and vivid; he felt as if a younger health had been infused into his frame. He was gliding on to madness, and he knew it not!

Nydia had not answered his first question, she had not been able to reply; his wild and fearful laugh had roused her from her passionate suspense: she could not see his fierce gestures, she could not mark his reeling and unsteady step as he paced unconsciously to and fro; but she heard the words, broken, incoherent, insane, that gushed from his lips. She became terrified and appalled; she hastened to him, feeling with her arms until she touched his knees, and then falling on the ground she embraced them, weeping with terror and excitement.

“Oh, speak to me! speak! You do not hate me? Speak, speak!”

“By the bright goddess, a beautiful land this Cyprus! Hó! how they fill us with wine instead of blood! Now they open the veins of the Faun yonder to show how the tide within bubbles and sparkles. Come hither, jolly old god! thou ridest on a goat, eh? What long silky hair he has! He is worth all the coursers of Parthia. But a word with thee: this wine of thine is too strong for us mortals. Oh, beautiful! the boughs are at rest! the green waves of the forest have caught the Zephyr and drowned him! Not a breath stirs the leaves, and I view the Dreams sleeping with folded wings upon the

motionless elm; and I look beyond, and I see a blue stream sparkle in the silent noon! a fountain, — a fountain springing aloft! Ah, my fount, thou wilt not put out the rays of my Grecian sun, though thou triest ever so hard with thy nimble and silver arms! And now, what form steals yonder through the boughs? She glides like a moonbeam; she has a garland of oak-leaves on her head. In her hand is a vase upturned, from which she pours pink and tiny shells, and sparkling water. Oh, look on yon face! Man never before saw its like. See! we are alone; only I and she in the wide forest. There is no smile upon her lips; she moves, grave and sweetly sad. Ha! fly! it is a nymph! it is one of the wild *Napææ*.¹ Whoever sees her becomes mad; fly! see, she discovers me!”

“Oh, Glaucus! Glaucus! do you not know me? Rave not so wildly, or thou wilt kill me with a word!”

A new change seemed now to operate upon the jarring and disordered mind of the unfortunate Athenian. He put his hands upon Nydia's silken hair; he smoothed the locks, he looked wistfully upon her face, and then, as in the broken chain of thought one or two links were yet unsevered, it seemed that her countenance brought its associations of Ione; and with that remembrance his madness became yet more powerful, and it was swayed and tinged by passion, as he burst forth, —

“I swear by Venus, by Diana, and by Juno, that though I have now the world on my shoulders, as my countryman Hercules (ah, dull Rome! whoever was truly great was of Greece; why, you would be godless if it were not for us!) I say, as my countryman Hercules had before me, I would let it fall into chaos for one smile from Ione. Ah, Beautiful, Adored,” he added, in a voice inexpressibly fond and plaintive, “thou lovest me not. Thou art unkind to me. The Egyptian hath belied me to thee; thou knowest not what hours I have spent beneath thy casement; thou knowest not how I have outwatched the stars, thinking thou, my sun, wouldst rise at last: and thou lovest me not, thou forsakest me! Oh, do not leave me now! I feel that my life will not be long; let

¹ Presiding over hills and woods.

me gaze on thee at least unto the last. I am of the bright land of thy fathers; I have trod the heights of Phyle; I have gathered the hyacinth and rose amidst the olive-groves of Ilissus. *Thou* shouldst not desert me, for thy fathers were brothers to my own. And they say this land is lovely, and these climes serene, but I will bear thee with me. Ho! dark form, why risest thou like a cloud between me and mine? Death sits calmly dread upon thy brow; on thy lip is the smile that slays: thy name is Orcus, but on earth men call thee Arbaces. See, I know thee! fly, dim shadow, thy spells avail not!"

"Glaucus! Glaucus!" murmured Nydia, releasing her hold and falling, beneath the excitement of her dismay, remorse, and anguish, insensible on the floor.

"Who calls?" said he, in a loud voice. "Ione, it is she! They have borne her off; we will save her: where is my stilus? Ha, I have it! I come, Ione, to thy rescue! I come! I come!"

So saying, the Athenian with one bound passed the portico, he traversed the house, and rushed with swift but vacillating steps, and muttering audibly to himself, down the starlit streets. The direful potion burnt like fire in his veins, for its effect was made, perhaps, still more sudden from the wine he had drunk previously. Used to the excesses of nocturnal revellers, the citizens, with smiles and winks, gave way to his reeling steps; they naturally imagined him under the influence of the Bromian god, not vainly worshipped at Pompeii; but they who looked twice upon his face started in a nameless fear, and the smile withered from their lips. He passed the more populous streets; and, pursuing mechanically the way to Ione's house, he traversed a more deserted quarter, and entered now the lonely grove of Cybele, in which Apæcides had held his interview with Olinthus.

CHAPTER VI.

A REUNION OF DIFFERENT ACTORS. — STREAMS THAT FLOWED APPARENTLY APART RUSH INTO ONE GULF.

IMPATIENT to learn whether the fell drug had yet been administered by Julia to his hated rival, and with what effect, Arbaces resolved, as the evening came on, to seek her house and satisfy his suspense. It was customary, as I have before said, for men at that time to carry abroad with them the tablets and the stilus attached to their girdle; and with the girdle they were put off when at home. In fact, under the appearance of a literary instrument, the Romans carried about with them in that same stilus¹ a very sharp and formidable weapon. It was with his stilus¹ that Cassius stabbed Cæsar in the senate-house. Taking, then, his girdle and his cloak, Arbaces left his house supporting his steps, which were still somewhat feeble (though hope and vengeance had conspired greatly with his own medical science, which was profound, to restore his natural strength), by his long staff: Arbaces took his way to the villa of Diomed.

And beautiful is the moonlight of the south! In those climes the night so quickly glides into the day, that twilight scarcely makes a bridge between them. One moment of darker purple in the sky, of a thousand rose-hues in the water, of shade half victorious over light, and then burst forth at once the countless stars: the moon is up; night has resumed her reign!

Brightly then, and softly bright, fell the moonbeams over the antique grove consecrated to Cybele; the stately trees, whose date went beyond tradition, cast their long shadows over the soil, while through the openings in their boughs the stars shone, still and frequent. The whiteness of the small sacellum in the centre of the grove, amidst the dark foliage, had in it something abrupt and startling; it recalled at once

¹ From the stilus may be derived the stiletto of the Italians.

the purpose to which the wood was consecrated, — its holiness and solemnity.

With a swift and stealthy pace, Calenus, gliding under the shade of the trees, reached the chapel, and gently putting back the boughs that completely closed around its rear, settled himself in his concealment, — a concealment so complete, what with the fane in front and the trees behind, that no unsuspecting passenger could possibly have detected him. Again, all was apparently solitary in the grove; afar off you heard faintly the voices of some noisy revellers, or the music that played cheerily to the groups that then, as now, in those climates, during the nights of summer, lingered in the streets, and enjoyed, in the fresh air and the liquid moonlight, a milder day.

From the height on which the grove was placed, you saw through the intervals of the trees the broad and purple sea rippling in the distance, the white villas of Stabiæ in the curving shore, and the dim Lectiarian hills mingling with the delicious sky. Presently the tall figure of Arbaces, on his way to the house of Diomed, entered the extreme end of the grove; and at the same instant Apæcides, also bound to his appointment with Olinthus, crossed the Egyptian's path.

"Hem! Apæcides," said Arbaces, recognizing the priest at a glance; "when last we met you were my foe. I have wished since then to see you, for I would have you still my pupil and my friend."

Apæcides started at the voice of the Egyptian, and halting abruptly, gazed upon him with a countenance full of contending, bitter, and scornful emotions.

"Villain and impostor!" said he at length; "thou hast recovered then from the jaws of the grave! But think not again to weave around me thy guilty meshes. *Retiarius*, I am armed against thee!"

"Hush!" said Arbaces, in a very low voice; but his pride, which in that descendant of kings was great, betrayed the wound it received from the insulting epithets of the priest in the quiver of his lip and the flush of his tawny brow. "Hush!

more low! thou mayest be overheard, and if other ears than mine had drunk those sounds, why — ”

“Dost thou threaten? What if the whole city had heard me?”

“The manes of my ancestors would not have suffered me to forgive thee. But hold, and hear me. Thou art enraged that I would have offered violence to thy sister. Nay, peace, peace, but one instant, I pray thee. Thou art right; it was the frenzy of passion and of jealousy. I have repented bitterly of my madness. Forgive me; I, who never implored pardon of living man, beseech thee now to forgive me. Nay, I will atone the insult; I ask thy sister in marriage: start not, consider, — what is the alliance of yon holiday Greek compared to mine? Wealth unbounded, birth that in its far antiquity leaves your Greek and Roman names the things of yesterday, science — but that thou knowest! Give me thy sister, and my whole life shall atone a moment’s error.”

“Egyptian, were even I to consent, my sister loathes the very air thou breathest; but I have my own wrongs to forgive. I may pardon thee that thou hast made me a tool to thy deceits, but never that thou hast seduced me to become the abettor of thy vices, — a polluted and a perjured man. Tremble! Even now I prepare the hour in which thou and thy false gods shall be unveiled. Thy lewd and Circean life shall be dragged to day, thy mumming oracles disclosed, the fane of the idol Isis shall be a byword and a scorn, the name of Arbaces a mark for the hisses of execration! Tremble!”

The flush on the Egyptian’s brow was succeeded by a livid paleness. He looked behind, before, around, to feel assured that none was by; and then he fixed his dark and dilating eye on the priest, with such a gaze of wrath and menace, that one perhaps less supported than Apæcides by the fervent daring of a divine zeal, could not have faced with unflinching look that lowering aspect. As it was, however, the young convert met it unmoved, and returned it with an eye of proud defiance.

“Apæcides,” said the Egyptian, in a tremulous and inward tone, “beware! What is it thou wouldst meditate? Speakest thou — reflect, pause before thou repliest — from the hasty

influences of wrath, as yet divining no settled purpose, or from some fixed design?"

"I speak from the inspiration of the True God, whose servant I now am," answered the Christian, boldly; "and in the knowledge that by His grace human courage has already fixed the date of thy hypocrisy and thy demon's worship; ere thrice the sun has dawned, thou wilt know all! Dark sorcerer, tremble, and farewell!"

All the fierce and lurid passions which he inherited from his nation and his clime, at all times but ill concealed beneath the blandness of craft and the coldness of philosophy, were released in the breast of the Egyptian. Rapidly one thought chased another; he saw before him an obstinate barrier to even a lawful alliance with Ione, — the fellow-champion of Glaucus in the struggle which had baffled his designs, the reviler of his name, the threatened desecrator of the goddess he served while he disbelieved, the avowed and approaching revealer of his own impostures and vices. His love, his repute, nay, his very life, might be in danger, — the day and hour seemed even to have been fixed for some design against him. He knew by the words of the convert that Apæcides had adopted the Christian faith; he knew the indomitable zeal which led on the proselytes of that creed. Such was his enemy; he grasped his stilus, — that enemy was in his power. They were now before the chapel; one hasty glance once more he cast around; he saw none near, — silence and solitude alike tempted him.

"Die, then, in thy rashness!" he muttered; "away, obstacle to my rushing fates!"

And just as the young Christian had turned to depart, Arbaces raised his hand high over the left shoulder of Apæcides, and plunged his sharp weapon twice into his breast.

Apæcides fell to the ground pierced to the heart; he fell mute, without even a groan, at the very base of the sacred chapel.

Arbaces gazed upon him for a moment with the fierce animal joy of conquest over a foe. But presently the full sense of the danger to which he was exposed flashed upon him; he wiped

his weapon carefully in the long grass, and with the very garments of his victim; drew his cloak round him, and was about to depart, when he saw coming up the path right before him the figure of a young man, whose steps reeled and vacillated strangely as he advanced. The quiet moonlight streamed full upon his face, which seemed, by the whitening ray, colorless as marble. The Egyptian recognized the face and form of Glaucus. The unfortunate and benighted Greek was chanting a disconnected and mad song, composed from snatches of hymns and sacred odes, all jarringly woven together.

“Ha!” thought the Egyptian, instantaneously divining his state and its terrible cause; “so, then, the hell-draught works, and destiny hath sent thee hither to crush two of my foes at once.”

Quickly, even ere this thought occurred to him, he had withdrawn on one side of the chapel, and concealed himself amongst the boughs; from that lurking-place he watched, as a tiger in his lair, the advance of his second victim. He noted the wandering and restless fire in the bright and beautiful eyes of the Athenian; the convulsions that distorted his statue-like features and writhed his hueless lip. He saw that the Greek was utterly deprived of reason. Nevertheless, as Glaucus came up to the dead body of Apæcides, from which the dark red stream flowed slowly over the grass, so strange and ghastly a spectacle could not fail to arrest him, benighted and erring as was his glimmering sense. He paused, placed his hand to his brow, as if to collect himself, and then saying, —

“What ho! Endymion, sleepest thou so soundly? What has the moon said to thee? Thou makest me jealous; it is time to wake,” he stooped down, with the intention of lifting up the body.

Forgetting, feeling not, his own debility, the Egyptian sprung from his hiding-place, and, as the Greek bent, struck him forcibly to the ground, over the very body of the Christian; then, raising his powerful voice to its loudest pitch, he shouted, —

“Ho, citizens! ho! help me; run hither, hither! A murder, a murder before your very fane! Help, or the murderer

escapes!" As he spoke, he placed his foot on the breast of Glaucus: an idle and superfluous precaution; for the potion operating with the fall, the Greek lay there motionless and insensible, save that now and then his lips gave vent to some vague and raving sounds.

As he there stood awaiting the coming of those his voice still continued to summon, perhaps some remorse, some compunctious visitings — for, despite his crimes, he was human — haunted the breast of the Egyptian; the defenceless state of Glaucus, his wandering words, his shattered reason, smote him even more than the death of Apæcides, and he said half audibly to himself, —

"Poor clay, poor human reason; *where is the soul now?* I could spare thee, O my rival — rival never more. But destiny must be obeyed; my safety demands thy sacrifice." With that, as if to drown compunction, he shouted yet more loudly; and drawing from the girdle of Glaucus the stilus it contained, he steeped it in the blood of the murdered man, and laid it beside the corpse.

And now, fast and breathless, several of the citizens came thronging to the place, some with torches, which the moon rendered unnecessary, but which flared red and tremulously against the darkness of the trees: they surrounded the spot.

"Lift up yon corpse," said the Egyptian, "and guard well the murderer."

They raised the body, and great was their horror and sacred indignation to discover in that lifeless clay a priest of the adored and venerable Isis; but still greater, perhaps, was their surprise when they found the accused in the brilliant and admired Athenian.

"Glaucus!" cried the bystanders, with one accord; "is it even credible?"

"I would sooner," whispered one man to his neighbor, "believe it to be the Egyptian himself."

Here a centurion thrust himself into the gathering crowd, with an air of authority.

"How! blood spilt! who the murderer?"

The bystanders pointed to Glaucus.

"He! By Mars, he has rather the air of being the victim! Who accuses him?"

"I," said Arbaces, drawing himself up haughtily; and the jewels which adorned his dress flashing in the eyes of the soldier, instantly convinced that worthy warrior of the witness's respectability.

"Pardon me: your name?" said he.

"Arbaces; it is well known, methinks, in Pompeii. Passing through the grove, I beheld before me the Greek and the priest in earnest conversation. I was struck by the reeling motions of the first, his violent gestures, and the loudness of his voice; he seemed to me either drunk or mad. Suddenly I saw him raise his stilus; I darted forward, too late to arrest the blow. He had twice stabbed his victim, and was bending over him, when, in my horror and indignation, I struck the murderer to the ground. He fell without a struggle, which makes me yet more suspect that he was not altogether in his senses when the crime was perpetrated; for, recently recovered from a severe illness, my blow was comparatively feeble, and the frame of Glaucus, as you see, is strong and youthful."

"His eyes are open now; his lips move," said the soldier. "Speak, prisoner: what sayest thou to the charge?"

"The charge — ha, ha! Why, it was merrily done; when the old hag set her serpent at me, and Hecate stood by laughing from ear to ear, what could I do? But I am ill; I faint; the serpent's fiery tongue hath bitten me. Bear me to bed, and send for your physician; old Æsculapius himself will attend me if you let him know that I am Greek. Oh, mercy, mercy, I burn! marrow and brain, I burn!"

And, with a thrilling and fierce groan, the Athenian fell back in the arms of the bystanders.

"He raves," said the officer, compassionately, "and in his delirium he has struck the priest. Hath any one present seen him to-day?"

"I," said one of the spectators, "beheld him in the morning. He passed my shop and accosted me. He seemed well and sane as the stoutest of us."

"And I saw him half an hour ago," said another, "passing

up the streets muttering to himself with strange gestures, and just as the Egyptian has described."

"A corroboration of the witness! It must be too true. He must at all events to the prætor: a pity, so young and so rich! But the crime is dreadful: a priest of Isis, in his very robes, too, and at the base itself of our most ancient chapel!"

At these words the crowd were reminded more forcibly, than in their excitement and curiosity they had yet been, of the heinousness of the sacrilege. They shuddered in pious horror.

"No wonder the earth has quaked," said one, "when it held such a monster!"

"Away with him to prison, — away!" cried they all.

And one solitary voice was heard shrilly and joyously above the rest, —

"The beasts will not want a gladiator now,

'Ho, ho! for the merry, merry show!'"

It was the voice of the young woman whose conversation with Medon has been repeated.

"True, true, it chanches in season for the games!" cried several; and at that thought all pity for the accused seemed vanished. His youth, his beauty, but fitted him better for the purpose of the arena.

"Bring hither some planks — or, if at hand, a litter — to bear the dead," said Arbaces: "a priest of Isis ought scarcely to be carried to his temple by vulgar hands, like a butchered gladiator."

At this the bystanders reverently laid the corpse of Apæcides on the ground, with the face upwards; and some of them went in search of some contrivance to bear the body, untouched by the profane.

It was just at that time that the crowd gave way to right and left as a sturdy form forced itself through, and Olinthus the Christian stood immediately confronting the Egyptian. But his eyes at first only rested with inexpressible grief and horror on that gory side and upturned face on which the agony of violent death yet lingered.

“Murdered!” he said. “Is it thy zeal that has brought thee to this? Have they detected thy noble purpose, and by death prevented their own shame?”

He turned his head abruptly, and his eyes fell full on the solemn features of the Egyptian.

As he looked, you might see in his face, and even the slight shiver of his frame, the repugnance and aversion which the Christian felt for one whom he knew to be so dangerous and so criminal. It was indeed the gaze of the bird upon the basilisk, so silent was it and so prolonged. But shaking off the sudden chill that had crept over him, Olinthus extended his right arm towards Arbaces, and said, in a deep and loud voice,—

“Murder hath been done upon this corpse! Where is the murderer? Stand forth, Egyptian! For, as the Lord liveth, I believe *thou* art the man!”

An anxious and perturbed change might for one moment be detected on the dusky features of Arbaces; but it gave way to the frowning expression of indignation and scorn, as, awed and arrested by the suddenness and vehemence of the charge, the spectators pressed nearer and nearer upon the two more prominent actors.

“I know,” said Arbaces, proudly, “who is my accuser, and I guess wherefore he thus arraigns me. Men and citizens, know this man for the most bitter of the Nazarenes, if that or Christians be their proper name! What marvel that in his malignity he dares accuse even an Egyptian of the murder of a priest of Egypt!”

“I know him! I know the dog!” shouted several voices. “It is Olinthus the Christian, or rather the Atheist; he denies the gods!”

“Peace, brethren,” said Olinthus, with dignity, “and hear me! This murdered priest of Isis before his death embraced the Christian faith; he revealed to me the dark sins, the sorceries of yon Egyptian,—the mummeries and delusions of the fane of Isis. He was about to declare them publicly. *He*, a stranger, unoffending, without enemies,—who should shed his blood but one of those who feared his witness? Who might fear that testimony the most? Arbaces the Egyptian!”

“You hear him!” said Arbaces; “you hear him! he blasphemes! Ask him if he believe in Isis.”

“Do I believe in an evil demon?” returned Olinthus, boldly.

A groan and shudder passed through the assembly. Nothing daunted, for prepared at every time for peril, and in the present excitement losing all prudence, the Christian continued, —

“Back, idolaters! this clay is not for your vain and polluting rites; it is to us — to the followers of Christ — that the last offices due to a Christian belong. I claim this dust in the name of the great Creator who has recalled the spirit!”

With so solemn and commanding a voice and aspect the Christian spoke these words, that even the crowd forbore to utter aloud the execration of fear and hatred which in their hearts they conceived. And never, perhaps, since Lucifer and the Archangel contended for the body of the mighty Lawgiver, was there a more striking subject for the painter's genius than that scene exhibited: the dark trees, the stately fane, the moon full on the corpse of the deceased, the torches tossing wildly to and fro in the rear, the various faces of the motley audience, the insensible form of the Athenian, supported, in the distance, and in the foreground, and above all, the forms of Arbaces and the Christian, — the first drawn to its full height, far taller than the herd around, his arms folded, his brow knit, his eyes fixed, his lip slightly curled in defiance and disdain; the last bearing, on a brow worn and furrowed, the majesty of an equal command, the features stern yet frank, the aspect bold yet open, the quiet dignity of the whole form impressed with an ineffable earnestness, hushed, as it were, in a solemn sympathy with the awe he himself had created, his left hand pointing to the corpse, his right hand raised to heaven.

The centurion pressed forward again.

“In the first place, hast thou, Olinthus, or whatever be thy name, any proof of the charge thou hast made against Arbaces, beyond thy vague suspicions?”

Olinthus remained silent; the Egyptian laughed contemptuously.

“Dost thou claim the body of a priest of Isis as one of the Nazarine or Christian sect?”

“I do.”

“Swear then by yon fane, yon statue of Cybele, by yon most ancient sacellum in Pompeii, that the dead man embraced your faith!”

“Vain man, I disown your idols! I abhor your temples! How can I swear by Cybele then?”

“Away, away with the Atheist! away! the earth will swallow us if we suffer these blasphemers in a sacred grove, — away with him to death!”

“*To the beasts!*” added a female voice in the centre of the crowd; “*we shall have one apiece now for the lion and tiger!*”

“If, O Nazarene, thou disbelievest in Cybele, which of our gods dost thou own?” resumed the soldier, unmoved by the cries around.

“None!”

“Hark to him! hark!” cried the crowd.

“O vain and blind!” continued the Christian, raising his voice, “can you believe in images of wood and stone? Do you imagine that they have eyes to see, or ears to hear, or hands to help ye? Is yon mute thing carved by man’s art a goddess! hath it made mankind? Alas! by mankind was it made. Lo! convince yourselves of its nothingness, — of your folly.”

And as he spoke he strode across to the fane, and ere any of the bystanders were aware of his purpose, he, in his compassion or his zeal, struck the statue of wood from its pedestal.

“See!” cried he, “your goddess cannot avenge herself. Is this a thing to worship?”

Further words were denied to him: so gross and daring a sacrilege — of one, too, of the most sacred of their places of worship — filled even the most lukewarm with rage and horror. With one accord the crowd rushed upon him, seized, and but for the interference of the centurion, they would have torn him to pieces.

“Peace!” said the soldier, authoritatively; — “refer we this insolent blasphemer to the proper tribunal: time has been

already wasted. Bear we both the culprits to the magistrates; place the body of the priest on the litter: carry it to his own home."

At this moment a priest of Isis stepped forward. "I claim these remains, according to the custom of the priesthood."

"The flamen be obeyed," said the centurion. "How is the murderer?"

"Insensible or asleep."

"Were his crime less, I could pity him. On!"

Arbaces, as he turned, met the eye of that priest of Isis, — it was Calenus; and something there was in that glance, so significant and sinister, that the Egyptian muttered to himself, —

"Could he have witnessed the deed?"

A girl darted from the crowd, and gazed hard on the face of Olinthus. "*By Jupiter, a stout knave! I say, we shall have a man for the tiger now; one for each beast!*"

"Ho!" shouted the mob; "a man for the lion, and another for the tiger! What luck! Io Pæan!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE READER LEARNS THE CONDITION OF GLAUCUS.

— FRIENDSHIP TESTED. — ENMITY SOFTENED. — LOVE THE SAME, — BECAUSE THE ONE LOVING IS BLIND.

THE night was somewhat advanced, and the gay lounging-places of the Pompeians were still crowded. You might observe in the countenances of the various idlers a more earnest expression than usual. They talked in large knots or groups, as if they sought by numbers to divide the half-painful, half-pleasurable anxiety which belonged to the subject on which they conversed: it was a subject of life and death.

A young man passed briskly by the graceful portico of the Temple of Fortune, — so briskly, indeed, that he came with no slight force full against the rotund and comely form of that

respectable citizen Diomed, who was retiring homeward to his suburban villa.

“Holloa!” groaned the merchant, recovering with some difficulty his equilibrium; “have you no eyes, or do you think I have no feeling? By Jupiter! you have well-nigh driven out the divine particle; such another shock, and my soul will be in Hades!”

“Ah, Diomed! is it you? Forgive my inadvertence. I was absorbed in thinking of the reverses of life. Our poor friend Glaucus, eh! who could have guessed it?”

“Well, but tell me, Clodius, is he really to be tried by the senate?”

“Yes; they say the crime is of so extraordinary a nature that the senate itself must adjudge it; and so the lictors are to induct him¹ formally.”

“He has been accused publicly, then?”

“To be sure; where have you been, not to hear that?”

“Why, I have only just returned from Neapolis, whither I went on business the very morning after his crime: so shocking, and at my house the same night that it happened!”

“There is no doubt of his guilt,” said Clodius, shrugging his shoulders; “and as these crimes take precedence of all little undignified peccadilloes, they will hasten to finish the sentence previous to the games.”

“The games! Good gods!” replied Diomed, with a slight shudder; “can they adjudge him to the beasts,—so young, so rich?”

“True; but then he is a Greek. Had he been a Roman, it would have been a thousand pities. These foreigners can be borne with in their prosperity; but in adversity we must not forget that they are in reality slaves. However, we of the upper classes are always tender-hearted, and he would certainly get off tolerably well if he were left to us; for, between ourselves, what is a paltry priest of Isis; what Isis herself? But the common people are superstitious; they clamor for the blood of the sacrilegious one. It is dangerous not to give way to public opinion.”

¹ Plin. Ep. ii. 11, 12; v. 4, 13.

“And the blasphemer, — the Christian, or Nazarene, or whatever else he be called?”

“Oh, poor dog! if he will sacrifice to Cybele or Isis, he will be pardoned; if not, the tiger has him. At least, so I suppose; but the trial will decide. We talk while the urn is still empty. And the Greek may yet escape the deadly [⊙]¹ of his own alphabet. But enough of this gloomy subject. How is the fair Julia?”

“Well, I fancy.”

“Commend me to her. But hark! the door yonder creaks on its hinges; it is the house of the prætor. Who comes forth? By Pollux, it is the Egyptian! What can he want with our official friend?”

“Some conference touching the murder, doubtless,” replied Diomed; “but what was supposed to be the inducement to the crime? Glaucus was to have married the priest’s sister.”

“Yes; some say Apæcides refused the alliance. It might have been a sudden quarrel. Glaucus was evidently drunk; nay, so much so as to have been quite insensible when taken up, and I hear is still delirious; whether with wine, terror, remorse, the Furies, or the Bacchanals, I cannot say.”

“Poor fellow! he has good counsel?”

“The best, — Caius Pollio, an eloquent fellow enough. Pollio has been hiring all the poor gentlemen and well-born spendthrifts of Pompeii to dress shabbily and sneak about, swearing their friendship to Glaucus (who would not have spoken to them to be made emperor! I will do him justice, he was a gentleman in his choice of acquaintance), and trying to melt the stony citizens into pity. But it will not do; Isis is mighty popular just at this moment.”

“And, by the bye, I have some merchandise at Alexandria. Yes, Isis ought to be protected.”

“True; so farewell, old gentleman: we shall meet soon; if not, we must have a friendly bet at the Amphitheatre. All my calculations are confounded by this cursed misfortune of

¹ ⊙, the initial of *θάνατος* (death), the condemning letter of the Greeks, as C was of the Romans.

Glaucus! He had bet on Lydon the gladiator; I must make up my tablets elsewhere. *Vale!*"

Leaving the less active Diomed to regain his villa, Clodius strode on, humming a Greek air, and perfuming the night with the odors that steamed from his snowy garments and flowing locks.

"If," thought he, "Glaucus feed the lion, Julia will no longer have a person to love better than me; she will certainly dote on me, and so, I suppose, I must marry. By the gods! the twelve lines begin to fail: men look suspiciously at my hand when it rattles the dice. That infernal Sallust insinuates cheating; and if it be discovered that the ivory is cogged, why, farewell to the merry supper and the perfumed billet; Clodius is undone! Better marry, then, while I may, renounce gaming, and push my fortune (or rather the gentle Julia's) at the imperial court."

Thus muttering the schemes of his ambition, if by that high name the projects of Clodius may be called, the gamester found himself suddenly accosted; he turned and beheld the dark brow of Arbaces.

"Hail, noble Clodius! pardon my interruption, and inform me, I pray you, which is the house of Sallust."

"It is but a few yards hence, wise Arbaces. But does Sallust entertain to-night?"

"I know not," answered the Egyptian; "nor am I, perhaps, one of those whom he would seek as a boon companion. But thou knowest that his house holds the person of Glaucus the murderer."

"Ay; he, good-hearted epicure, believes in the Greek's innocence! You remind me that he has become his surety, and therefore, till the trial, is responsible for his appearance.¹ Well, Sallust's house is better than a prison, especially that wretched hole in the forum. But for what can *you* seek Glaucus?"

"Why, noble Clodius, if we could save him from execution it would be well. The condemnation of the rich is a blow

¹ If a criminal could obtain surety (called *vades* in capital offences), he was not compelled to lie in prison till after sentence.

upon society itself. I should like to confer with him, — for I hear he has recovered his senses, — and ascertain the motives of his crime; they may be so extenuating as to plead in his defence.”

“You are benevolent, Arbaces.”

“Benevolence is the duty of one who aspires to wisdom,” replied the Egyptian, modestly. “Which way lies Sallust’s mansion?”

“I will show you,” said Clodius, “if you will suffer me to accompany you a few steps. But pray, what has become of the poor girl who was to have wed the Athenian, — the sister of the murdered priest?”

“Alas! well-nigh insane. Sometimes she utters imprecations on the murderer, then suddenly stops short, then cries, ‘But *why* curse? Oh, my brother! Glaucus was *not* thy murderer; never will I believe it!’ Then she begins again, and again stops short and mutters awfully to herself, ‘Yet if it were indeed he?’”

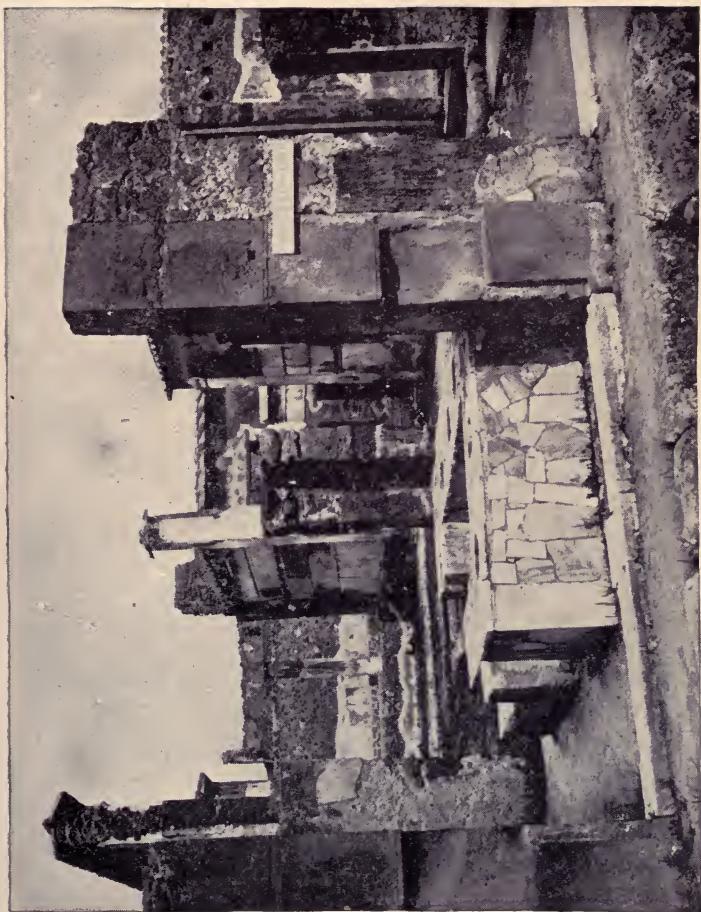
“Unfortunate Ione!”

“But it is well for her that those solemn cares to the dead which religion enjoins have hitherto greatly absorbed her attention from Glaucus and herself; and in the dimness of her senses she scarcely seems aware that Glaucus is apprehended and on the eve of trial. When the funeral rites due to Apæcides are performed, her apprehensions will return; and then I fear me much that her friends will be revolted by seeing her run to succor and aid the murderer of her brother!”

“Such scandal should be prevented.”

“I trust I *have* taken precautions to that effect. I am her lawful guardian, and have just succeeded in obtaining permission to escort her, after the funeral of Apæcides, to my own house; there, please the gods, she will be secure.”

“You have done well, sage Arbaces. And now yonder is the house of Sallust. The gods keep you! Yet hark you, Arbaces, why so gloomy and unsocial? Men say you *can* be gay; why not let me initiate you into the pleasures of Pompeii? I flatter myself no one knows them better.”



THE HOUSE OF SALUST.



“I thank you, noble Clodius: under your auspices I might venture, I think, to wear the philyra; but at my age I should be an awkward pupil.”

“Oh, never fear; I have made converts of fellows of seventy. The rich, too, are never old.”

“You flatter me. At some future time I will remind you of your promise.”

“You may command Marcus Clodius at all times; and so *vale!*”

“Now,” said the Egyptian, soliloquizing, “I am not wantonly a man of blood; I would willingly save this Greek, if, by confessing the crime, he will lose himself forever to Ione, and forever free me from the chance of discovery; and I *can* save him by persuading Julia to own the philtre, which will be held his excuse. But if he do not confess the crime, why, Julia must be shamed from the confession, and he must die, — die, lest he prove my rival with the living, — die that he may be my proxy with the dead! Will he confess? Can he not be persuaded that in his delirium he struck the blow? To me it would give far greater safety than even his death. Hem! we must hazard the experiment.”

Sweeping along the narrow street, Arbaces now approached the house of Sallust, when he beheld a dark form wrapped in a cloak, and stretched at length across the threshold of the door.

So still lay the figure and so dim was its outline, that any other than Arbaces might have felt a superstitious fear lest he beheld one of those grim *lemures*, who, above all other spots, haunted the threshold of the homes they formerly possessed. But not for Arbaces were such dreams.

“Rise!” said he, touching the figure with his foot; “thou obstructest the way!”

“Ha! who art thou?” cried the form, in a sharp tone; and as she raised herself from the ground, the starlight fell full on the pale face and fixed but sightless eyes of Nydia the Thesalian. “Who art thou? I know the burden of thy voice.”

“Blind girl, what dost thou here at this late hour? Fie! is this seeming thy sex or years? Home, girl!”

“I know thee,” said Nydia, in a low voice; “thou art Arbaces the Egyptian.” Then, as if inspired by some sudden impulse, she flung herself at his feet, and clasping his knees exclaimed, in a wild and passionate tone, “O dread and potent man! save him — save him! He is not guilty; it is I! He lies within, ill, dying, and I, — I am the hateful cause! And they will not admit me to him; they spurn the blind girl from the hall. Oh, heal him! thou knowest some herb, some spell, some countercharm, for it is a potion that hath wrought this frenzy!”

“Hush, child! I know all! Thou forgettest that I accompanied Julia to the Saga’s home. Doubtless her hand administered the draught, but her reputation demands thy silence. Reproach not thyself; what must be, must: meanwhile, I seek the criminal; he may yet be saved. Away!”

Thus saying, Arbaces extricated himself from the clasp of the despairing Thessalian, and knocked loudly at the door.

In a few moments the heavy bars were heard suddenly to yield, and the porter, half opening the door, demanded who was there.

“Arbaces; important business to Sallust relative to Glaucus. I come from the prætor.”

The porter, half yawning, half groaning, admitted the tall form of the Egyptian. Nydia sprang forward. “How is he?” she cried; “tell me, tell me!”

“Ho, mad girl! is it thou still? for shame! Why, they say he is sensible.”

“The gods be praised! And you will not admit me? Ah! I beseech thee —”

“Admit thee! No. A pretty salute I should prepare for these shoulders were I to admit such things as thou! Go home!”

The door closed, and Nydia with a deep sigh laid herself down once more on the cold stones, and wrapping her cloak round her face, resumed her weary vigil.

Meanwhile Arbaces had already gained the triclinium, where Sallust, with his favorite freedman, sat late at supper.

“What! Arbaces! and at this hour! Accept this cup.”

“Nay, gentle Sallust; it is on business, not pleasure, that I venture to disturb thee. How doth thy charge? They say in the town that he has recovered sense.”

“Alas! and truly,” replied the good-natured but thoughtless Sallust, wiping the tear from his eyes; “but so shattered are his nerves and frame that I scarcely recognize the brilliant and gay carouser I was wont to know. Yet, strange to say, he cannot account for the cause of the sudden frenzy that seized him; he retains but a dim consciousness of what hath passed; and, despite thy witness, wise Egyptian, solemnly upholds his innocence of the death of Apæcides.”

“Sallust,” said Arbaces, gravely, “there is much in thy friend’s case that merits a peculiar indulgence; and could we learn from his lips the confession and the cause of his crime, much might be yet hoped from the mercy of the senate; for the senate, thou knowest, hath the power either to mitigate or to sharpen the law. Therefore it is that I have conferred with the highest authority of the city, and obtained his permission to hold a private conference this night with the Athenian. To-morrow, thou knowest, the trial comes on.”

“Well,” said Sallust, “thou wilt be worthy of thy Eastern name and fame if thou canst learn aught from him; but thou mayst try. Poor Glaucus! And he had such an excellent appetite! He eats nothing now!”

The benevolent epicure was moved sensibly at this thought. He sighed, and ordered his slaves to refill his cup.

“Night wanes,” said the Egyptian; “suffer me to see thy ward now.”

Sallust nodded assent, and led the way to a small chamber, guarded without by two dozing slaves. The door opened; at the request of Arbaces, Sallust withdrew: the Egyptian was alone with Glaucus.

One of those tall and graceful candelabra common to that day, supporting a single lamp, burned beside the narrow bed. Its rays fell palely over the face of the Athenian, and Arbaces was moved to see how sensibly that countenance had changed. The rich color was gone, the cheek was sunk, the lips were convulsed and pallid; fierce had been the struggle between

reason and madness, life and death. The youth, the strength of Glaucus had conquered; but the freshness of blood and soul, the life of life, its glory and its zest, were gone forever.

The Egyptian seated himself quietly beside the bed; Glaucus still lay mute, and unconscious of his presence. At length, after a considerable pause, Arbaces thus spoke, —

“Glaucus, we have been enemies. I come to thee alone and in the dead of night, — thy friend, perhaps thy saviour.”

As the steed starts from the path of the tiger, Glaucus sprang up breathless, alarmed, panting at the abrupt voice, the sudden apparition of his foe. Their eyes met, and neither, for some moments, had power to withdraw his gaze. The flush went and came over the face of the Athenian, and the bronzed cheek of the Egyptian grew a shade more pale. At length, with an inward groan, Glaucus turned away, drew his hand across his brow, sank back, and muttered, —

“Am I still dreaming?”

“No, Glaucus, thou art awake. By this right hand and my father’s head, thou seest one who may save thy life. Hark! I know what thou hast done, but I know also its excuse, of which thou thyself art ignorant. Thou hast committed murder, it is true, — a sacrilegious murder: frown not, start not, these eyes saw it. But I can save thee; I can prove how thou wert bereaved of sense, and made not a free-thinking and free-acting man. But in order to save thee, thou must confess thy crime. Sign but this paper, acknowledging thy hand in the death of Apæcides, and thou shalt avoid the fatal urn.”

“What words are these? Murder and Apæcides! Did I not see him stretched on the ground, bleeding and a corpse, and wouldst thou persuade me that *I* did the deed? Man, thou liest! Away!”

“Be not rash, Glaucus, be not hasty; the deed is proved. Come, come, thou mayst well be excused for not recalling the act of thy delirium, and which thy sober senses would have shunned even to contemplate. But let me try to refresh thy exhausted and weary memory. Thou knowest thou wert walking with the priest, disputing about his sister; thou knowest he was intolerant, and half a Nazarene, and he sought

to convert thee, and ye had hot words; and he calumniated thy mode of life, and swore he would not marry Ione to thee, — and then, in thy wrath and thy frenzy, thou didst strike the sudden blow. Come, come; you can recollect this! Read this papyrus; it runs to that effect: sign it, and thou art saved.”

“Barbarian, give me the written lie, that I may tear it! *I* the murderer of Ione’s brother! *I* confess to have injured one hair of the head of him she loved! Let me rather perish a thousand times!”

“Beware!” said Arbaces, in a low and hissing tone; “there is but one choice, — thy confession and thy signature, or the amphitheatre and the lion’s maw!”

As the Egyptian fixed his eyes upon the sufferer, he hailed with joy the signs of evident emotion that seized the latter at these words. A slight shudder passed over the Athenian’s frame, his lip fell, an expression of sudden fear and wonder betrayed itself in his brow and eye.

“Great gods!” he said in a low voice, “what reverse is this? It seems but a little day since life laughed out from amidst roses: Ione mine, — youth, health, love lavishing on me their treasures; and now, — pain, madness, shame, death! And for what? What have I have done? Oh, I am mad still!”

“Sign, and be saved!” said the soft, sweet voice of the Egyptian.

“Tempter, never!” cried Glaucus, in the reaction of rage. “Thou knowest me not: thou knowest not the haughty soul of an Athenian. The sudden face of death might appall me for a moment, but the fear is over. Dishonor appalls forever. Who will debase his name to save his life; who exchange clear thoughts for sullen days? Who will belie himself to shame, and stand blackened in the eyes of glory and of love? If to earn a few years of polluted life there be so base a coward, dream not, dull barbarian of Egypt! to find him in one who has trod the same sod as Harmodius, and breathed the same air as Socrates. Go! leave me to live without self-reproach, or to perish without fear!”

“Bethink thee well, — the lion’s fangs, the hoots of the

brutal mob, the vulgar gaze on thy dying agony and mutilated limbs, thy name degraded, thy corpse unburied; the shame thou wouldst avoid clinging to thee for aye and ever!"

"Thou ravest! *thou* art the madman! Shame is not in the loss of other men's esteem, — it is in the loss of our own. Wilt thou go? My eyes loathe the sight of thee! hating ever, I despise thee now!"

"I go," said Arbaces, stung and exasperated, but not without some pitying admiration of his victim, — "I go; we meet twice again: once at the Trial, once at the Death! Farewell!"

The Egyptian rose slowly, gathered his robes about him, and left the chamber. He sought Sallust for a moment, whose eyes began to reel with the vigils of the cup: "He is still unconscious, or still obstinate; there is no hope for him."

"Say not so," replied Sallust, who felt but little resentment against the Athenian's accuser, for he possessed no great austerity of virtue, and was rather moved by his friend's reverses than persuaded of his innocence, — "say not so, my Egyptian! So good a drinker shall be saved if possible. Bacchus against Isis!"

"We shall see," said the Egyptian.

Suddenly the bolts were again withdrawn, the door unclosed; Arbaces was in the open street; and poor Nydia once more started from her long watch.

"Wilt thou save him?" she cried, clasping her hands.

"Child, follow me home; I would speak to thee: it is for his sake I ask it."

"And thou wilt save him?"

No answer came forth to the thirsting ear of the blind girl: Arbaces had already proceeded far up the street; she hesitated a moment, and then followed his steps in silence.

"I must secure this girl," said he, musingly, "lest she give evidence of the philtre; as to the vain Julia, she will not betray herself."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CLASSIC FUNERAL.

WHILE Arbaces had been thus employed, Sorrow and Death were in the house of Ione. It was the night preceding the morn in which the solemn funeral rites were to be decreed to the remains of the murdered Apæcides. The corpse had been removed from the temple of Isis to the house of the nearest surviving relative, and Ione had heard in the same breath the death of her brother and the accusation against her betrothed. That first violent anguish which blunts the sense to all but itself, and the forbearing silence of her slaves, had prevented her learning minutely the circumstances attendant on the fate of her lover. His illness, his frenzy, and his approaching trial were unknown to her. She learned only the accusation against him, and at once indignantly rejected it; nay, on hearing that Arbaces was the accuser, she required no more to induce her firmly and solemnly to believe that the Egyptian himself was the criminal. But the vast and absorbing importance attached by the ancients to the performance of every ceremonial connected with the death of a relation, had as yet confined her woe and her convictions to the chamber of the deceased. Alas! it was not for her to perform that tender and touching office which obliged the nearest relative to endeavor to catch the last breath, — the parting soul, — of the beloved one: but it was hers to close the straining eyes, the distorted lips; to watch by the consecrated clay, as, fresh bathed and anointed, it lay in festive robes upon the ivory bed; to strew the couch with leaves and flowers, and to renew the solemn cypress-branch at the threshold of the door. And in these sad offices, in lamentation and in prayer, Ione forgot herself. It was among the loveliest customs of the ancients to bury the young at the morning twilight; for, as they strove to give the softest interpretation to death, so they poetically imagined that Aurora, who loved the young, had stolen them to her embrace; and though in the instance of the murdered priest this fable could

not appropriately cheat the fancy, the general custom was still preserved.¹

The stars were fading one by one from the gray heavens, and night slowly receding before the approach of morn, when a dark group stood motionless before Ione's door. High and slender torches, made paler by the unmellowed dawn, cast their light over various countenances, hushed for the moment in one solemn and intent expression. And now there arose a slow and dismal music, which accorded sadly with the rite, and floated far along the desolate and breathless streets; while a chorus of female voices (the *Præficæ* so often cited by the Roman poets), accompanying the *Tibicen* and the *Mysian flute*, woke the following strain: —

THE FUNERAL DIRGE.

O'er the sad threshold, where the cypress-bough
 Supplants the rose that should adorn thy home,
 On the last pilgrimage on earth that now
 Awaits thee, wanderer to Cocytus, come!
 Darkly we woo, and weeping we invite:
 Death is thy host, his banquet asks thy soul;
 Thy garlands hang within the House of Night,
 And the black stream alone shall fill thy bowl.

No more for thee the laughter and the song,
 The jocund night, the glory of the day.
 The Argive daughters² at their labors long;
 The hell-bird swooping on its Titan prey —
 The false *Æolides*³ upheaving slow,
 O'er the eternal hill, the eternal stone;
 The crownèd Lydian,⁴ in his parching woe,
 And green *Callirrhœ's* monster-headed son,⁵

These shalt thou see, dim shadow'd through the dark,
 Which makes the sky of Pluto's dreary shore;
 Lo! where thou stand'st, pale-gazing on the bark
 That waits our rite⁶ to bear thee trembling o'er!

¹ This was rather a Greek than a Roman custom; but the reader will observe that in the cities of *Magna Græcia* the Greek customs and superstitions were much mingled with the Roman.

² The *Danaïdes*.

³ *Sisyphus*.

⁴ *Tantalus*.

⁵ *Geryon*.

⁶ The most idle novel-reader need scarcely be reminded that not till after the funeral rites were the dead carried over the *Styx*.

Come, then, no more delay! — the phantom pines
Amidst the Unburied for its latest home ;
O'er the gray sky the torch impatient shines, —
Come, mourner, forth! — the lost one bids thee come.

As the hymn died away, the group parted in twain ; and placed upon a couch, spread with a purple pall, the corpse of Apæcides was carried forth, with the feet foremost. The designator, or marshal of the sombre ceremonial, accompanied by his torch-bearers, clad in black, gave the signal, and the procession moved dreadly on.

First went the musicians, playing a slow march ; the solemnity of the lower instruments broken by many a louder and wilder burst of the funeral trumpet ; next followed the hired mourners, chanting their dirges to the dead ; and the female voices were mingled with those of boys, whose tender years made still more striking the contrast of life and death, the fresh leaf and the withered one. But the players, the buffoons, the archimimus (whose duty it was to personate the dead), — these, the customary attendants at ordinary funerals, were banished from a funeral attended with so many terrible associations.

The priests of Isis came next in their snowy garments, barefooted, and supporting sheaves of corn ; while before the corpse were carried the images of the deceased and his many Athenian forefathers. And behind the bier followed, amidst her women, the sole surviving relative of the dead, her head bare, her locks dishevelled, her face paler than marble, but composed and still, save ever and anon, as some tender thought, awakened by the music, flashed upon the dark lethargy of woe, she covered that countenance with her hands, and sobbed unseen ; for hers were not the noisy sorrow, the shrill lament, the ungoverned gesture, which characterized those who honored less faithfully. In that age, as in all, the channel of deep grief flowed hushed and still.

And so the procession swept on, till it had traversed the streets, passed the city gate, and gained the Place of Tombs without the wall, which the traveller yet beholds.

Raised in the form of an altar — of unpolished pine, amidst

whose interstices were placed preparations of combustible matter — stood the funeral pyre; and around it drooped the dark and gloomy cypresses so consecrated by song to the tomb.

As soon as the bier was placed upon the pile, the attendants parting on either side, Ione passed up to the couch, and stood before the unconscious clay for some moments motionless and silent. The features of the dead had been composed from the first agonized expression of violent death. Hushed forever the terror and the doubt, the contest of passion, the awe of religion, the struggle of the past and present, the hope and the horror of the future! Of all that racked and desolated the breast of that young aspirant to the Holy of Life, what trace was visible in the awful serenity of that impenetrable brow and unbreathing lip? The sister gazed, and not a sound was heard amidst the crowd; there was something terrible, yet softening also, in the silence; and when it broke, it broke sudden and abrupt: it broke with a loud and passionate cry, the event of long-smothered despair.

“My brother! my brother!” cried the poor orphan, falling upon the couch; “thou whom the worm on thy path feared not — what enemy couldst thou provoke? Oh, is it in truth come to this? Awake! awake! We grew together! Are we thus torn asunder? Thou art not dead: thou sleepest. Awake! awake!”

The sound of her piercing voice aroused the sympathy of the mourners, and they broke into loud and rude lament. This startled, this recalled Ione; she looked up hastily and confusedly, as if for the first time sensible of the presence of those around.

“Ah!” she murmured with a shiver, “*we are not then alone!*”

With that, after a brief pause, she rose, and her pale and beautiful countenance was again composed and rigid. With fond and trembling hands she unclosed the lids of the deceased;¹ but when the dull, glazed eye, no longer beaming with love and life, met hers, she shrieked aloud, as if she had

¹ Pliny, ii. 37.

seen a spectre. Once more recovering herself, she kissed again and again the lids, the lips, the brow, and with mechanic and unconscious hand received from the high priest of her brother's temple the funeral torch.

The sudden burst of music, the sudden song of the mourners, announced the birth of the sanctifying flame.

HYMN TO THE WIND.

I.

On thy couch of cloud reclined,
 Wake, O soft and sacred Wind!
 Soft and sacred will we name thee,
 Whosoe'er the sire that claim thee,—
 Whether old Auster's dusky child,
 Or the loud son of Eurus wild;
 Or his¹ who o'er the darkling deeps,
 From the bleak North, in tempest sweeps,
 Still shalt thou seem as dear to us
 As flowery-crowned Zephyrus,
 When, through twilight's starry dew,
 Trembling, he hastes his nymph² to woo.

II.

Lo! our silver censers swinging,
 Perfumes o'er thy path are flinging,—
 Ne'er o'er Tempe's breathless valleys,
 Ne'er o'er Cypria's cedarn alleys,
 Or the Rose-Isle's³ moonlit sea,
 Floated sweets more worthy thee.
 Lo! around our vases sending
 Myrrh and nard with cassia blending:
 Paving air with odors meet
 For thy silver-sandall'd feet!

III.

August and everlasting air!
 The source of all that breathe and be,
 From the mute clay before thee bear
 The seeds it took from thee!
 Aspire, bright Flame! aspire!
 Wild Wind!—awake, awake!
 Thine own, O solemn Fire!
 O Air, thine own retake!

¹ Boreas.² Flora.³ Rhodes.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEIL

IV.

It comes! it comes! Lo! it sweeps,
 The Wind we invoke the while!
 And crackles, and darts, and leaps
 The light on the holy pile!
 It rises! its wings interweave
 With the flames, — how they howl and heave!
 Toss'd, whirl'd to and fro,
 How the flame-serpents glow!
 Rushing higher and higher,
 On, on, fearful Fire!
 Thy giant limbs twined
 With the arms of the Wind!
 Lo! the elements meet on the throne
 Of death — to reclaim their own!

V.

Swing, swing the censer round;
 Tune the strings to a softer sound!
 From the chains of thy earthly toil,
 From the clasp of thy mortal coil,
 From the prison where clay confined thee,
 The hands of the flame unbind thee!
 O Soul! thou art free — all free!

As the winds in their ceaseless chase,
 When they rush o'er their airy sea,
 Thou mayst speed through the realms of space, —
 No fetter is forged for thee!
 Rejoice! o'er the sluggard tide
 Of the Styx thy bark can glide,
 And thy steps evermore shall rove
 Through the glades of the happy grove,
 Where, far from the loath'd Cocytus,
 The loved and the lost invite us.
 Thou art slave to the earth no more!
 O soul, thou art freed! and we, —
 Ah! when shall our toil be o'er?
 Ah! when shall we rest with thee?

And now high and far into the dawning skies broke the fragrant fire; it flushed luminously across the gloomy cypresses; it shot above the massive walls of the neighboring city; and the early fisherman started to behold the blaze reddening on the waves of the creeping sea.

But Ione sat down apart and alone, and, leaning her face upon her hands, saw not the flame nor heard the lamentation or the music; she felt only one sense of loneliness; she had not yet arrived at that hallowing sense of comfort, when we know that we are *not* alone, — that the dead are with us.

The breeze rapidly aided the effect of the combustibles placed within the pile. By degrees the flame wavered, lowered, dimmed, and slowly, by fits and unequal starts, died away, — emblem of life itself; where, just before, all was restlessness and flame, now lay the dull and smouldering ashes.

The last sparks were extinguished by the attendants; the embers were collected. Steeped in the rarest wine and the costliest odors, the remains were placed in a silver urn, which was solemnly stored in one of the neighboring sepulchres beside the road; and they placed within it the phial full of tears, and the small coin which poetry still consecrated to the grim boatman. And the sepulchre was covered with flowers and chaplets, and incense kindled on the altar, and the tomb hung round with many lamps.

But the next day, when the priest returned with fresh offerings to the tomb, he found that to the relics of heathen superstition some unknown hands had added a green palm-branch. He suffered it to remain, unknowing that it was the sepulchral emblem of Christianity.

When the above ceremonies were over, one of the *Præficæ* three times sprinkled the mourners from the purifying branch of laurel, uttering the last word, "*Illicet!*" (Depart) and the rite was done.

But first they paused to utter, weepingly and many times, the affecting farewell, "*Salve Eternum!*" And as Ione yet lingered they woke the parting strain.

SALVE ETERNUM.

I.

Farewell, O soul departed!
Farewell, O sacred urn!
Bereaved and broken-hearted,
To earth the mourners turn!

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH AN ADVENTURE HAPPENS TO IONE.

WHILE some stayed behind to share with the priests the funeral banquet, Ione and her handmaids took homeward their melancholy way. And now (the last duties to her brother performed) her mind awoke from its absorption, and she thought of her affianced, and the dread charge against him. Not, as we have before said, attaching even a momentary belief to the unnatural accusation, but nursing the darkest suspicion against Arbaces, she felt that justice to her lover and to her murdered relative demanded her to seek the prætor, and communicate her impression, unsupported as it might be. Questioning her maidens, who had hitherto — kindly anxious, as I have said, to save her the additional agony — refrained from informing her of the state of Glaucus, she learned that he had been dangerously ill; that he was in custody, under the roof of Sallust; that the day of his trial was appointed.

“Averting gods!” she exclaimed, “and have I been so long forgetful of him? Have I seemed to shun him? Oh, let me hasten to do him justice; to show that I, the nearest relative of the dead, believe him innocent of the charge. Quick! quick! let us fly. Let me soothe, tend, cheer him! And if they will not believe me; if they will not yield to my conviction; if they sentence him to exile or to death, let me share the sentence with him!”

Instinctively she hastened her pace, confused and bewildered, scarce knowing whither she went; now designing first to seek the prætor, and now to rush to the chamber of Glaucus. She hurried on, she passed the gate of the city, she was in the long street leading up the town. The houses were opened, but none were yet astir in the streets; the life of the city was scarce awake, when lo! she came suddenly upon a small knot of men standing beside a covered litter. A tall figure stepped

from the midst of them, and Ione shrieked aloud to behold Arbaces.

“Fair Ione,” said he, gently, and appearing not to heed her alarm, “my ward, my pupil! forgive me if I disturb thy pious sorrows; but the prætor, solicitous of thy honor, and anxious that thou mayst not rashly be implicated in the coming trial, knowing the strange embarrassment of thy state (seeking justice for thy brother, but dreading punishment to thy betrothed), sympathizing, too, with thy unprotected and friendless condition, and deeming it harsh that thou shouldst be suffered to act unguided and mourn alone, hath wisely and paternally confided thee to the care of thy lawful guardian. Behold the writing which intrusts thee to my charge!”

“Dark Egyptian,” cried Ione, drawing herself proudly aside, “begone! It is thou that hast slain my brother! Is it to thy care, thy hands yet reeking with his blood, that they will give the sister? Ha! thou turnest pale! thy conscience smites thee! thou tremblest at the thunderbolt of the avenging gods! Pass on, and leave me to my woe!”

“Thy sorrows unstring thy reason, Ione,” said Arbaces, attempting in vain his usual calmness of tone. “I forgive thee. Thou wilt find me now, as ever, thy surest friend. But the public streets are not the fitting place for us to confer, for me to console thee. Approach, slaves! Come, my sweet charge, the litter awaits thee.”

The amazed and terrified attendants gathered round Ione and clung to her knees.

“Arbaces,” said the eldest of the maidens, “this is surely not the law! For nine days after the funeral, is it not written that the relatives of the deceased shall not be molested in their homes, or interrupted in their solitary grief?”

“Woman!” returned Arbaces, imperiously waving his hand, “to place a ward under the roof of her guardian is not against the funeral laws. I tell thee I have the fiat of the prætor. This delay is indecorous. Place her in the litter.”

So saying, he threw his arms firmly round the shrinking form of Ione. She drew back, gazed earnestly in his face, and then burst into hysterical laughter:—

“Ha, ha! this is well — well! Excellent guardian, paternal law! Ha, ha!” And, startled herself at the dread echo of that shrill and maddened laughter, she sunk, as it died away, lifeless upon the ground. . . . A minute more, and Arbaces had lifted her into the litter. The bearers moved swiftly on, and the unfortunate lone was soon borne from the sight of her weeping handmaids.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT BECOMES OF NYDIA IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES. — THE EGYPTIAN FEELS COMPASSION FOR GLAUCUS. — COMPASSION IS OFTEN A VERY USELESS VISITOR TO THE GUILTY.

It will be remembered that at the command of Arbaces Nydia followed the Egyptian to his home, and conversing there with her, he learned from the confession of her despair and remorse that her hand, and not Julia's, had administered to Glaucus the fatal potion. At another time the Egyptian might have conceived a philosophical interest in sounding the depths and origin of the strange and absorbing passion which, in blindness and in slavery, this singular girl had dared to cherish; but at present he spared no thought from himself. As, after her confession, the poor Nydia threw herself on her knees before him, and besought him to restore the health and save the life of Glaucus, — for in her youth and ignorance she imagined the dark magician all-powerful to effect both, — Arbaces, with unheeding ears, was noting only the new expediency of detaining Nydia a prisoner until the trial and fate of Glaucus were decided. For if, when he judged her merely the accomplice of Julia in obtaining the philtre, he had felt it was dangerous to the full success of his vengeance to allow her to be at large, to appear, perhaps, as a witness, to avow the manner in which the sense of Glaucus had been darkened, and thus win indulgence to the crime of which he was accused, — how much more was she likely to volunteer her

testimony when she herself had administered the draught, and, inspired by love, would be only anxious, at any expense of shame, to retrieve her error and preserve her beloved? Besides, how unworthy of the rank and repute of Arbaces to be implicated in the disgrace of pandering to the passion of Julia, and assisting in the unholy rites of the Saga of Vesuvius! Nothing less, indeed, than his desire to induce Glaucus to own the murder of Apæcides, as a policy evidently the best both for his own permanent safety and his successful suit with Ione, could ever have led him to contemplate the confession of Julia.

As for Nydia, who was necessarily cut off by her blindness from much of the knowledge of active life, and who, a slave and a stranger, was naturally ignorant of the perils of the Roman law, she thought rather of the illness and delirium of her Athenian than the crime of which she had vaguely heard him accused, or the chances of the impending trial. Poor wretch that she was, whom none addressed, none cared for, what did she know of the senate and the sentence, the hazard of the law, the ferocity of the people, the arena, and the lion's den? She was accustomed only to associate with the thought of Glaucus everything that was prosperous and lofty: she could not imagine that any peril, save from the madness of her love, could menace that sacred head. He seemed to her set apart for the blessings of life. *She* only had disturbed the current of his felicity; she knew not, she dreamed not that the stream once so bright was dashing on to darkness and to death. It was therefore to restore the brain that *she* had marred, to save the life that *she* had endangered, that she implored the assistance of the great Egyptian.

"Daughter," said Arbaces, waking from his reverie, "thou must rest here; it is not meet for thee to wander along the streets, and be spurned from the threshold by the rude feet of slaves. I have compassion on thy soft crime; I will do all to remedy it. Wait here patiently for some days, and Glaucus shall be restored." So saying, and without waiting for her reply, he hastened from the room, drew the bolt across the door, and consigned the care and wants of his prisoner to the slave who had the charge of that part of the mansion.

Alone, then, and musingly, he waited the morning light, and with it repaired, as we have seen, to possess himself of the person of Ione.

His primary object with respect to the unfortunate Neapolitan was that which he had really stated to Clodius; namely, to prevent her interesting herself actively in the trial of Glaucus, and also to guard against her accusing him (which she would, doubtless, have done) of his former act of perfidy and violence towards her, his ward, — denouncing his causes for vengeance against Glaucus, unveiling the hypocrisy of his character, and casting any doubt upon his veracity in the charge which he had made against the Athenian. Not till he had encountered her that morning, not till he had heard her loud denunciations, was he aware that he had also another danger to apprehend in her suspicion of his crime. He hugged himself now in the thought that these ends were effected; that one, at once the object of his passion and his fear, was in his power. He believed more than ever the flattering promises of the stars; and when he sought Ione in that chamber in the inmost recesses of his mysterious mansion to which he had consigned her, when he found her overpowered by blow upon blow, and passing from fit to fit, from violence to torpor, in all the alternations of hysterical disease, he thought more of the loveliness which no frenzy could distort, than of the woe which he had brought upon her. In that sanguine vanity common to men who through life have been invariably successful, whether in fortune or love, he flattered himself that when Glaucus had perished, when his name was solemnly blackened by the award of a legal judgment, his title to her love forever forfeited by condemnation to death for the murder of her own brother, her affection would be changed to horror; and that his tenderness and his passion, assisted by all the arts with which he well knew how to dazzle woman's imagination, might elect him to that throne in her heart from which his rival would be so awfully expelled. This was his hope; but should it fail, his unholy and fervid passion whispered, "At the worst, *now* she is in my power."

Yet, withal, he felt that uneasiness and apprehension which

attend upon the chance of detection, even when the criminal is insensible to the voice of conscience, — that vague terror of the consequences of crime which is often mistaken for remorse at the crime itself. The buoyant air of Campania weighed heavily upon his breast; he longed to hurry from a scene where danger might not sleep eternally with the dead; and, having Ione now in his possession, he secretly resolved, as soon as he had witnessed the last agony of his rival, to transport his wealth, and her, the costliest treasure of all, to some distant shore.

“Yes,” said he, striding to and fro his solitary chamber, — “yes, the law that gave me the person of my ward gives me the possession of my bride. Far across the broad main will we sweep on our search after novel luxuries and inexperienced pleasures. Cheered by my stars, supported by the omens of my soul, we will penetrate to those vast and glorious worlds which my wisdom tells me lie yet untracked in the recesses of the circling sea. There may this heart, possessed of love, grow once more alive to ambition; there, amongst nations uncrushed by the Roman yoke, and to whose ear the name of Rome has not yet been wafted, I may found an empire, and transplant my ancestral creed, renewing the ashes of the dead Theban rule, continuing in yet grander shores the dynasty of my crowned fathers, and waking in the noble heart of Ione the grateful consciousness that she shares the lot of one who, far from the aged rottenness of this slavish civilization, restores the primal elements of greatness, and unites in one mighty soul the attributes of the prophet and the king.”

From this exultant soliloquy Arbaces was awakened to attend the trial of the Athenian.

The worn and pallid cheek of his victim touched him less than the firmness of his nerves and the dauntlessness of his brow; for Arbaces was one who had little pity for what was unfortunate, but a strong sympathy for what was bold. The congenialities that bind us to others ever assimilate to the qualities of our own nature. The hero weeps less at the reverses of his enemy than at the fortitude with which he bears them. All of us are human, and Arbaces, criminal as he was,

had his share of our common feelings and our mother clay. Had he but obtained from Glaucus the written confession of his crime, which would, better than even the judgment of others, have lost him with Ione, and removed from Arbaces the chance of future detection, the Egyptian would have strained every nerve to save his rival. Even now his hatred was over, his desire of revenge was slaked: he crushed his prey, not in enmity, but as an obstacle in his path. Yet was he not the less resolved, the less crafty and persevering, in the course he pursued for the destruction of one whose doom was become necessary to the attainment of his objects; and while, with apparent reluctance and compassion, he gave against Glaucus the evidence which condemned him, he secretly, and through the medium of the priesthood, fomented that popular indignation which made an effectual obstacle to the pity of the senate. He had sought Julia; he had detailed to her the confession of Nydia; he had easily, therefore, lulled any scruple of conscience which might have led her to extenuate the offence of Glaucus by avowing her share in his frenzy: and the more readily, for her vain heart had loved the fame and the prosperity of Glaucus, not Glaucus himself; she felt no affection for a disgraced man; nay, she almost rejoiced in the disgrace that humbled the hated Ione. If Glaucus could not be her slave, neither could he be the adorer of her rival. This was sufficient consolation for any regret at his fate. Volatile and fickle, she began again to be moved by the sudden and earnest suit of Clodius, and was not willing to hazard the loss of an alliance with that base but high-born noble by any public exposure of her past weakness and immodest passion for another. All things then smiled upon Arbaces: all things frowned upon the Athenian.

CHAPTER XI.

NYDIA AFFECTS THE SORCERESS.

WHEN the Thessalian found that Arbaces returned to her no more, when she was left, hour after hour, to all the torture of that miserable suspense which was rendered by blindness doubly intolerable, she began, with outstretched arms, to feel around her prison for some channel of escape; and finding the only entrance secure, she called aloud, and with the vehemence of a temper naturally violent, and now sharpened by impatient agony.

“Ho, girl!” said the slave in attendance, opening the door, “art thou bit by a scorpion, or thinkest thou that we are dying of silence here, and only to be preserved, like the infant Jupiter, by a hullabaloo?”

“Where is thy master, and wherefore am I caged here? I want air and liberty: let me go forth!”

“Alas! little one, hast thou not seen enough of Arbaces to know that his will is imperial? He hath ordered thee to be caged; and caged thou art, and I am thy keeper. Thou canst not have air and liberty; but thou mayst have what are much better things, — food and wine.”

“Proh Jupiter!” cried the girl, wringing her hands; “and why am I thus imprisoned? What can the great Arbaces want with so poor a thing as I am?”

“That I know not, unless it be to attend on thy new mistress, who has been brought hither this day.”

“What! Ione here?”

“Yes, poor lady! she liked it little, I fear. Yet, by the Temple of Castor! Arbaces is a gallant man to the women. Thy lady is his ward, thou knowest.”

“Wilt thou take me to her?”

“She is ill; frantic with rage and spite. Besides, I have no orders to do so; and I never think for myself. When Arbaces

made me slave of these chambers,¹ he said, 'I have but one lesson to give thee: while thou servest me, thou must have neither ears, eyes, nor thought; thou must be but one quality, — obedience.'"

"But what harm is there in seeing Ione?"

"That I know not; but if thou wantest a companion, I am willing to talk to thee, little one, for I am solitary enough in my dull cubiculum. And, by the way, thou art Thessalian; knowest thou not some cunning amusement of knife and shears, some pretty trick of telling fortunes, as most of thy race do, in order to pass the time?"

"Tush, slave, hold thy peace! or, if thou wilt speak, what hast thou heard of the state of Glaucus?"

"Why, my master has gone to the Athenian's trial; Glaucus will smart for it!"

"For what?"

"The murder of the priest Apæcides."

"Ha!" said Nydia, pressing her hands to her forehead; "something of this I have indeed heard, but understand not. Yet who will dare to touch a hair of his head?"

"That will the lion, I fear."

"Averting gods! what wickedness dost thou utter?"

"Why, only that, if he be found guilty, the lion, or may be the tiger, will be his executioner."

Nydia leaped up, as if an arrow had entered her heart; she uttered a piercing scream; then, falling before the feet of the slave, she cried, in a tone that melted even his rude heart, —

"Ah! tell me thou jestest — thou utterest not the truth — speak, speak!"

"Why, by my faith, blind girl, I know nothing of the law; it may not be so bad as I say. But Arbaces is his accuser, and the people desire a victim for the arena. Cheer thee! But what hath the fate of the Athenian to do with thine?"

"No matter, no matter; he has been kind to me: thou knowest not, then, what they will do? Arbaces his accuser!

- In the houses of the great, each suite of chambers had its peculiar slave.

O fate! The people, the people! Ah, *they* can look upon his face! Who will be cruel to the Athenian! Yet was not Love itself cruel to him?"

So saying, her head drooped upon her bosom: she sunk into silence; scalding tears flowed down her cheeks; and all the kindly efforts of the slave were unable either to console her or distract the absorption of her reverie.

When his household cares obliged the ministrant to leave her room, Nydia began to re-collect her thoughts. Arbaces was the accuser of Glaucus; Arbaces had imprisoned her here: was not that a proof that her liberty might be serviceable to Glaucus? Yes, she was evidently inveigled into some snare; she was contributing to the destruction of her beloved. Oh, how she panted for release! Fortunately for her sufferings, all sense of pain became merged in the desire of escape; and as she began to revolve the possibility of deliverance, she grew calm and thoughtful. She possessed much of the craft of her sex, and it had been increased in her breast by her early servitude. What slave was ever destitute of cunning? She resolved to practise upon her keeper; and, calling suddenly to mind his superstitious query as to her Thessalian art, she hoped by that handle to work out some method of release. These doubts occupied her mind during the rest of the day and the long hours of night; and accordingly when Sosia visited her the following morning, she hastened to divert his garrulity into that channel in which it had before evinced a natural disposition to flow.

She was aware, however, that her only chance of escape was at night: and accordingly she was obliged, with a bitter pang at the delay, to defer till then her purposed attempt.

"The night," said she, "is the sole time in which we can well decipher the decrees of Fate; then it is thou must seek me. But what desirest thou to learn?"

"By Pollux! I should like to know as much as my master; but that is not to be expected. Let me know, at least, whether I shall save enough to purchase my freedom, or whether this Egyptian will give it me for nothing. He does such generous things sometimes. Next, supposing that be true, shall I pos-

sess myself of that snug taberna among the Myropolia,¹ which I have long had in my eye? 'Tis a genteel trade, that of a perfumer, and suits a retir'd slave who has something of a gentleman about him!"

"Ay! so you would have precise answers to those questions? There are various ways of satisfying you. There is the Lithomanteia, or Speaking-stone, which answers your prayer with an infant's voice; but then, we have not that precious stone with us,—costly is it and rare. Then there is the Gastromanteia, whereby the demon casts pale and deadly images upon water, prophetic of the future. But this art requires also glasses of a peculiar fashion, to contain the consecrated liquid, which we have not. I think, therefore, that the simplest method of satisfying your desire would be by the Magic of Air."

"I trust," said Sosia, tremulously, "that there is nothing very frightful in the operation? I have no love for apparitions."

"Fear not; thou wilt see nothing; thou wilt only hear by the bubbling of water whether or not thy suit prospers. First, then, be sure, from the rising of the evening star, that thou leavest the garden-gate somewhat open, so that the demon may feel himself invited to enter therein; and place fruits and water near the gate as a sign of hospitality; then, three hours after twilight, come here with a bowl of the coldest and purest water, and thou shalt learn all, according to the Thesalian lore my mother taught me. But forget not the garden-gate,—all rests upon that: it must be open when you come, and for three hours previously."

"Trust me," replied the unsuspecting Sosia; "I know what a gentleman's feelings are when a door is shut in his face, as the cook-shop's hath been in mine many a day; and I know also that a person of respectability, as a demon of course is, cannot but be pleased, on the other hand, with any little mark of courteous hospitality. Meanwhile, pretty one, here is thy morning's meal."

"And what of the trial?"

¹ The shops of the perfumers.

“Oh, the lawyers are still at it, — talk, talk, — it will last over till to-morrow.”

“To-morrow? you are sure of that?”

“So I hear.”

“And Ione?”

“By Bacchus! she must be tolerably well, for she was strong enough to make my master stamp and bite his lip this morning. I saw him quit her apartment with a brow like a thunder-storm.”

“Lodges she near this?”

“No; in the upper apartments. But I must not stay prating here longer. *Vale!*”

CHAPTER XII.

A WASP VENTURES INTO THE SPIDER'S WEB.

THE second night of the trial had set in; and it was nearly the time in which Sosia was to brave the dread Unknown, when there entered, at that very garden-gate which the slave had left ajar, — not, indeed, one of the mysterious spirits of earth or air, but the heavy and most human form of Calenus, the priest of Isis. He scarcely noted the humble offerings of indifferent fruit and still more indifferent wine, which the pious Sosia had deemed good enough for the invisible stranger they were intended to allure. “Some tribute,” thought he, “to the garden god. By my father's head! if his deityship were never better served, he would do well to give up the godly profession. Ah, were it not for us priests, the gods would have a sad time of it. And now for Arbaces: I am treading a quicksand, but it ought to cover a mine. I have the Egyptian's life in my power: what will he value it at?”

As he thus soliloquized, he crossed through the open court into the peristyle, where a few lamps here and there broke upon the empire of the starlit night, and issuing from one of the chambers that bordered the colonnade, suddenly encountered Arbaces.

"Ho! Calenus, seekest thou me?" said the Egyptian; and there was a little embarrassment in his voice.

"Yes, wise Arbaces; I trust my visit is not unseasonable?"

"Nay; it was but this instant that my freedman Callias sneezed thrice at my right hand: I knew, therefore, some good fortune was in store for me; and lo! the gods have sent me Calenus."

"Shall we within to your chamber, Arbaces?"

"As you will; but the night is clear and balmy. I have some remains of languor yet lingering on me from my recent illness; the air refreshes me; let us walk in the garden; we are equally alone there."

"With all my heart," answered the priest; and the two *friends* passed slowly to one of the many terraces which, bordered by marble vases and sleeping flowers, intersected the garden.

"It is a lovely night," said Arbaces, "blue and beautiful as that on which, twenty years ago, the shores of Italy first broke upon my view. My Calenus, age creeps upon us: let us, at least, feel that we have lived."

"Thou, at least, mayst arrogate that boast," said Calenus, beating about, as it were, for an opportunity to communicate the secret which weighed upon him, and feeling his usual awe of Arbaces still more impressively that night, from the quiet and friendly tone of dignified condescension which the Egyptian assumed,—"thou, at least, mayst arrogate that boast. Thou hast had countless wealth, a frame on whose close-woven fibres disease can find no space to enter, prosperous love, inexhaustible pleasure and, even at this hour, triumphant revenge."

"Thou alludest to the Athenian. Ay, to-morrow's sun the fiat of his death will go forth. The senate does not relent. But thou mistakest: his death gives me no other gratification than that it releases me from a rival in the affections of Ione. I entertain no other sentiment of animosity against that unfortunate homicide."

"Homicide!" repeated Calenus, slowly and meaningly; and, halting as he spoke, he fixed his eyes upon Arbaces. The stars

shone pale and steadily on the proud face of their prophet, but they betrayed there no change; the eyes of Calenus fell disappointed and abashed. He continued rapidly: "Homicide! it is well to charge him with that crime; but thou, of all men, knowest that he is innocent."

"Explain thyself," said Arbaces, coldly, for he had prepared himself for the hint his secret fears had foretold.

"Arbaces," answered Calenus, sinking his voice into a whisper, "I was in the sacred grove, sheltered by the chapel and the surrounding foliage. I overheard, I marked the whole. I saw thy weapon pierce the heart of Apæcides. I blame not the deed; it destroyed a foe and an apostate."

"Thou sawest the whole!" said Arbaces, dryly; "so I imagined: thou wert alone?"

"Alone!" returned Calenus, surprised at the Egyptian's calmness.

"And wherefore wert thou hid behind the chapel at that hour?"

"Because I had learned the conversion of Apæcides to the Christian faith; because I knew that on that spot he was to meet the fierce Olinthus; because they were to meet there to discuss plans for unveiling the sacred mysteries of our goddess to the people; and I was there to detect, in order to defeat them."

"Hast thou told living ear what thou didst witness?"

"No, my master; the secret is locked in thy servant's breast."

"What! even thy kinsman Burbo guesses it not? Come, the truth!"

"By the gods —"

"Hush! we know each other; what are the gods to us?"

"By the fear of thy vengeance, then — no!"

"And why hast thou hitherto concealed from me this secret? Why hast thou waited till the eve of the Athenian's condemnation before thou hast ventured to tell me that Arbaces is a murderer; and, having tarried so long, why revealest thou now that knowledge?"

"Because — because —" stammered Calenus, coloring and in confusion.

“Because,” interrupted Arbaces, with a gentle smile, and tapping the priest on the shoulder with a kindly and familiar gesture, — “because, my Calenus (see, now, I will read thy heart and explain its motives), because thou didst wish thoroughly to commit and entangle me in the trial, so that I might have no loophole of escape; that I might stand firmly pledged to perjury and to malice, as well as to homicide; that having myself whetted the appetite of the populace to blood, no wealth, no power, could prevent my becoming their victim; and thou tellest me thy secret now, ere the trial be over and the innocent condemned, to show what a desperate web of villany thy word to-morrow could destroy; to enhance in this, the ninth hour, the price of thy forbearance; to show that my own arts, in arousing the popular wrath, would, at thy witness, recoil upon myself; and that, if not for Glaucus, for *me* would gape the jaws of the lion! Is it not so?”

“Arbaces,” replied Calenus, losing all the vulgar audacity of his natural character, “verily thou *art* a Magian; thou readeest the heart as it were a scroll.”

“It is my vocation,” answered the Egyptian, laughing gently. “Well, then, forbear; and when all is over, I will make thee rich.”

“Pardon me,” said the priest, as the quick suggestion of that avarice, which was his master-passion, bade him trust no *future* chance of generosity; “pardon me; thou saidst right — we know each other. If thou wouldst have me silent, thou must pay something in advance, as an offer to Harpocrates.¹ If the rose, sweet emblem of discretion, is to take root firmly, water her this night with a stream of gold.”

“Witty and poetical!” answered Arbaces, still in that bland voice which lulled and encouraged, when it ought to have alarmed and checked his griping comrade. “Wilt thou not wait the morrow?”

“Why this delay? Perhaps, when I can no longer give my testimony without shame for not having given it ere the innocent man suffered, thou wilt forget my claim; and, indeed, thy present hesitation is a bad omen of thy future gratitude.”

¹ The god of silence.

“Well, then, Calenus, what wouldst thou have me pay thee?”

“Thy life is very precious, and thy wealth is very great,” returned the priest, grinning.

“Wittier and more witty. But speak out: what shall be the sum?”

“Arbaces, I have heard that in thy secret treasury below, beneath those rude Oscan arches which prop thy stately halls, thou hast piles of gold, of vases, and of jewels, which might rival the receptacles of the wealth of the deified Nero. Thou mayst easily spare out of those piles enough to make Calenus among the richest priests of Pompeii, and yet not miss the loss.”

“Come, Calenus,” said Arbaces, winningly, and with a frank and generous air, “thou art an old friend, and hast been a faithful servant. Thou canst have no wish to take away my life, nor I a desire to stint thy reward: thou shalt descend with me to that treasury thou referrest to; thou shalt feast thine eyes with the blaze of uncounted gold and the sparkle of priceless gems; and thou shalt, for thy own reward, bear away with thee this night as much as thou canst conceal beneath thy robes. Nay, when thou hast once seen what thy friend possesses, thou wilt learn how foolish it would be to injure one who has so much to bestow. When Glaucus is no more, thou shalt pay the treasury another visit. Speak I frankly and as a friend?”

“Oh, greatest, best of men,” cried Calenus, almost weeping with joy, “canst thou thus forgive my injurious doubts of thy justice, thy generosity?”

“Hush! one other turn, and we will descend to the Oscan arches.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SLAVE CONSULTS THE ORACLE. — THEY WHO BLIND THEMSELVES THE BLIND MAY FOOL. — TWO NEW PRISONERS MADE IN ONE NIGHT.

IMPATIENTLY Nydia awaited the arrival of the no less anxious Sosia. Fortifying his courage by plentiful potations of a better liquor than that provided for the demon, the credulous ministrant stole into the blind girl's chamber.

"Well, Sosia, and art thou prepared? Hast thou the bowl of pure water?"

"Verily, yes; but I tremble a little. You are sure I shall not see the demon? I have heard that these gentlemen are by no means of a handsome person or a civil demeanor."

"Be assured. And hast thou left the garden gate gently open?"

"Yes; and placed some beautiful nuts and apples on a little table close by."

"That's well. And the gate is open now, so that the demon may pass through it?"

"Surely it is."

"Well, then, open this door; there—leave it just ajar. And now, Sosia, give me the lamp."

"What, you will not extinguish it?"

"No; but I must breathe my spell over its ray. There is a spirit in fire. Seat thyself."

The slave obeyed; and Nydia, after bending for some moments silently over the lamp, rose, and in a low voice chanted the following rude

INVOCATION TO THE SPECTRE OF THE AIR.

Loved alike by Air and Water
Aye must be Thessalia's daughter;
To us, Olympian hearts, are given
Spells that draw the moon from heaven

All that Egypt's learning wrought,
 All that Persia's Magian taught, —
 Won from song, or wrung from flowers,
 Or whisper'd low by fiend, are ours.

Spectre of the viewless air!
 Hear the blind Thessalian's prayer!
 By Erictho's art, that shed
 Dews of life when life was fled;
 By lone Ithaca's wise king,
 Who could wake the crystal spring
 To the voice of prophecy;
 By the lost Eurydice,
 Summon'd from the shadowy throng
 At the muse-son's magic song;
 By the Colchian's awful charms,
 When fair-haired Jason left her arms; —
 Spectre of the airy halls,
 One who owns thee duly calls!
 Breathe along the brimming bowl,
 And instruct the fearful soul
 In the shadowy things that lie
 Dark in dim futurity.
 Come, wild demon of the air,
 Answer to thy votary's prayer!
 Come, oh, come!

And no god on heaven or earth, —
 Not the Paphian Queen of Mirth,
 Nor the vivid Lord of Light,
 Nor the triple Maid of Night,
 Nor the Thunderer's self shall be
 Blest and honor'd more than thee!
 Come, oh, come!

“The spectre *is* certainly coming,” said Sosia. “I feel him running along my hair!”

“Place thy bowl of water on the ground. Now, then, give me thy napkin, and let me fold up thy face and eyes.”

“Ay! that's always the custom with these charms. Not so tight, though; gently, gently.”

“There; thou canst not see?”

“See, by Jupiter! No, nothing but darkness.”

“Address, then, to the spectre whatever question thou

wouldst ask him, in a low-whispered voice, three times. If thy question is answered in the affirmative, thou wilt hear the water ferment and bubble before the demon breathes upon it; if in the negative, the water will be quite silent."

"But you will not play any trick with the water, eh?"

"Let me place the bowl under thy feet — so. Now thou wilt perceive that I cannot touch it without thy knowledge."

"Very fair. Now then, O Bacchus, befriend me! Thou knowest that I have always loved thee better than all the other gods, and I will dedicate to thee that silver cup I stole last year from the burly carptor [butler], if thou wilt but befriend me with this water-loving demon. And thou, O Spirit, listen and hear me! Shall I be enabled to purchase my freedom next year? Thou knowest; for, as thou livest in the air, the birds¹ have doubtless acquainted thee with every secret of this house: thou knowest that I have filched and pilfered all that I honestly — that is, safely — could lay finger upon for the last three years, and I yet want two thousand sesterces of the full sum. Shall I be able, O good Spirit, to make up the deficiency in the course of this year? Speak. Ha! does the water bubble? No; all is as still as a tomb. Well, then, if not this year, in two years? Ah, I hear something; the demon is scratching at the door; he'll be here presently. In two years, my good fellow? Come, now, two; that's a very reasonable time. What! dumb still? Two years and a half — three — four? Ill fortune to you, friend demon! You are no lady, that's clear, or you would not keep silence so long. Five — six — sixty years? and may Pluto seize you! I'll ask no more." And Sosia, in a rage, kicked down the water over his legs. He then, after much fumbling, and more cursing, managed to extricate his head from the napkin in which it was completely folded, stared round, and discovered that he was in the dark.

"What, ho! Nydia; the lamp is gone. Ah, traitress; and thou art gone, too; but I'll catch thee; thou shalt smart for this!"

¹ Who are supposed to know all secrets. The same superstition prevails in the East, and is not without example, also, in our Northern legends.

The slave groped his way to the door; it was bolted from without: he was a prisoner instead of Nydia. What could he do? He did not dare to knock loud—to call out—lest Arbaces should overhear him, and discover how he had been duped; and Nydia, meanwhile, had probably already gained the garden gate and was fast on her escape.

“But,” thought he, “she will go home, or at least be somewhere in the city. To-morrow, at dawn, when the slaves are at work in the peristyle, I can make myself heard; then I can go forth and seek her. I shall be sure to find and bring her back before Arbaces knows a word of the matter. Ah! that’s the best plan. Little traitress, my fingers itch at thee: and to leave only a bowl of water, too! Had it been wine, it would have been some comfort.”

While Sosia, thus entrapped, was lamenting his fate, and revolving his schemes to repossess himself of Nydia, the blind girl, with that singular precision and dexterous rapidity of motion which, we have before observed, was peculiar to her, had passed lightly along the peristyle, threaded the opposite passage that led into the garden, and with a beating heart was about to proceed towards the gate, when she suddenly heard the sound of approaching steps, and distinguished the dreaded voice of Arbaces himself. She paused for a moment in doubt and terror; then suddenly it flashed across her recollection that there was another passage which was little used except for the admission of the fair partakers of the Egyptian’s secret revels, and which wound along the basement of that massive fabric towards a door which also communicated with the garden. By good fortune it might be open. At that thought she hastily retraced her steps, descended the narrow stairs at the right, and was soon at the entrance of the passage. Alas! the door at the entrance was closed and secured. While she was yet assuring herself that it was indeed locked, she heard behind her the voice of Calenus, and a moment after, that of Arbaces in low reply. She could not stay there; they were probably passing to this very door. She sprang onward, and felt herself in unknown ground. The air grew damp and chill; this reassured her. She thought she might be among the cellars of

the luxurious mansion, or at least in some rude spot not likely to be visited by its haughty lord, when again her quick ear caught steps and the sound of voices. On, on, she hurried, extending her arms, which now frequently encountered pillars of thick and massive form. With a tact, doubled in acuteness by her fear, she escaped these perils, and continued her way, the air growing more and more damp as she proceeded; yet still, as she ever and anon paused for breath, she heard the advancing steps and the indistinct murmur of voices. At length she was abruptly stopped by a wall that seemed the limit of her path. Was there no spot in which she could hide, no aperture, no cavity? There was none! She stopped, and wrung her hands in despair; then again nerved as the voices neared upon her, she hurried on by the side of the wall; and coming suddenly against one of the sharp buttresses that here and there jutted boldly forth, she fell to the ground. Though much bruised, her senses did not leave her; she uttered no cry; nay, she hailed the accident that had led her to something like a screen; and creeping close up to the angle formed by the buttress, so that on one side at least she was sheltered from view, she gathered her slight and small form into its smallest compass, and breathlessly awaited her fate.

Meanwhile Arbaces and the priest were taking their way to that secret chamber whose stores were so vaunted by the Egyptian. They were in a vast subterranean atrium, or hall; the low roof was supported by short, thick pillars of an architecture far remote from the Grecian graces of that luxuriant period. The single and pale lamp, which Arbaces bore, shed but an imperfect ray over the bare and rugged walls, in which the huge stones, without cement, were fitted curiously and uncouthly into each other. The disturbed reptiles glared fully on the intruders, and then crept into the shadow of the walls.

Calenus shivered as he looked around and breathed the damp, unwholesome air.

“Yet,” said Arbaces, with a smile, perceiving his shudder, “it is these rude abodes that furnish the luxuries of the halls above. They are like the laborers of the world; we despise

their ruggedness, yet they feed the very pride that disdains them."

"And whither goes you dim gallery to the left?" asked Calenus; "in this depth of gloom it seems without limit, as if winding into Hades."

"On the contrary, it does but conduct to the upper day," answered Arbaces, carelessly; "it is to the right that we steer to our bourn."

The hall, like many in the more habitable regions of Pompeii, branched off at the extremity into two wings or passages, the length of which, not really great, was to the eye considerably exaggerated by the sullen gloom against which the lamp so faintly struggled. To the right of these *alæ* the two comrades now directed their steps.

"The gay Glaucus will be lodged to-morrow in apartments not much drier, and far less spacious than this," said Calenus, as they passed by the very spot where, completely wrapped in the shadow of the broad, projecting buttress, cowered the Thessalian.

"Ay, but then he will have dry room, and ample enough, in the arena on the following day. And to think," continued Arbaces slowly, and very deliberately, — "to think that a word of thine could save him, and consign Arbaces to his doom!"

"That word shall never be spoken," said Calenus.

"Right, my Calenus! it never shall," returned Arbaces, familiarly leaning his arm on the priest's shoulder; "and now, halt; we are at the door!"

The light trembled against a small door deep set in the wall, and guarded strongly by many plates and bindings of iron, that intersected the rough and dark wood. From his girdle Arbaces now drew a small ring, holding three or four short but strong keys. Oh, how beat the griping heart of Calenus, as he heard the rusty wards growl, as if resenting the admission to the treasures they guarded!

"Enter, my friend," said Arbaces, "while I hold the lamp on high, that thou mayst glut thine eyes on the yellow heaps."

The impatient Calenus did not wait to be twice invited; he hastened towards the aperture.

Scarce had he crossed the threshold, when the strong hand of Arbaces plunged him forwards.

"*The word shall never be spoken!*" said the Egyptian, with a loud, exultant laugh, and closed the door upon the priest.

Calenus had been precipitated down several steps, but not feeling at the moment the pain of his fall, he sprang up again to the door, and beating at it fiercely with his clenched fist, he cried aloud in what seemed more a beast's howl than a human voice, so keen was his agony and despair: "Oh, release me, release me, and I will ask no gold!"

The words but imperfectly penetrated the massive door, and Arbaces again laughed. Then, stamping his foot violently, rejoined, perhaps to give vent to his long-stifled passions, —

"All the gold of Dalmatia will not buy thee a crust of bread. Starve, wretch! thy dying groans will never wake even the echo of these vast halls; nor will the air ever reveal, as thou gnawest, in thy desperate famine, thy flesh from thy bones, that so perishes the man who threatened, and could have undone, Arbaces! Farewell!"

"Oh, pity — mercy! Inhuman villain, was it for this —"

The rest of the sentence was lost to the ear of Arbaces as he passed backward along the dim hall. A toad, plump and bloated, lay unmoving before his path; the rays of the lamp fell upon its unshaped hideousness and red upward eye. Arbaces turned aside that he might not harm it.

"Thou art loathsome and obscene," he muttered, "but thou canst not injure me; therefore thou art safe in my path."

The cries of Calenus, dulled and choked by the barrier that confined him, yet faintly reached the ear of the Egyptian. He paused and listened intently.

"This is unfortunate," thought he; "for I cannot sail till that voice is dumb forever. My stores and treasures lie, not in yon dungeon, it is true, but in the opposite wing. My slaves, as they move them, must not hear his voice. But what fear of that? In three days, if he still survive, his accents, by my father's beard, must be weak enough then! No, they

could not pierce even through his tomb. By Isis, it is cold! I long for a deep draught of the spiced Falernian."

With that the remorseless Egyptian drew his gown closer round him, and resought the upper air.

CHAPTER XIV.

NYDIA ACCOSTS CALENUS.

WHAT words of terror, yet of hope, had Nydia overheard! The next day Glaucus was to be condemned; yet there lived one who could save him, and adjudge Arbaces to his doom, and that one breathed within a few steps of her hiding-place! She caught his cries and shrieks, his imprecations, his prayers, though they fell choked and muffled on her ear. He was imprisoned, but she knew the secret of his cell: could she but escape, could she but seek the prætor, he might yet in time be given to light, and preserve the Athenian. Her emotions almost stifled her; her brain reeled, she felt her sense give way, but by a violent effort she mastered herself; and, after listening intently for several minutes, till she was convinced that Arbaces had left the space to solitude and herself, she crept on as her ear guided her to the very door that had closed upon Calenus. Here she more distinctly caught his accents of terror and despair. Thrice she attempted to speak, and thrice her voice failed to penetrate the folds of the heavy door. At length, finding the lock, she applied her lips to its small aperture, and the prisoner distinctly heard a soft tone breathe his name.

His blood curdled, his hair stood on end. That awful solitude what mysterious and preternatural being could penetrate! "Who's there?" he cried in new alarm; "What spectre, what dread *larva*, calls upon the lost Calenus?"

"Priest," replied the Thessalian, "unknown to Arbaces, I have been, by the permission of the gods, a witness to his perfidy. If I myself can escape from these walls, I may save

thee. But let thy voice reach my ear through this narrow passage, and answer what I ask."

"Ah, blessed spirit," said the priest, exultingly, and obeying the suggestion of Nydia, "save me, and I will sell the very cups on the altar to pay thy kindness."

"I want not thy gold, I want thy secret. Did I hear aright? Canst thou save the Athenian Glaucus from the charge against his life?"

"I can; I can; therefore (may the Furies blast the foul Egyptian!) hath Arbaces snared me thus, and left me to starve and rot!"

"They accuse the Athenian of murder: canst thou disprove the accusation?"

"Only free me, and the proudest head of Pompeii is not more safe than his. I saw the deed done; I saw Arbaces strike the blow; I can convict the true murderer and acquit the innocent man. But if I perish, he dies also. Dost thou interest thyself for him? Oh, blessed stranger, in my heart is the urn which condemns or frees him!"

"And thou wilt give full evidence of what thou knowest?"

"Will? Oh, were hell at my feet — yes! Revenge on the false Egyptian, — revenge! revenge! revenge!"

As through his ground teeth Calenus shrieked forth those last words, Nydia felt that in his worst passions was her certainty of his justice to the Athenian. Her heart beat: was it to be her proud destiny to preserve her idolized, her adored? "Enough," said she; "the powers that conducted me hither will carry me through all. Yes, I feel that I shall deliver thee. Wait in patience and hope."

"But be cautious, be prudent, sweet stranger. Attempt not to appeal to Arbaces; he is marble. Seek the prætor, say what thou knowest, obtain his writ of search; bring soldiers, and smiths of cunning; these locks are wondrous strong! Time flies: I may starve — starve, if you are not quick! Go, go! Yet stay; it is horrible to be alone! the air is like a charnel; and the scorpions, — ha! and the pale *larvæ*. Oh! stay, stay!"

"Nay," said Nydia, terrified by the terror of the priest.

and anxious to confer with herself, — “nay, for thy sake I must depart. Take Hope for thy companion: farewell!”

So saying, she glided away, and felt with extended arms along the pillared space until she had gained the farther end of the hall and the mouth of the passage that led to the upper air. But there she paused; she felt that it would be more safe to wait a while, until the night was so far blended with the morning that the whole house would be buried in sleep, and so that she might quit it unobserved. She therefore once more laid herself down, and counted the weary moments. In her sanguine heart, joy was the predominant emotion. Glaucus was in deadly peril; but *she* should save him!

CHAPTER XV.

ARBACES AND IONE. — NYDIA GAINS THE GARDEN. — WILL SHE ESCAPE AND SAVE THE ATHENIAN?

WHEN Arbaces had warmed his veins by large draughts of that spiced and perfumed wine so valued by the luxurious, he felt more than usually elated and exultant of heart. There is a pride in triumphant ingenuity, not less felt, perhaps, though its object be guilty. Our vain human nature hugs itself in the consciousness of superior craft and self-obtained success: afterwards comes the horrible reaction of remorse.

But remorse was not a feeling which Arbaces was likely ever to experience for the fate of the base Calenus. He swept from his remembrance the thought of the priest's agonies and lingering death: he felt only that a great danger was passed, and a possible foe silenced; all left to him now would be to account to the priesthood for the disappearance of Calenus; and this he imagined it would not be difficult to do. Calenus had often been employed by him in various religious missions to the neighboring cities. On some such errand he could now assert that he had been sent, with offerings to the shrines of Isis at Herculaneum and Neapolis,

placatory of the goddess for the recent murder of her priest Apæcides. When Calenus had expired, his body might be thrown, previous to the Egyptian's departure from Pompeii, into the deep stream of the Sarnus; and when discovered, suspicion would probably fall upon the Nazarene atheists, as an act of revenge for the death of Olinthus at the arena. After rapidly running over these plans for screening himself, Arbaces dismissed at once from his mind all recollection of the wretched priest; and, animated by the success which had lately crowned all his schemes, he surrendered his thoughts to Ione. The last time he had seen her, she had driven him from her presence by a reproachful and bitter scorn, which his arrogant nature was unable to endure. He now felt emboldened once more to renew that interview; for his passion for her was like similar feelings in other men: it made him restless for her presence, even though in that presence he was exasperated and humbled. From delicacy to her grief he laid not aside his dark and unfestive robes, but renewing the perfumes on his raven locks, and arranging his tunic in its most becoming folds, he sought the chamber of the Neapolitan. Accosting the slave in attendance without, he inquired if Ione had yet retired to rest; and learning that she was still up, and unusually quiet and composed, he ventured into her presence. He found his beautiful ward sitting before a small table, and leaning her face upon both her hands in the attitude of thought. Yet the expression of the face itself possessed not its wonted bright and Psyche-like expression of sweet intelligence; the lips were apart, the eye vacant and unheeding, and the long dark hair, falling neglected and dishevelled upon her neck, gave by the contrast additional paleness to a cheek which had already lost the roundness of its contour.

Arbaces gazed upon her a moment ere he advanced. She, too, lifted up her eyes; and when she saw who was the intruder, shut them with an expression of pain, but did not stir.

"Ah!" said Arbaces, in a low and earnest tone, as he respectfully, nay, humbly, advanced and seated himself at a little distance from the table,—"ah! that my death could

remove thy hatred, then would I gladly die ! Thou wrongest me, Ione ; but I will bear the wrong without a murmur, only let me see thee sometimes. Chide, reproach, scorn me, if thou wilt ; I will teach myself to bear it. And is not even thy bitterest tone sweeter to me than the music of the most artful lute ? In thy silence the world seems to stand still ; a stagnation curdles up the veins of the earth : there is no earth, no life, without the light of thy countenance and the melody of thy voice."

"Give me back my brother and my betrothed," said Ione, in a calm and imploring tone ; and a few large tears rolled unheeded down her cheeks.

"Would that I could restore the one and save the other !" returned Arbaces, with apparent emotion. "Yes ; to make thee happy I would renounce my ill-fated love, and gladly join thy hand to the Athenian's. Perhaps he will yet come unscathed from his trial [Arbaces had prevented her learning that the trial had already commenced] ; if so, thou art free to judge or condemn him thyself. And think not, O Ione, that I would follow thee longer with a prayer of love. I know it is in vain. Suffer me only to weep — to mourn with thee. Forgive a violence deeply repented, and that shall offend no more. Let me be to thee only what I once was, — a friend, a father, a protector. Ah, Ione, spare me and forgive !"

"I forgive thee. Save but Glaucus, and I will renounce him. O mighty Arbaces ! thou art powerful in evil or in good : save the Athenian, and the poor Ione will never see him more." As she spoke, she rose with weak and trembling limbs, and falling at his feet she clasped his knees : "Oh, if thou really lovest me, if thou art human, remember my father's ashes, remember my childhood, think of all the hours we passed happily together, and save my Glaucus !"

Strange convulsions shook the frame of the Egyptian ; his features worked fearfully : he turned his face aside, and said, in a hollow voice, "If I could save him even now, I would ; but the Roman law is stern and sharp. Yet if I *could* succeed, if I *could* rescue and set him free, wouldst thou be mine, — my bride ?"

"Thine!" repeated Ione, rising: "thine! thy bride? My brother's blood is unavenged: *who* slew him? O Nemesis! can I even sell, for the life of Glaucus, thy solemn trust? Arbaces — *thine*? Never."

"Ione, Ione!" cried Arbaces, passionately, "why these mysterious words; why dost thou couple my name with the thought of thy brother's death?"

"My dreams couple it, and dreams are from the gods."

"Vain fantasies all! Is it for a dream that thou wouldst wrong the innocent, and hazard thy sole chance of saving thy lover's life?"

"Hear me!" said Ione, speaking firmly, and with a deliberate and solemn voice. "If Glaucus be saved by thee, I will never be borne to his home a bride. But I cannot master the horror of other rites: I cannot wed with thee. Interrupt me not; but mark me, Arbaces! If Glaucus die, on that same day I baffle thine arts, and leave to thy love only my dust! Yes, thou mayst put the knife and the poison from my reach; thou mayst imprison, thou mayst chain me, but the brave soul resolved to escape is never without means. These hands, naked and unarmed though they be, shall tear away the bonds of life. Fetter them, and these lips shall firmly refuse the air. Thou art learned; thou hast read how women have died rather than meet dishonor. If Glaucus perish, I will not unworthily linger behind him. By all the gods of the heaven, and the ocean, and the earth, I devote myself to death! I have said!"

High, proud, dilating in her stature, like one inspired, the air and voice of Ione struck an awe into the breast of her listener.

"Brave heart!" said he, after a short pause, "thou art indeed worthy to be mine. Oh that I should have dreamt of such a partner in my lofty destinies, and never found it but in thee! Ione," he continued rapidly, "dost thou not see that we are born for each other? Canst thou not recognize something kindred to thine own energy, thine own courage, in this high and self-dependent soul? We were formed to unite our sympathies; formed to breathe a new spirit into this

hackneyed and gross world; formed for the mighty ends which my soul, sweeping down the gloom of time, foresees with a prophet's vision. With a resolution equal to thine own I defy thy threats of an inglorious suicide. I hail thee as my own! Queen of climes undarkened by the eagle's wing, unravaged by his beak, I bow before thee in homage and in awe; but I claim thee in worship and in love! Together will we cross the ocean; together will we found our realm; and far distant ages shall acknowledge the long race of kings born from the marriage-bed of Arbaces and Ione!"

"Thou ravest! These mystic declamations are suited rather to some palsied crone selling charms in the market-place than to the wise Arbaces. Thou hast heard my resolution, — it is fixed as the Fates themselves. Orcus has heard my vow, and it is written in the book of the unforgetful Hades. Atone, then, O Arbaces, atone the past: convert hatred into regard, vengeance into gratitude; preserve one who shall never be thy rival. These are acts suited to thy original nature, which gives forth sparks of something high and noble. They weigh in the scales of the Kings of Death; they turn the balance on that day when the disembodied soul stands shivering and dismayed between Tartarus and Elysium; they gladden the heart in life, better and longer than the reward of a momentary passion. Oh, Arbaces, hear me, and be swayed!"

"Enough, Ione. All that I can do for Glaucus shall be done; but blame me not if I fail. Inquire of my foes, even, if I have not sought, if I do not seek, to turn aside the sentence from his head, and judge me accordingly. Sleep, then, Ione. Night wanes; I leave thee to its rest, — and mayst thou have kinder dreams of one who has no existence but in thine."

Without waiting a reply, Arbaces hastily withdrew, afraid, perhaps, to trust himself further to the passionate prayer of Ione, which racked him with jealousy, even while it touched him to compassion. But compassion itself came too late. Had Ione even pledged him her hand as his reward, he could not now, his evidence given, the populace excited, have saved the Athenian. Still, made sanguine by his very energy of mind, he threw himself on the chances of the future, and believed he

should yet triumph over the woman that had so entangled his passions.

As his attendants assisted to unrobe him for the night, the thought of Nydia flashed across him. He felt it was necessary that Ione should never learn of her lover's frenzy, lest it might excuse his imputed crime; and it was possible that her attendants might inform her that Nydia was under his roof, and she might desire to see her. As this idea crossed him, he turned to one of his freedmen, —

“Go, Callias,” said he, “forthwith to Sosia, and tell him that on no pretence is he to suffer the blind slave Nydia out of her chamber. But stay! first seek those in attendance upon my ward, and caution them not to inform her that the blind girl is under my roof. Go, quick!”

The freedman hastened to obey. After having discharged his commission with respect to Ione's attendants, he sought the worthy Sosia. He found him not in the little cell which was apportioned for his cubiculum; he called his name aloud, and from Nydia's chamber, close at hand, he heard the voice of Sosia reply, —

“Oh, Callias, is it you that I hear? The gods be praised! Open the door, I pray you!”

Callias withdrew the bolt, and the rueful face of Sosia hastily obtruded itself.

“What! in the chamber with that young girl, Sosia! *Proh pudor!* Are there not fruits ripe enough on the wall, but that thou must tamper with such green —”

“Name not the little witch!” interrupted Sosia, impatiently; “she will be my ruin!” And he forthwith imparted to Callias the history of the Air Demon, and the escape of the Thessalian.

“Hang thyself, then, unhappy Sosia! I am just charged from Arbaces with a message to thee; on no account art thou to suffer her, even for a moment, from that chamber!”

“*Me miserum!*” exclaimed the slave. “What can I do? By this time she may have visited half Pompeii. But tomorrow I will undertake to catch her in her old haunts. Keep but my counsel, my dear Callias.”

“I will do all that friendship can, consistent with my own safety. But are you sure she has left the house? She may be hiding here yet.”

“How is that possible? She could easily have gained the garden; and the door, as I told thee, was open.”

“Nay, not so! for at that very hour thou specifiest, Arbaces was in the garden with the priest Calenus. I went there in search of some herbs for my master’s bath to-morrow. I saw the table set out; but the gate I am sure was shut: depend upon it, that Calenus entered by the garden, and naturally closed the door after him.”

“But it was not locked.”

“Yes; for I myself, angry at a negligence which might expose the bronzes in the peristyle to the mercy of any robber, turned the key, took it away, and, as I did not see the proper slave to whom to give it, or I should have rated him finely, here it actually is, still in my girdle.”

“O merciful Bacchus! I did not pray to thee in vain, after all. Let us not lose a moment! Let us to the garden instantly; she may yet be there!”

The good-natured Callias consented to assist the slave; and after vainly searching the chambers at hand, and the recesses of the peristyle, they entered the garden.

It was about this time that Nydia had resolved to quit her hiding-place, and venture forth on her way. Lightly, tremulously holding her breath, which ever and anon broke forth in quick convulsive gasps, now gliding by the flower-wreathed columns that bordered the peristyle, now darkening the still moonshine that fell over its tessellated centre, now ascending the terrace of the garden, now gliding amidst the gloomy and breathless trees, she gained the fatal door, to find it locked! We have all seen that expression of pain, of uncertainty, of fear, which a sudden disappointment of touch, if I may use the expression, casts over the face of the blind. But what words can paint the intolerable woe, the sinking of the whole heart, which was now visible on the features of the Thessalian? Again and again her small, quivering hands wandered to and fro the inexorable door. Poor thing that

thou wert! in vain had been all thy noble courage, thy innocent craft, thy doublings to escape the hound and huntsmen! Within but a few yards from thee, laughing at thy endeavors, thy despair, knowing thou wert now their own, and watching with cruel patience their own moment to seize their prey, — thou art saved from seeing thy pursuers!

“Hush, Callias! let her go on. Let us see what she will do when she has convinced herself that the door is honest.”

“Look! she raises her face to the heavens, she mutters, she sinks down despondent! No! by Pollux, she has some new scheme! She will not resign herself! By Jupiter, a tough spirit! See, she springs up, she retraces her steps, she thinks of some other chance! I advise thee, Sosia, to delay no longer: seize her ere she quit the garden; now!”

“Ah! runaway! I have thee, eh?” said Sosia, seizing upon the unhappy Nydia.

As a hare's last *human* cry in the faugs of the dogs, as the sharp voice of terror uttered by a sleep-walker suddenly awakened, broke the shriek of the blind girl when she felt the abrupt gripe of her jailer. It was a shriek of such utter agony, such entire despair, that it might have rung hauntingly in your ears forever. She felt as if the last plank of the sinking Glaucus were torn from his clasp! It had been a suspense of life and death; and death had now won the game.

“Gods! that cry will alarm the house! Arbaces sleeps full lightly. Gag her!” cried Callias.

“Ah! here is the very napkin with which the young witch conjured away my reason! Come, that's right; now thou art dumb as well as blind.”

And, catching the light weight in his arms, Sosia soon gained the house, and reached the chamber from which Nydia had escaped. There, removing the gag, he left her to a solitude so racked and terrible, that out of Hades its anguish could scarcely be exceeded.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SORROW OF BOON COMPANIONS FOR OUR AFFLICTIONS. —
THE DUNGEON AND ITS VICTIMS.

It was now late on the third and last day of the trial of Glaucus and Olinthus. A few hours after the court had broken up and judgment been given, a small party of the fashionable youth at Pompeii were assembled round the fastidious board of Lepidus.

“So Glaucus denies his crime to the last?” said Clodius.

“Yes; but the testimony of Arbaces was convincing: he saw the blow given,” answered Lepidus.

“What could have been the cause?”

“Why, the priest was a gloomy and sullen fellow. He probably rated Glaucus soundly about his gay life and gaming habits, and ultimately swore he would not consent to his marriage with Ione. High words arose; Glaucus seems to have been full of the passionate god, and struck in sudden exasperation. The excitement of wine, the desperation of abrupt remorse, brought on the delirium under which he suffered for some days; and I can readily imagine, poor fellow! that, yet confused by that delirium, he is even now unconscious of the crime he committed! Such, at least, is the shrewd conjecture of Arbaces, who seems to have been most kind and forbearing in his testimony.”

“Yes; he has made himself generally popular by it. But, in consideration of these extenuating circumstances, the senate should have relaxed the sentence.”

“And they *would* have done so but for the people; but *they* were outrageous. The priest had spared no pains to excite them; and they imagined—the ferocious brutes!—because Glaucus was a rich man and a gentleman, that he was likely to escape; and therefore they were inveterate against him, and doubly resolved upon his sentence. It seems, by some accident or other, that he was never formerly enrolled as a

Roman citizen; and thus the senate is deprived of the power to resist the people, though, after all, there was but a majority of three against him. Ho! the Chian!"

"He looks sadly altered; but how composed and fearless!"

"Ay, we shall see if his firmness will last over to-morrow. But what merit in courage, when that atheistical hound, Olinthus, manifested the same?"

"The blasphemer! Yes," said Lepidus, with pious wrath, "no wonder that one of the decurions was, but two days ago, struck dead by lightning in a serene sky.¹ The gods feel vengeance against Pompeii while the vile desecrator is alive within its walls."

"Yet so lenient was the senate, that had he but expressed his penitence, and scattered a few grains of incense on the altar of Cybele, he would have been let off. I doubt whether these Nazarenes, had they the state religion, would be as tolerant to us, supposing we had kicked down the image of their Deity, blasphemed their rites, and denied their faith."

"They give Glaucus one chance, in consideration of the circumstances; they allow him, against the lion, the use of the same stilus wherewith he smote the priest."

"Hast thou seen the lion? Hast thou looked at his teeth and fangs, and wilt thou call *that* a chance? Why, sword and buckler would be mere reed and papyrus against the rush of the mighty beast! No, I think the true mercy has been, not to leave him long in suspense; and it was therefore fortunate for him that our benign laws are slow to pronounce, but swift to execute; and that the games of the amphitheatre had been, by a sort of providence, so long since fixed for to-morrow. He who awaits death, dies twice."

"As for the Atheist," said Clodius, "he is to cope the grim tiger naked-handed. Well, these combats are past betting on. Who will take the odds?"

A peal of laughter announced the ridicule of the question.

"Poor Clodius!" said the host, "to lose a friend is some-

¹ Pliny says that, immediately before the eruption of Vesuvius, one of the *decuriones municipales* was — though the heaven was unclouded — struck dead by lightning.

thing; but to find no one to bet on the chance of his escape is a worse misfortune to thee."

"Why, it is provoking; it would have been some consolation to him and to me to think he was useful to the last."

"The people," said the grave Pansa, "are all delighted with the result. They were so much afraid the sports at the amphitheatre would go off without a criminal for the beasts: and now, to get two *such* criminals is indeed a joy for the poor fellows! They work hard; they ought to have some amusement."

"There speaks the popular Pansa, who never moves without a string of clients as long as an Indian triumph. He is always prating about the people. Gods! he will end by being a Gracchus!"

"Certainly I am no insolent patrician," said Pansa, with a generous air.

"Well," observed Lepidus, "it would have been assuredly dangerous to have been merciful at the eve of a beast-fight. If ever *I*, though a Roman bred and born, come to be tried, pray Jupiter there may be either no beasts in the *vivaria*, or plenty of criminals in the jail."

"And pray," said one of the party, "what has become of the poor girl whom Glaucus was to have married? A widow without being a bride,—that is hard!"

"Oh," returned Clodius, "she is safe under the protection of her guardian, Arbaces. It was natural she should go to him when she had lost both lover and brother."

"By sweet Venus, Glaucus was fortunate among the women! They say the rich Julia was in love with him."

"A mere fable, my friend," said Clodius, coxcombically; "I was with her to-day. If any feeling of the sort she ever conceived, I flatter myself that *I* have consoled her."

"Hush, gentlemen!" said Pansa; "do you not know that Clodius is employed at the house of Diomed in blowing hard at the torch? It begins to burn, and will soon shine bright on the shrine of Hymen."

"Is it so?" said Lepidus. "What! Clodius become a married man? Fie!"

“Never fear,” answered Clodius; “old Diomed is delighted at the notion of marrying his daughter to a nobleman, and will come down largely with the sesterces. You will see that I shall not lock them up in the atrium. It will be a white day for his jolly friends, when Clodius marries an heiress.”

“Say you so?” cried Lepidus; “come, then, a full cup to the health of the fair Julia!”

While such was the conversation, — one not discordant to the tone of mind common among the dissipated of that day, and which might perhaps, a century ago, have found an echo in the looser circles of Paris, — while such, I say, was the conversation in the gaudy triclinium of Lepidus, far different the scene which scowled before the young Athenian.

After his condemnation, Glaucus was admitted no more to the gentle guardianship of Sallust, the only friend of his distress. He was led along the forum till the guards stopped at a small door by the side of the temple of Jupiter. You may see the place still. The door opened in the centre in a somewhat singular fashion, revolving round on its hinges, as it were, like a modern turnstile, so as only to leave half the threshold open at the same time. Through this narrow aperture they thrust the prisoner, placed before him a loaf and a pitcher of water, and left him to darkness, and, as he thought, to solitude. So sudden had been that revolution of fortune which had prostrated him from the palmy height of youthful pleasure and successful love to the lowest abyss of ignominy and the horror of a most bloody death, that he could scarcely convince himself that he was not held in the meshes of some fearful dream. His elastic and glorious frame had triumphed over a potion, the greater part of which he had fortunately not drained. He had recovered sense and consciousness, but still a dim and misty depression clung to his nerves and darkened his mind. His natural courage, and the Greek nobility of pride, enabled him to vanquish all unbecoming apprehension, and, in the judgment-court, to face his awful lot with a steady mien and unquailing eye. But the consciousness of innocence scarcely sufficed to support him when the gaze of men no longer excited his haughty valor, and he was left to

loneliness and silence. He felt the damps of the dungeon sink chillingly into his enfeebled frame, — *he*, the fastidious, the luxurious, the refined; he who had hitherto braved no hardship and known no sorrow. Beautiful bird that he was! why had he left his far and sunny clime, the olive-groves of his native hill, the music of immemorial streams? Why had he wantoned on his glittering plumage amidst these harsh and ungenial strangers, dazzling the eye with his gorgeous hues, charming the ear with his blithesome song, thus suddenly to be arrested, caged in darkness, a victim and a prey, his gay flights forever over, his hymns of gladness forever stilled! The poor Athenian! his very faults the exuberance of a gentle and joyous nature, how little had his past career fitted him for the trials he was destined to undergo! The hoots of the mob, amidst whose plaudits he had so often guided his graceful car and bounding steeds, still rang gratingly in his ear. The cold and stony faces of his former friends (the co-mates of his merry revels) still rose before his eye. None now were by to soothe, to sustain, the admired, the adulated stranger. These walls opened but on the dread arena of a violent and shameful death. And Ione! of her, too, he had heard naught; no encouraging word, no pitying message: she, too, had forsaken him; she believed him guilty — and of what crime? The murder of a brother! He ground his teeth, he groaned aloud, and ever and anon a sharp fear shot across him. In that fell and fierce delirium which had so unaccountably seized his soul, which had so ravaged the disordered brain, *might he not*, indeed, unknowing to himself, have committed the crime of which he was accused? Yet, as the thought flashed upon him, it was as suddenly checked; for, amidst all the darkness of the past, he thought distinctly to recall the dim grove of Cybele, the upward face of the pale dead, the pause that he had made beside the corpse, and the sudden shock that felled him to the earth. He felt convinced of his innocence; and yet who, to the latest time, long after his mangled remains were mingled with the elements, would believe him guiltless, or uphold his fame? As he recalled his interview with Araces, and the causes of revenge which had been excited in

the heart of that dark and fearful man, he could not but believe that he was the victim of some deep-laid and mysterious snare, the clew and train of which he was lost in attempting to discover; and Ione — Arbaces loved her! Might his rival's success be founded upon his ruin? That thought cut him more deeply than all; and his noble heart was more stung by jealousy than appalled by fear. Again he groaned aloud.

A voice from the recess of the darkness answered that burst of anguish. "Who," it said, "is my companion in this awful hour? Athenian Glaucus, is it thou?"

"So, indeed, they called me in mine hour of fortune: they may have other names for me now. And *thy* name, stranger?"

"Is Olinthus, thy co-mate in the prison as the trial?"

"What! he whom they call the Atheist? Is it the injustice of men that hath taught thee to deny the providence of the gods?"

"Alas!" answered Olinthus, "thou, not I; art the true Atheist, for thou deniest the sole true God — the unknown One — to whom thy Athenian fathers erected an altar. It is in this hour that I know my God. He is with me in the dungeon; His smile penetrates the darkness; on the eve of death my heart whispers immortality, and earth recedes from me but to bring the weary soul nearer unto heaven."

"Tell me," said Glaucus, abruptly, "did I not hear thy name coupled with that of Apæcides in my trial? Dost thou believe me guilty?"

"God alone reads the heart! but my suspicion rested not upon thee."

"On whom, then?"

"Thy accuser, Arbaces."

"Ha! thou cheerest me: and wherefore?"

"Because I know the man's evil breast, and he had cause to fear him who is now dead."

With that, Olinthus proceeded to inform Glaucus of those details which the reader already knows, — the conversion of Apæcides, the plan they had proposed for the detection of the impostures of the Egyptian priestcraft, and of the seductions

practised by Arbaces upon the youthful weakness of the proselyte. "Therefore," concluded Olinthus, "had the deceased encountered Arbaces, reviled his treasons, and threatened detection, the place, the hour, might have favored the wrath of the Egyptian, and passion and craft alike dictated the fatal blow."

"It must have been so!" cried Glaucus, joyfully. "I am happy."

"Yet what, O unfortunate! avails to thee now the discovery? Thou art condemned and fated; and in thine innocence thou wilt perish."

"But I shall *know myself* guiltless; and in my mysterious madness I had fearful, though momentary, doubts. Yet tell me, man of a strange creed, thinkest thou that for small errors, or for ancestral faults, we are forever abandoned and accursed by the powers above, whatever name thou allottest to them?"

"God is just, and abandons not His creatures for their mere human frailty. God is merciful, and curses none but the wicked who repent not."

"Yet it seemeth to me as if, in the divine anger, I had been smitten by a sudden madness, a supernatural and solemn frenzy, wrought not by human means."

"There are demons on earth," answered the Nazarene, fearfully, "as well as there are God and His Son in heaven; and since thou acknowledgest not the last, the first may have had power over thee."

Glaucus did not reply, and there was a silence for some minutes. At length the Athenian said, in a changed and soft and half-hesitating voice, "Christian, believest thou, among the doctrines of thy creed, that the dead live again; that they who have loved here are united hereafter; that beyond the grave our good name shines pure from the mortal mists that unjustly dim it in the gross-eyed world; and that the streams which are divided by the desert and the rock meet in the solemn Hades, and flow once more into one?"

"Believe I that, O Athenian? No, I do not believe — I *know!* and it is that beautiful and blessed assurance which supports me now. O Cyllene!" continued Olinthus, passion-

ately. "bride of my heart! torn from me in the first month of our nuptials, shall I not see thee yet, and ere many days be past? Welcome, welcome death, that will bring me to heaven and thee!"

There was something in this sudden burst of human affection which struck a kindred chord in the soul of the Greek. He felt, for the first time, a sympathy greater than mere affliction between him and his companion. He crept nearer towards Olinthus; for the Italians, fierce in some points, were not unnecessarily cruel in others; they spared the separate cell and the superfluous chain, and allowed the victims of the arena the sad comfort of such freedom and such companionship as the prison would afford.

"Yes," continued the Christian with holy fervor, "the immortality of the soul, the resurrection, the reunion of the dead, is the great principle of our creed; the great truth a God suffered death itself to attest and proclaim. No fabled Elysium, no poetic Orcus, but a pure and radiant heritage of heaven itself, is the portion of the good."

"Tell me, then, thy doctrines, and expound to me thy hopes," said Glaucus, earnestly.

Olinthus was not slow to obey that prayer; and there — as oftentimes in the early ages of the Christian creed — it was in the darkness of the dungeon, and over the approach of death, that the dawning Gospel shed its soft and consecrating rays.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHANGE FOR GLAUCUS.

THE hours passed in lingering torture over the head of Nydia from the time in which she had been replaced in her cell.

Sosia, as if afraid he should be again outwitted, had refrained from visiting her until late in the morning of the following day, and then he but thrust in the periodical basket of food and wine, and hastily reclosed the door. That day rolled on, and

Nydia felt herself pent, barred, inexorably confined, when that day was the judgment-day of Glaucus, and when her release would have saved him! Yet knowing, almost impossible as seemed her escape, that the sole chance for the life of Glaucus rested on her, this young girl, frail, passionate, and acutely susceptible as she was, resolved not to give way to a despair that would disable her from seizing whatever opportunity *might* occur. She kept her senses whenever, beneath the whirl of intolerable thought, they reeled and tottered; nay, she took food and wine that she might sustain her strength — that she might be prepared!

She revolved scheme after scheme of escape, and was forced to dismiss all. Yet Sosia was her only hope, the only instrument with which she could tamper. He had been superstitious in the desire of ascertaining whether he could eventually purchase his freedom. Blessed gods! might he not be won by the bribe of freedom itself? Was she not nearly rich enough to purchase it? Her slender arms were covered with bracelets, the presents of Ione; and on her neck she yet wore that very chain which, it may be remembered, had occasioned her jealous quarrel with Glaucus, and which she had afterwards promised vainly to wear forever. She waited burningly till Sosia should again appear; but as hour after hour passed, and he came not, she grew impatient. Every nerve beat with fever; she could endure the solitude no longer; she groaned, she shrieked aloud, she beat herself against the door. Her cries echoed along the hall, and Sosia, in peevish anger, hastened to see what was the matter, and silence his prisoner if possible.

“Ho! ho! what is this?” said he, surlily. “Young slave, if thou screamest out thus, we must gag thee again. My shoulders will smart for it, if thou art heard by my master.”

“Kind Sosia, chide me not; I cannot endure to be so long alone,” answered Nydia; “the solitude appalls me. Sit with me, I pray, a little while. Nay, fear not that I should attempt to escape; place thy seat before the door. Keep thine eye on me; I will not stir from this spot.”

Sosia, who was a considerable gossip himself, was moved by this address. He pitied one who had nobody to talk with; it

was his case, too; he pitied, and resolved to relieve *himself*. He took the hint of Nydia, placed a stool before the door, leaned his back against it, and replied, —

“I am sure I do not wish to be churlish; and so far as a little innocent chat goes, I have no objection to indulge you. But mind, no tricks: no more conjuring!”

“No, no; tell me, dear Sosia, what is the hour?”

“It is already evening; the goats are going home.”

“O gods! how went the trial?”

“Both condemned!”

Nydia repressed the shriek. “Well, well, I thought it would be so. When do they suffer?”

“To-morrow, in the amphitheatre. If it were not for thee, little wretch, I should be allowed to go with the rest and see it.”

Nydia leaned back for some moments. Nature could endure no more; she had fainted away. But Sosia did not perceive it, for it was the dusk of eve, and he was full of his own privations. He went on lamenting the loss of so delightful a show, and accusing the injustice of Arbaces for singling him out from all his fellows to be converted into a jailer; and ere he had half finished, Nydia, with a deep sigh, recovered the sense of life.

“Thou sighest, blind one, at my loss! Well, that is some comfort. So long as you acknowledge how much you cost me, I will endeavor not to grumble. It is hard to be ill-treated, and yet not pitied.”

“Sosia, how much dost thou require to make up the purchase of thy freedom?”

“How much? Why, about two thousand sesterces.”

“The gods be praised! not more? Seest thou these bracelets and this chain? They are well worth double that sum. I will give them thee if —”

“Tempt me not: I cannot release thee. Arbaces is a severe and awful master. Who knows but I might feed the fishes of the Sarnus? Alas! all the sesterces in the world would not buy me back into life. Better a live dog than a dead lion.”

“Sosia, thy freedom! Think well! If thou wilt let me out

only for one little hour—let me out at midnight—I will return ere to-morrow's dawn; nay, thou canst go with me."

"No," said Sosia, sturdily; "a slave once disobeyed Arbaces, and he was never more heard of."

"But the law gives a master no power over the life of a slave."

"The law is very obliging, but more polite than efficient. I know that Arbaces always gets the law on his side. Besides, if I am once dead, what law can bring me to life again?"

Nydia wrung her hands. "Is there no hope, then?" said she, convulsively.

"None of escape till Arbaces gives the word."

"Well, then," said Nydia, quickly, "thou wilt not, at least, refuse to take a letter for me: thy master cannot kill thee for that."

"To whom?"

"The prætor."

"To a magistrate? No,—not I. I should be made a witness in court, for what I know; and the way they cross-examine the slaves is by the torture."

"Pardon: I meant not the prætor,—it was a word that escaped me unawares: I meant quite another person,—the gay Sallust."

"Oh! and what want you with him?"

"Glaucus was my master; he purchased me from a cruel lord. He alone has been kind to me. He is to die. I shall never live happily if I cannot, in this hour of trial and doom, let him know that one heart is grateful to him. Sallust is his friend; he will convey my message."

"I am sure he will do no such thing. Glaucus will have enough to think of between this and to-morrow without troubling his head about a blind girl."

"Man," said Nydia, rising, "wilt thou become free? Thou hast the offer in thy power; to-morrow it will be too late. Never was freedom more cheaply purchased. Thou canst easily and unmissed leave home: less than half an hour will suffice for thine absence. And for such a trifle wilt thou refuse liberty?"

Sosia was greatly moved. It was true that the request was remarkably silly, but what was that to him? So much the better. He could lock the door on Nydia, and if Arbaces should learn his absence, the offence was venial, and would merit but a reprimand. Yet, should Nydia's letter contain something more than what she had said, — should it speak of her imprisonment, as he shrewdly conjectured it would do, — what then! It need never be known to Arbaces that *he* had carried the letter. At the worst the bribe was enormous, the risk light, the temptation irresistible. He hesitated no longer; he assented to the proposal.

“Give me the trinkets, and I will take the letter. Yet stay: thou art a slave, thou hast no right to these ornaments, they are thy master's.”

“They were the gifts of Glaucus; he is my master. What chance hath he to claim them? Who else will know they are in my possession?”

“Enough: I will bring thee the papyrus.”

“No, not papyrus, — a tablet of wax and a stilus.”

Nydia, as the reader will have seen, was born of gentle parents. They had done all to lighten her calamity, and her quick intellect seconded their exertions. Despite her blindness, she had therefore acquired in childhood, though imperfectly, the art to write with a sharp stilus upon waxen tablets, in which her exquisite sense of touch came to her aid. When the tablets were brought to her, she thus painfully traced some words in Greek, the language of her childhood, and which almost every Italian of the higher ranks was then supposed to know. She carefully wound round the epistle the protecting thread, and covered its knot with wax; and ere she placed it in the hands of Sosia, she thus addressed him: —

“Sosia, I am blind and in prison. Thou mayst think to deceive me, thou mayst pretend only to take this letter to Sallust, thou mayst not fulfil thy charge: but here I solemnly dedicate thy head to vengeance, thy soul to the infernal powers, if thou wrongest thy trust; and I call upon thee to place thy right hand of faith in mine, and repeat after me

these words: 'By the ground on which we stand, by the elements which contain life and can curse life, by Orcus the all-avenging, by the Olympian Jupiter the all-seeing, I swear that I will honestly discharge my trust, and faithfully deliver into the hands of Sallust this letter! And if I perjure myself in this oath, may the full curses of heaven and hell be wreaked upon me!' Enough! I trust thee: take thy reward. It is already dark: depart at once."

"Thou art a strange girl, and thou hast frightened me terribly; but it is all very natural: and if Sallust is to be found, I give him this letter as I have sworn. By my faith, I may have my little peccadilloes! but perjury, — no! I leave *that* to my betters."

With this Sosia withdrew, carefully passing the heavy bolt athwart Nydia's door, carefully locking its wards; and, hanging the key to his girdle, he retired to his own den, enveloped himself from head to foot in a huge disguising cloak, and slipped out by the back way undisturbed and unseen.

The streets were thin and empty. He soon gained the house of Sallust. The porter bade him leave his letter and be gone; for Sallust was so grieved at the condemnation of Glaucus, that he could not on any account be disturbed.

"Nevertheless, I have sworn to give this letter into his own hands; do so I must." And Sosia, well knowing by experience that Cerberus loves a sop, thrust some half a dozen sesterces into the hand of the porter.

"Well, well," said the latter, relenting, "you may enter if you will; but, to tell you the truth, Sallust is drinking himself out of his grief. It is his way when anything disturbs him. He orders a capital supper, the best wine, and does not give over till everything is out of his head — but the liquor."

"An excellent plan, — excellent! Ah, what it is to be rich! If I were Sallust, I would have some grief or another every day. But just say a kind word for me with the atriensis; I see him coming."

Sallust was too sad to receive company; he was too sad, also, to drink alone; so, as was his wont, he admitted his favorite freedman to his entertainment, and a stranger ban-

quet never was held; for ever and anon the kind-hearted epicure sighed, whimpered, wept outright, and then turned with double zest to some new dish or his refilled goblet.

"My good fellow," said he to his companion, "it was a most awful judgment — heigho! — it is not bad that kid, eh? Poor, dear Glaucus! what a jaw the lion has too! Ah, ah, ah!"

And Sallust sobbed loudly; the fit was stopped by a counteraction of hiccups.

"Take a cup of wine," said the freedman.

"A thought too cold; but then how cold Glaucus must be! Shut up the house to-morrow; not a slave shall stir forth; none of my people shall honor that cursed arena! No, no!"

"Taste the Falernian; your grief distracts you. By the gods it does — a piece of that cheese-cake."

It was at this auspicious moment that Sosia was admitted to the presence of the disconsolate carouser.

"Ho! what art thou?"

"Merely a messenger to Sallust. I give him this billet from a young female. There is no answer that I know of. May I withdraw?"

Thus said the discreet Sosia, keeping his face muffled in his cloak, and speaking with a feigned voice, so that he might not hereafter be recognized.

"By the gods, a pimp! Unfeeling wretch! do you not see my sorrows? Go! and the curses of Pandarus with you!"

Sosia lost not a moment in retiring.

"Will you read the letter, Sallust?" said the freedman.

"Letter! *which* letter?" said the epicure, reeling, for he began to see double. "A curse on these wenches, say I! Am I a man to think of [*hiccup*] pleasure, when — when — my friend is going to be eat up?"

"Eat another tartlet."

"No, no! My grief chokes me!"

"Take him to bed," said the freedman; and, Sallust's head now declining fairly on his breast, they bore him off to his cubiculum, still muttering lamentations for Glaucus, and imprecations on the unfeeling overtures of ladies of pleasure.

Meanwhile Sosia strode indignantly homeward. "Pimp,

indeed!" quoth he to himself. "Pimp! a scurvy-tongued fellow that Sallust! Had I been called knave or thief, I could have forgiven it; but pimp! Faugh! there is something in the word which the toughest stomach in the world would rise against. A knave is a knave for his own pleasure, and a thief a thief for his own profit; and there is something honorable and philosophical in being a rascal for one's own sake; that is, doing things upon principle, — upon a grand scale. But a pimp is a thing that defiles itself for another; a pipkin that is put on the fire for another man's pottage; a napkin that every guest wipes his hands upon, and the scullion says, 'By your leave,' too. A pimp! I would rather he had called me paricide! But the man was drunk, and did not know what he said; and besides, I disguised myself. Had he seen it had been Sosia who addressed him, it would have been 'honest Sosia!' and 'worthy man!' I warrant. Nevertheless, the trinkets have been won easily; that's some comfort. And, O goddess Feronia! I shall be a freedman soon! and then I should like to see who'll call me pimp! unless, indeed, he pay me pretty handsomely for it!"

While Sosia was soliloquizing in this high-minded and generous vein, his path lay along a narrow lane that led toward the amphitheatre and its adjacent palaces. Suddenly, as he turned a sharp corner he found himself in the midst of a considerable crowd. Men, women, and children, all were hurrying or laughing, talking, gesticulating; and ere he was aware of it, the worthy Sosia was borne away with the noisy stream.

"What now?" he asked of his nearest neighbor, a young artificer, — "what now? Where are all these good folks thronging? Does any rich patron give away alms or viands to-night?"

"Not so, man; better still," replied the artificer: "the noble Pansa, the people's friend, has granted the public leave to see the beasts in their *vivaria*. By Hercules! they will not be seen so safely by some persons to-morrow."

"'Tis a pretty sight," said the slave, yielding to the throng that impelled him onward; "and since I may not go to the

sports to-morrow, I may as well take a peep at the beasts to-night."

"You will do well," returned his new acquaintance; "a lion and a tiger are not to be seen at Pompeii every day."

The crowd had now entered a broken and wide space of ground, on which, as it was only lighted scantily and from a distance, the press became dangerous to those whose limbs and shoulders were not fitted for a mob. Nevertheless, the women especially — many of them with children in their arms, or even at the breast — were the most resolute in forcing their way; and their shrill exclamations of complaint or objurgation were heard loud above the more jovial and masculine voices. Yet amidst them was a young and girlish voice, that appeared to come from one too happy in her excitement to be alive to the inconvenience of the crowd.

"Aha!" cried the young woman to some of her companions, "I always told you so; I always said we should have a man for the lion; and now we have one for the tiger too! I wish to-morrow were come!

'Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row!
Lo, the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmena,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hush'd arena;
Talk while you may — you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death.
Tramp, tramp, how gayly they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!'"

"A jolly girl!" said Sosia.

"Yes," replied the young artificer, a curly-headed, handsome youth. "Yes," replied he, enviously; "the women love a gladiator. If I had been a slave, I would have soon found my schoolmaster in the lanista!"

"Would you indeed?" said Sosia, with a sneer. "People's notions differ."

The crowd had now arrived at the place of destination; but as the cell in which the wild beasts were confined was extremely small and narrow, tenfold more vehement than it hitherto had been, was the rush of the aspirants to obtain

admittance. Two of the officers of the amphitheatre, placed at the entrance, very wisely mitigated the evil by dispensing to the foremost only a limited number of tickets at a time, and admitting no new visitors till their predecessors had sated their curiosity. Sosia, who was a tolerably stout fellow, and not troubled with any remarkable scruples of diffidence or good-breeding, contrived to be among the first of the initiated.

Separated from his companion the artificer, Sosia found himself in a narrow cell of oppressive heat and atmosphere, and lighted by several rank and flaring torches.

The animals, usually kept in different *vivaria*, or dens, were now, for the greater entertainment of the visitors, placed in one, but equally indeed divided from each other by strong cages protected by iron bars.

There they were, the fell and grim wanderers of the desert, who have now become almost the principal agents of this story. The lion, who, as being the more gentle by nature than his fellow-beast, had been more incited to ferocity by hunger, stalked restlessly and fiercely to and fro his narrow confines; his eyes were lurid with rage and famine; and as, every now and then, he paused and glared around, the spectators fearfully pressed backward, and drew their breath more quickly. But the tiger lay quiet and extended at full length in his cage, and only by an occasional play of his tail, or a long impatient yawn, testified any emotion at his confinement, or at the crowd which honored him with their presence.

"I have seen no fiercer beast than yon lion even in the amphitheatre of Rome," said a gigantic and sinewy fellow who stood at the right hand of Sosia.

"I feel humbled when I look at his limbs," replied, at the left of Sosia, a slighter and younger figure, with his arms folded on his breast.

The slave looked first at one, and then at the other. "*Virtus in medio!* [Virtue is ever in the middle!]" muttered he to himself; "a goodly neighborhood for thee, Sosia, — a gladiator on each side!"

"That is well said, Lydon," returned the huger gladiator; "I feel the same."

“And to think,” observed Lydon, in a tone of deep feeling, “to think that the noble Greek, he whom we saw but a day or two since before us, so full of youth and health and joyousness, is to feast yon monster!”

“Why not?” growled Niger, savagely; “many an honest gladiator has been compelled to a like combat by the emperor: why not a wealthy murderer by the law?”

Lydon sighed, shrugged his shoulders, and remained silent. Meanwhile the common gazers listened with staring eyes and lips apart: the gladiators were objects of interest as well as the beasts; they were animals of the same species; so the crowd glanced from one to the other, — the men and the brutes, — whispering their comments and anticipating the morrow.

“Well,” said Lydon, turning away, “I thank the gods that it is not the lion or the tiger *I* am to contend with; even you, Niger, are a gentler combatant than they.”

“But equally dangerous,” said the gladiator, with a fierce laugh; and the bystanders, admiring his vast limbs and ferocious countenance, laughed too.

“That as it may be,” answered Lydon, carelessly, as he pressed through the throng and quitted the den.

“I may as well take advantage of his shoulders,” thought the prudent Sosia, hastening to follow him; “the crowd always give way to a gladiator, so I will keep close behind, and come in for a share of his consequence.”

The son of Medon strode quickly through the mob, many of whom recognized his features and profession.

“That is young Lydon, a brave fellow; he fights to-morrow,” said one.

“Ah! I have a bet on him,” said another; “see how firmly he walks!”

“Good luck to thee, Lydon!” said a third.

“Lydon, you have my wishes,” half whispered a fourth, smiling (a comely woman of the middle class), “and if you win, why, you may hear more of me.”

“A handsome man, by Venus!” cried a fifth, who was a girl scarce in her teens.

"Thank you," returned Sosia, gravely taking the compliment to himself.

However strong the purer motives of Lydon, and certain though it be that he would never have entered so bloody a calling but from the hope of obtaining his father's freedom, he was not altogether unmoved by the notice he excited. He forgot that the voices now raised in commendation might, on the morrow, shout over his death-pangs. By nature fierce and reckless, as well as generous and warm-hearted, he was already imbued with the pride of a profession that he fancied he disdained, and affected by the influence of a companionship that in reality he loathed. He saw himself now a man of importance; his step grew yet lighter, and his mien more elate.

"Niger," said he, turning suddenly, as he had now threaded the crowd, "we have often quarrelled; we are not matched against each other, but one of us, at least, may reasonably expect to fall; give us thy hand."

"Most readily," said Sosia, extending his palm.

"Ha! what fool is this? Why, I thought Niger was at my heels!"

"I forgive the mistake," replied Sosia, condescendingly; "don't mention it; the error was easy; I and Niger are somewhat of the same build."

"Ha! ha! that is excellent! Niger would have slit thy throat had he heard thee!"

"You gentlemen of the arena have a most disagreeable mode of talking," said Sosia: "let us change the conversation."

"*Vah! vah!*" said Lydon, impatiently; "I am in no humor to converse with thee!"

"Why, truly," returned the slave, "you must have serious thoughts enough to occupy your mind: to-morrow is, I think, your first essay in the arena. Well, I am sure you will die bravely."

"May thy words fall on thine own head!" said Lydon, superstitiously, for he by no means liked the blessing of Sosia. "*Die!* No — I trust *my* hour is not yet come."

"He who plays at dice with death must expect the dog's

throw," replied Sosia, maliciously. "But you are a strong fellow, and I wish you all imaginable luck; and so, *vale!*"

With that the slave turned on his heel, and took his way homeward.

"I trust the rogue's words are not ominous," said Lydon, musingly. "In my zeal for my father's liberty, and my confidence in my own thews and sinews, I have not contemplated the possibility of death. My poor father! I am thy only son! if I were to fall —"

As the thought crossed him, the gladiator strode on with a more rapid and restless pace, when suddenly, in an opposite street, he beheld the very object of his thoughts. Leaning on his stick, his form bent by care and age, his eyes down-cast and his steps trembling, the gray-haired Medon slowly approached towards the gladiator. Lydon paused a moment: he divined at once the cause that brought forth the old man at that late hour.

"Be sure it is I whom he seeks," thought he; "he is horror-struck at the condemnation of Olinthus; he more than ever esteems the arena criminal and hateful; he comes again to dissuade me from the contest. I must shun him; I cannot brook his prayers, his tears."

These thoughts, so long to recite, flashed across the young man like lightning. He turned abruptly and fled swiftly in an opposite direction. He paused not till, almost spent and breathless, he found himself on the summit of a small acclivity which overlooked the most gay and splendid part of that miniature city; and as he there paused, and gazed along the tranquil streets glittering in the rays of the moon (which had just arisen, and brought partially and picturesquely into light the crowd around the amphitheatre at a distance, murmuring, and swaying to and fro), the influence of the scene affected him, rude and unimaginative though his nature. He sat himself down to rest upon the steps of a deserted portico, and felt the calm of the hour quiet and restore him. Opposite, and near at hand, the lights gleamed from a palace in which the master now held his revels. The doors were open for coolness, and the gladiator beheld the numerous and festive

group gathered round the tables in the atrium ;¹ while behind them, closing the long vista of the illumined rooms beyond, the spray of the distant fountain sparkled in the moonbeams. There, the garlands wreathed around the columns of the hall ; there, gleamed still and frequent the marble statue ; there, amidst peals of jocund laughter, rose the music and the lay.

EPICUREAN SONG.

Away with your stories of Hades,
Which the Flamen has forged to affright us, —
We laugh at your three Maiden Ladies,
Your fates, and your sullen Cocytus.

Poor Jove has a troublesome life, sir,
Could we credit your tales of his portals :
In shutting his ears on his wife, sir,
And opening his eyes upon mortals.

Oh, blest be the bright Epicurus !
Who taught us to laugh at such fables ;
On Hades they wanted to moor us,
And his hand cut the terrible cables.

If, then, there 's a Jove or a Juno,
They vex not their heads about us, man ;
Besides, if they did, I and you know
'T is the life of a god to live *thus*, man !

What ! think you the gods place their bliss, eh ? —
In playing the spy on a sinner ?
In counting the girls that we kiss, eh,
Or the cups that we empty at dinner ?

Content with the soft lips that love us,
This music, this wine, and this mirth, boys,
We care not for gods up above us, —
We know there 's no god for this earth, boys !

While Lydon's piety (which, accommodating as it might be, was in no slight degree disturbed by these verses, which embodied the fashionable philosophy of the day) slowly recov-

¹ In the atrium, as I have elsewhere observed, a larger party of guests than ordinary was frequently entertained.

ered itself from the shock it had received, a small party of men, in plain garments and of the middle class, passed by his resting-place. They were in earnest conversation, and did not seem to notice or heed the gladiator as they moved on.

“Oh, horror on horrors!” said one, “Olinthus is snatched from us! our right arm is lopped away! When will Christ descend to protect His own?”

“Can human atrocity go farther,” said another, “to sentence an innocent man to the same arena as a murderer! But let us not despair; the thunder of Sinai may yet be heard, and the Lord preserve His saint. ‘The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.’”

At that moment out broke again, from the illumined palace, the burden of the revellers’ song:—

“We care not for gods up above us,—
We know there’s no god for this earth, boys!”¹

Ere the words died away, the Nazarenes, moved by sudden indignation, caught up the echo, and, in the words of one of their favorite hymns, shouted aloud:—

THE WARNING HYMN OF THE NAZARENES.

Around — about — forever near thee,
God — OUR GOD — shall mark and hear thee!
On His car of storm He sweeps!
Bow, ye heavens, and shrink, ye deeps!
Woe to the proud ones who defy Him! —
Woe to the dreamers who deny Him!
Woe to the wicked, woe!
The proud stars shall fail —
The sun shall grow pale —
The heavens shrivel up like a scroll —
Hell’s ocean shall bare
Its depths of despair,
Each wave an eternal soul!
For the only thing, then,
That shall *not* live again
Is the corpse of the giant TIME.
Hark, the trumpet of thunder!
Lo, earth rent asunder!

¹ See note (a) at the end.

And, forth, on his Angel-throne,
 He comes through the gloom,
 The Judge of the Tomb,
 To summon and save His own!
 Oh, joy to Care, and woe to Crime,
 He comes to save His own!
 Woe to the proud ones who defy Him!
 Woe to the dreamers who deny Him!
 Woe to the wicked, woe!

A sudden silence from the startled hall of revel succeeded these ominous words: the Christians swept on, and were soon hidden from the sight of the gladiator. Awed, he scarce knew why, by the mystic denunciations of the Christians, Lydon, after a short pause, now rose to pursue his way homeward.

Before him, how serenely slept the starlight on that lovely city! how breathlessly its pillared streets reposed in their security! how softly rippled the dark-green waves beyond! how cloudless spread, aloft and blue, the dreaming Campanian skies! Yet this was the last night for the gay Pompeii, the colony of the hoar Chaldean, the fabled city of Hercules, the delight of the voluptuous Roman! Age after age had rolled, indestructive, unheeded, over its head, and now the last ray quivered on the dial-plate of its doom. The gladiator heard some light steps behind; a group of females were wending homeward from their visit to the amphitheatre. As he turned, his eye was arrested by a strange and sudden apparition. From the summit of Vesuvius, darkly visible at the distance, there shot a pale, meteoric, livid light; it trembled an instant and was gone. And at the same moment that his eye caught it, the voice of one of the youngest of the women broke out hilariously and shrill:—

"TRAMP! TRAMP! HOW GAYLY THEY GO!
 HO, HO! FOR THE MORROW'S MERRY SHOW!"

BOOK V.

Stat ecce ad aras hostia, expectat manum
Cervice pronâ. — SENEC.

Before the altars, lo, the victim stands,
And waits with bended neck the fatal blow.

Mutatus ordo est — sede nil propriâ jacet,
Sed acta retro cuncta. — *Ibid.*

The appointed order changes! nought remains
In the allotted ranks, but backward rolls
The tide of acted things.

Tempore quanquam illo tellus quoque, et æquora ponte
Signa dabant. — VIRGIL: *Georgic.* lib. i.

In the same time, the earth and surging seas
Gave signal!

CHAPTER I.

THE DREAM OF ARBACES. — A VISITOR AND A WARNING TO
THE EGYPTIAN.

THE awful night preceding the fierce joy of the amphitheatre rolled drearily away, and grayly broke forth the dawn of THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII! The air was uncommonly calm and sultry, a thin and dull mist gathered over the valleys and hollows of the broad Campanian fields. But yet it was remarked in surprise by the early fishermen, that, despite the exceeding stillness of the atmosphere, the waves of the sea were agitated, and seemed, as it were, to run disturbedly back from the shore; while along the blue and stately Sarnus, whose ancient breadth of channel the traveller now vainly seeks to discover, there crept a hoarse and sullen murmur, as it glided by the laughing plains and the gaudy villas of the

wealthy citizens. Clear above the low mist rose the time-worn towers of the immemorial town, the red-tiled roofs of the bright streets, the solemn columns of many temples, and the statue-crowned portals of the Forum and the Arch of Triumph. Far in the distance the outline of the circling hills soared above the vapors and mingled with the changeful hues of the morning sky. The cloud that had so long rested over the crest of Vesuvius had suddenly vanished, and its rugged and haughty brow looked without a frown over the beautiful scenes below.

Despite the earliness of the hour, the gates of the city were already opened. Horsemen upon horsemen, vehicle after vehicle, poured rapidly in; and the voices of numerous pedestrian groups, clad in holiday attire, rose high in joyous and excited merriment; the streets were crowded with citizens and strangers from the populous neighborhood of Pompeii; and noisily, fast, confusedly swept the many streams of life towards the fatal show.

Despite the vast size of the amphitheatre, seemingly so disproportioned to the extent of the city, and formed to include nearly the whole population of Pompeii itself, so great, on extraordinary occasions, was the concourse of strangers from all parts of Campania, that the space before it was usually crowded for several hours previous to the commencement of the sports, by such persons as were not entitled by their rank to appointed and special seats. And the intense curiosity which the trial and sentence of two criminals so remarkable had occasioned, increased the crowd on this day to an extent wholly unprecedented.

While the common people, with the lively vehemence of their Campanian blood, were thus pushing, scrambling, hurrying on, yet, amidst all their eagerness, preserving, as is now the wont with Italians in such meetings, a wonderful order and unquarrelsome good-humor, a strange visitor to Arbaces was threading her way to his sequestered mansion. At the sight of her quaint and primeval garb, of her wild gait and gestures, the passengers she encountered touched each other and smiled; but as they caught a glimpse of her countenance,

the mirth was hushed at once, for the face was as the face of the dead ; and, what with the ghastly features and obsolete robes of the stranger, it seemed as if one long entombed had risen once more amongst the living. In silence and awe each group gave way as she passed along, and she soon gained the broad porch of the Egyptian's palace.

The black porter, like the rest of the world, astir at an unusual hour, started as he opened the door to her summons.

The sleep of the Egyptian had been unusually profound during the night ; but as the dawn approached it was disturbed by strange and unquiet dreams, which impressed him the more as they were colored by the peculiar philosophy he embraced.

He thought that he was transported to the bowels of the earth, and that he stood alone in a mighty cavern, supported by enormous columns of rough and primeval rock, lost, as they ascended, in the vastness of a shadow athwart whose eternal darkness no beam of day had ever glanced. And in the space between these columns were huge wheels, that whirled round and round unceasingly, and with a rushing and roaring noise. Only to the right and left extremities of the cavern, the space between the pillars was left bare, and the apertures stretched away into galleries, not wholly dark, but dimly lighted by wandering and erratic fires, that, meteor-like, now crept (as the snake creeps) along the rugged and dank soil, and now leaped fiercely to and fro, darting across the vast gloom in wild gambols, suddenly disappearing, and as suddenly bursting into tenfold brilliancy and power. And while he gazed wonderingly upon the gallery to the left, thin, mist-like, aerial shapes passed slowly up ; and when they had gained the hall they seemed to rise aloft, and to vanish, as the smoke vanishes, in the measureless ascent.

He turned in fear towards the opposite extremity, and behold ! there came swiftly from the gloom above, similar shadows, which swept hurriedly along the gallery to the right, as if borne involuntarily adown the tides of some invisible stream ; and the faces of these spectres were more distinct than those that emerged from the opposite passage ; and on

some was joy, and on others sorrow; some were vivid with expectation and hope, some unutterably dejected by awe and horror. And so they passed, swift and constantly on, till the eyes of the gazer grew dizzy and blinded with the whirl of an ever-varying succession of things impelled by a power apparently not their own.

Arbaces turned away, and in the recess of the hall he saw the mighty form of a giantess seated upon a pile of skulls, and her hands were busy upon a pale and shadowy woof; and he saw that the woof communicated with the numberless wheels, as if it guided the machinery of their movements. He thought his feet, by some secret agency, were impelled towards the female, and that he was borne onwards till he stood before her, face to face. The countenance of the giantess was solemn and hushed, and beautifully serene. It was as the face of some colossal sculpture of his own ancestral sphinx. No passion, no human emotion, disturbed its brooding and unwrinkled brow: there was neither sadness, nor joy, nor memory, nor hope; it was free from all with which the wild human heart can sympathize. The mystery of mysteries rested on its beauty; it awed, but terrified not: it was the Incarnation of the Sublime. And Arbaces felt the voice leave his lips, without an impulse of his own; and the voice asked, —

“Who art thou, and what is thy task?”

“I am That which thou hast acknowledged,” answered, without desisting from its work, the mighty phantom. “My name is NATURE! These are the wheels of the world, and my hand guides them for the life of all things.”

“And what,” said the voice of Arbaces, “are these galleries, that, strangely and fitly illumined, stretch on either hand into the abyss of gloom?”

“That,” answered the giant mother, “which thou beholdest to the left, is the gallery of the Unborn. The shadows that flit onward and upward into the world are the souls that pass from the long eternity of being to their destined pilgrimage on earth. That which thou beholdest to thy right, wherein the shadows descending from above sweep on, equally unknown and dim, is the gallery of the dead!”

“And wherefore,” said the voice of Arbaces, “yon wandering lights, that so wildly break the darkness; but only *break*, not *reveal*?”

“Dark fool of the human sciences, dreamer of the stars, and would-be decipherer of the heart and origin of things! those lights are but the glimmerings of such knowledge as is vouchsafed to Nature to work her way, to trace enough of the past and future to give providence to her designs. Judge, then, puppet as thou art, what lights are reserved for thee!”

Arbaces felt himself tremble as he asked again, “Wherefore am I here?”

“It is the forecast of thy soul; the prescience of thy rushing doom; the shadow of thy fate lengthening into eternity as it declines from earth.”

Ere he could answer, Arbaces felt a rushing WIND sweep down the cavern, as the winds of a giant god. Borne aloft from the ground, and whirled on high as a leaf in the storms of autumn, he beheld himself in the midst of the Spectres of the Dead, and hurrying with them along the length of gloom. As in vain and impotent despair he struggled against the impelling power, he thought the WIND grew into something like a shape,—a spectral outline of the wings and talons of an eagle, with limbs floating far and indistinctly along the air, and eyes that, alone clearly and vividly seen, glared stonily and remorselessly on his own.

“What art thou?” again said the voice of the Egyptian.

“I am That which thou hast acknowledged,”—and the spectre laughed aloud,—“and my name is NECESSITY.”

“To what dost thou bear me?”

“To the Unknown.”

“To happiness, or to woe?”

“As thou hast sown, so shalt thou reap.”

“Dread thing, not so! If thou art the Ruler of Life, *thine* are my misdeeds, not mine.”

“I am but the breath of God!” answered the mighty WIND.

“Then is my wisdom vain!” groaned the dreamer.

“The husbandman accuses not fate, when, having sown

thistles, he reaps not corn. Thou hast sown crime, accuse not fate if thou reapest not the harvest of virtue."

The scene suddenly changed. Arbaces was in a place of human bones; and lo! in the midst of them was a skull, and the skull, still retaining its fleshless hollows, assumed slowly, and in the mysterious confusion of a dream, the face of Apæcides; and forth from the grinning jaws there crept a small worm, and it crawled to the feet of Arbaces. He attempted to stamp on it and crush it; but it became longer and larger with that attempt. It swelled and bloated till it grew into a vast serpent: it coiled itself round the limbs of Arbaces; it crunched his bones; it raised its glaring eyes and poisonous jaws to his face. He writhed in vain; he withered, he gasped, beneath the influence of the blighting breath; he felt himself blasted into death. And then a voice came from the reptile, which still bore the face of Apæcides, and rang in his reeling ear, —

"THY VICTIM IS THY JUDGE! THE WORM THOU WOULDST CRUSH BECOMES THE SERPENT THAT DEVOURS THEE!"

With a shriek of wrath and woe and despairing resistance, Arbaces awoke, his hair on end, his brow bathed in dew, his eyes glazed and staring, his mighty frame quivering as an infant's, beneath the agony of that dream. He awoke; he collected himself; he blessed the gods whom he disbelieved, that he *was* in a dream; he turned his eyes from side to side; he saw the dawning light break through his small but lofty window; he was in the Precincts of Day; he rejoiced; he smiled; his eyes fell, and opposite to him he beheld the ghastly features, the lifeless eye, the livid lip, of the hag of Vesuvius!

"Ha!" he cried, placing his hands before his eyes, as to shut out the grisly vision, "do I dream still? Am I with the dead?"

"Mighty Hermes, no! Thou art with one death-like, but not dead. Recognize thy friend and slave."

There was a long silence. Slowly the shudders that passed over the limbs of the Egyptian chased each other away, faintlier and faintlier dying till he was himself again.

"It was a dream, then," said he. "Well, let me dream no

more, or the day cannot compensate for the pangs of night. Woman, how camest thou here, and wherefore ? ”

“ I came to warn thee, ” answered the sepulchral voice of the Saga.

“ Warn me ! The dream lied not, then ? Of what peril ? ”

“ Listen to me. Some evil hangs over this fated city. Fly while it be time. Thou knowest that I hold my home on that mountain beneath which old tradition saith there yet burn the fires of the river of Phlegethon ; and in my cavern is a vast abyss, and in that abyss I have of late marked a red and dull stream creep slowly, slowly on ; and heard many and mighty sounds hissing and roaring through the gloom. But last night, as I looked thereon, behold the stream was no longer dull, but intensely and fiercely luminous ; and while I gazed, the beast that liveth with me, and was cowering by my side, uttered a shrill howl, and fell down and died,¹ and the slaver and froth were round his lips. I crept back to my lair ; but I distinctly heard, all the night, the rock shake and tremble, and though the air was heavy and still, there were the hissing of pent winds, and the grinding as of wheels beneath the ground. So, when I rose this morning at the very birth of dawn, I looked again down the abyss, and I saw vast fragments of stone borne black and floatingly over the lurid stream ; and the stream itself was broader, fiercer, redder than the night before. Then I went forth, and ascended to the summit of the rock : and in that summit there appeared a sudden and vast hollow, which I had never perceived before, from which curled a dim, faint smoke ; and the vapor was deathly, and I gasped, and sickened, and nearly died. I returned home. I took my gold and my drugs, and left the habitation of many years ; for I remembered the dark Etruscan prophecy which saith, ‘ When the mountain opens the city shall fall ; when the smoke crowns the Hill of the Parched Fields, there shall be woe and weeping in the hearths of the Children of the Sea. ’ Dread master, ere I leave these walls for some more distant dwelling, I come to thee. As thou livest, know I in my heart that the earthquake that

¹ We may suppose that the exhalations were similar in effect to those of the *Grotta del Cane*.

sixteen years ago shook this city to its solid base, was but the forerunner of more deadly doom. The walls of Pompeii are built above the fields of the Dead, and the rivers of the sleepless Hell. Be warned and fly!"

"Witch, I thank thee for thy care of one not ungrateful. On yon table stands a cup of gold; take it, it is thine. I dreamt not that there lived one, out of the priesthood of Isis, who would have saved Arbaces from destruction. The signs thou hast seen in the bed of the extinct volcano," continued the Egyptian, musingly, "surely tell of some coming danger to the city; perhaps another earthquake fiercer than the last. Be that as it may, there is a new reason for my hastening from these walls. After this day I will prepare my departure. Daughter of Etruria, whither wendest thou?"

"I shall cross over to Herculaneum this day, and, wandering thence along the coast, shall seek out a new home. I am friendless; my two companions, the fox and the snake, are dead. Great Hermes, thou hast promised me twenty additional years of life!"

"Ay," said the Egyptian, "I have promised thee. But woman," he added, lifting himself upon his arm, and gazing curiously on her face, "tell me, I pray thee, wherefore thou wishest to live? What sweets dost thou discover in existence?"

"It is not life that is sweet, but death that is awful," replied the hag, in a sharp, impressive tone, that struck forcibly upon the heart of the vain star-seer. He winced at the truth of the reply; and, no longer anxious to retain so uninviting a companion, he said: "Time wanes; I must prepare for the solemn spectacle of this day. Sister, farewell! enjoy thyself as thou canst over the ashes of life."

The hag, who had placed the costly gift of Arbaces in the loose folds of her vest, now rose to depart. When she had gained the door she paused, turned back, and said, "This may be the last time we meet on earth; but whither flieth the flame when it leaves the ashes? Wandering to and fro, up and down, as an exhalation on the morass, the flame may be seen in the marshes of the lake below; and the witch and the Magian,

the pupil and the master, the great one and the accursed one, may meet again. Farewell!"

"Out, croaker!" muttered Arbaces, as the door closed on the hag's tattered robes; and, impatient of his own thoughts, not yet recovered from the past dream, he hastily summoned his slaves.

It was the custom to attend the ceremonials of the amphitheatre in festive robes, and Arbaces arrayed himself that day with more than usual care. His tunic was of the most dazzling white; his many fibulæ were formed from the most precious stones; over his tunic flowed a loose Eastern robe, half-gown, half-mantle, glowing in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye; and the sandals, that reached half-way up the knee, were studded with gems and inlaid with gold. In the quackeries that belonged to his priestly genius, Arbaces never neglected, on great occasions, the arts which dazzle and impose upon the vulgar; and on this day, that was forever to release him, by the sacrifice of Glaucus, from the fear of a rival and the chance of detection, he felt that he was arraying himself as for a triumph or a nuptial feast.

It was customary for men of rank to be accompanied to the shows of the amphitheatre by a procession of their slaves and freedmen; and the long "family" of Arbaces were already arranged in order, to attend the litter of their lord.

Only, to their great chagrin, the slaves in attendance on Ione, and the worthy Sosia, as jailer to Nydia, were condemned to remain at home.

"Callias," said Arbaces, apart to his freedman, who was buckling on his girdle, "I am weary of Pompeii; I propose to quit it in three days, should the wind favor. Thou knowest the vessel that lies in the harbor, which belonged to Narses of Alexandria; I have purchased it of him. The day after to-morrow we shall begin to remove my stores."

"So soon! 'T is well. Arbaces shall be obeyed; and his ward, Ione?"

"Accompanies me. Enough! Is the morning fair?"

"Dim and oppressive; it will probably be intensely hot in the forenoon."

“The poor gladiators, and more wretched criminals! Descend, and see that the slaves are marshalled.”

Left alone, Arbaces stepped into his chamber of study, and thence upon the portico without. He saw the dense masses of men pouring fast into the amphitheatre, and heard the cry of the assistants and the cracking of the cordage, as they were straining aloft the huge awning under which the citizens, molested by no discomfoting ray, were to behold, at luxurious ease, the agonies of their fellow-creatures. Suddenly a wild, strange sound went forth, and as suddenly died away: it was the roar of the lion. There was a silence in the distant crowd; but the silence was followed by joyous laughter: they were making merry at the hungry impatience of the royal beast.

“Brutes!” muttered the disdainful Arbaces, “are ye less homicides than I am? I slay but in self-defence; ye make murder pastime.”

He turned with a restless and curious eye towards Vesuvius. Beautifully glowed the green vineyards round its breast, and tranquil as eternity lay in the breathless skies the form of the mighty hill.

“We have time yet, if the earthquake be nursing,” thought Arbaces; and he turned from the spot. He passed by the table which bore his mystic scrolls and Chaldean calculations.

“August art,” he thought, “I have not consulted thy decrees since I passed the danger and the crisis they foretold. What matter? I know that *henceforth* all in my path is bright and smooth. Have not events already proved it? Away, doubt; away, pity! Reflect, O my heart, reflect, for the future, but two images!— Empire and Ione!”

CHAPTER II.

THE AMPHITHEATRE.

NYDIA, assured by the account of Sosia, on his return home, and satisfied that her letter was in the hands of Sallust, gave herself up once more to hope. Sallust would surely lose no time in seeking the prætor, in coming to the house of the Egyptian, in releasing her, in breaking the prison of Calenus. That very night Glaucus would be free. Alas! the night passed; the dawn broke; she heard nothing but the hurried footsteps of the slaves along the hall and peristyle, and their voices in preparation for the show. By and by the commanding voice of Arbaces broke on her ear; a flourish of music rang out cheerily; the long procession were sweeping to the amphitheatre to glut their eyes on the death-pangs of the Athenian!

The procession of Arbaces moved along slowly, and with much solemnity, till now, arriving at the place where it was necessary for such as came in litters or chariots to alight, Arbaces descended from his vehicle, and proceeded to the entrance by which the more distinguished spectators were admitted. His slaves, mingling with the humbler crowd, were stationed by officers who received their tickets (not much unlike our modern opera ones), in places in the *popularia* (the seats apportioned to the vulgar). And now, from the spot where Arbaces sat, his eyes scanned the mighty and impatient crowd that filled the stupendous theatre.

On the upper tier (but apart from the male spectators) sat the women, their gay dresses resembling some gaudy flower-bed; it is needless to add that they were the most talkative part of the assembly; and many were the looks directed up to them, especially from the benches appropriated to the young and the unmarried men. On the lower seats round the arena sat the more high-born and wealthy visitors, the magistrates, and those of senatorial or equestrian¹ dignity: the passages

¹ The equites sat immediately behind the senators.

which, by corridors at the right and left, gave access to these seats, at either end of the oval arena, were also the entrances for the combatants. Strong palings at these passages prevented any unwelcome eccentricity in the movements of the beasts, and confined them to their appointed prey. Around the parapet which was raised above the arena, and from which the seats gradually rose, were gladiatorial inscriptions, and paintings wrought in fresco, typical of the entertainments for which the place was designed. Throughout the whole building wound invisible pipes, from which, as the day advanced, cooling and fragrant showers were to be sprinkled over the spectators. The officers of the amphitheatre were still employed in the task of fixing the vast awning (or *velaria*) which covered the whole, and which luxurious invention the Campanians arrogated to themselves: it was woven of the whitest Apulian wool, and variegated with broad stripes of crimson. Owing either to some inexperience on the part of the workmen, or to some defect in the machinery, the awning, however, was not arranged that day so happily as usual: indeed, from the immense space of the circumference, the task was always one of great difficulty and art; so much so, that it could seldom be adventured in rough or windy weather. But the present day was so remarkably still that there seemed to the spectators no excuse for the awkwardness of the artificers; and when a large gap in the back of the awning was still visible, from the obstinate refusal of one part of the *velaria* to ally itself with the rest, the murmurs of discontent were loud and general.

The ædile Pansa, at whose expense the exhibition was given, looked particularly annoyed at the defect, and vowed bitter vengeance on the head of the chief officer of the show, who, fretting, puffing, perspiring, busied himself in idle orders and unavailing threats.

The hubbub ceased suddenly, the operators desisted, the crowd were stilled, the gap was forgotten; for now, with a loud and warlike flourish of trumpets, the gladiators, marshalled in ceremonious procession, entered the arena. They swept round the oval space very slowly and deliberately, in order to give the spectators full leisure to admire their stern

serenity of feature, their brawny limbs and various arms, as well as to form such wagers as the excitement of the moment might suggest.

"Oh," cried the widow Fulvia to the wife of Pansa, as they leaned down from their lofty bench, "do you see that gigantic gladiator? How drolly he is dressed!"

"Yes," said the ædile's wife with complacent importance, for she knew all the names and qualities of each combatant, "he is a *retiarius*, or netter; he is armed only, you see, with a three-pronged spear like a trident, and a net; he wears no armor, only the fillet and the tunic. He is a mighty man, and is to fight with Sporus, yon thick-set gladiator with the round shield and drawn sword, but without body armor; he has not his helmet on now, in order that you may see his face,—how fearless it is! By and by he will fight with his visor down."

"But surely a net and a spear are poor arms against a shield and sword?"

"That shows how innocent you are, my dear Fulvia; the *retiarius* has generally the best of it."

"But who is yon handsome gladiator, nearly naked,—is it not quite improper? By Venus! but his limbs are beautifully shaped!"

"It is Lydon, a young untried man! He has the rashness to fight yon other gladiator similarly dressed, or rather undressed,—*Tetraides*. They fight first in the Greek fashion, with the *cestus*; afterwards they put on armor, and try sword and shield."

"He is a proper man, this Lydon; and the women, I am sure, are on his side."

"So are not the experienced betters; Clodius offers three to one against him."

"Oh, Jove, how beautiful!" exclaimed the widow, as two gladiators, armed *cap-a-pie*, rode round the arena on light and prancing steeds. Resembling much the combatants in the tilts of the Middle Ages, they bore lances and round shields beautifully inlaid: their armor was woven intricately with bands of iron, but it covered only the thighs and the right

arms; short cloaks, extending to the seat, gave a picturesque and graceful air to their costume; their legs were naked, with the exception of sandals, which were fastened a little above the ankle. "Oh, beautiful! Who are these?" asked the widow.

"The one is named Berbix,—he has conquered twelve times; the other assumes the arrogant name of Nobilior. They are both Gauls."

While thus conversing, the first formalities of the show were over. To these succeeded a feigned combat with wooden swords between the various gladiators matched against each other. Amongst these the skill of two Roman gladiators, hired for the occasion, was the most admired; and next to them the most graceful combatant was Lydon. This sham contest did not last above an hour, nor did it attract any very lively interest—except among those connoisseurs of the arena to whom art was preferable to more coarse excitement; the body of the spectators were rejoiced when it was over, and when the sympathy rose to terror. The combatants were now arranged in pairs, as agreed beforehand, their weapons examined; and the grave sports of the day commenced amidst the deepest silence, broken only by an exciting and preliminary blast of warlike music.

It was often customary to begin the sports by the most cruel of all, and some *bestiarius*, or gladiator appointed to the beasts, was slain first, as an initiatory sacrifice. But in the present instance the experienced Pansa thought it better that the sanguinary drama should advance, not decrease, in interest; and accordingly the execution of Olinthus and Glaucus was reserved for the last. It was arranged that the two horsemen should first occupy the arena; that the foot gladiators, paired off, should then be loosed indiscriminately on the stage; that Glaucus and the lion should next perform their part in the bloody spectacle, and the tiger and the Nazarene be the grand finale. And in the spectacles of Pompeii the reader of Roman history must limit his imagination, nor expect to find those vast and wholesale exhibitions of magnificent slaughter with which a Nero or a Caligula regaled the inhabitants of the

Imperial City. The Roman shows, which absorbed the more celebrated gladiators and the chief proportion of foreign beasts, were indeed the very reason why, in the lesser towns of the empire, the sports of the amphitheatre were comparatively humane and rare; and in this, as in other respects, Pompeii was but the miniature, the microcosm of Rome. Still, it was an awful and imposing spectacle, with which modern times have, happily, nothing to compare: a vast theatre, rising row upon row, and swarming with human beings, from fifteen to eighteen thousand in number, intent upon no fictitious representation, no tragedy of the stage, but the actual victory or defeat, the exultant life or the bloody death, of each and all who entered the arena!

The two horsemen were now at either extremity of the lists (if so they might be called), and at a given signal from Pansa the combatants started simultaneously as in full collision, each advancing his round buckler, each poising on high his light yet sturdy javelin; but just when within three paces of his opponent, the steed of Berbix suddenly halted, wheeled round, and, as Nobilior was borne rapidly by, his antagonist spurred upon him. The buckler of Nobilior, quickly and skilfully extended, received a blow which otherwise would have been fatal.

"Well done, Nobilior!" cried the prætor, giving the first vent to the popular excitement.

"Bravely struck, my Berbix!" answered Clodius from his seat.

And the wild murmur, swelled by many a shout, echoed from side to side.

The visors of both the horsemen were completely closed (like those of the knights in after times), but the head was, nevertheless, the great point of assault; and Nobilior, now wheeling his charger with no less adroitness than his opponent, directed his spear full on the helmet of his foe. Berbix raised his buckler to shield himself, and his quick-eyed antagonist, suddenly lowering his weapon, pierced him through the breast. Berbix reeled and fell.

"Nobilior! Nobilior!" shouted the populace.

"I have lost ten sestertia,"¹ said Clodius, between his teeth.

"*Habet!* [he has it!]" said Pansa, deliberately.

The populace, not yet hardened into cruelty, made the signal of mercy; but as the attendants of the arena approached, they found the kindness came too late; the heart of the Gaul had been pierced, and his eyes were set in death. It was his life's blood that flowed so darkly over the sand and sawdust of the arena.

"It is a pity it was so soon over; there was little enough for one's trouble," said the widow Fulvia.

"Yes; I have no compassion for Berbix. Any one might have seen that Nobilior did but feint. Mark, they fix the fatal hook to the body; they drag him away to the spoliarium; they scatter new sand over the stage! Pansa regrets nothing more than that he is not rich enough to strew the arena with borax and cinnabar, as Nero used to do!"

"Well, if it has been a brief battle, it is quickly succeeded. See my handsome Lydon on the arena; ay, and the net-bearer too, and the swordsmen! Oh, charming!"

There were now on the arena six combatants: Niger and his net, matched against Sporus with his shield and his short broadsword; Lydon and Tetraides, naked save by a cincture round the waist, each armed only with a heavy Greek cestus; and two gladiators from Rome clad in complete steel, and evenly matched with immense bucklers and pointed swords.

The initiatory contest between Lydon and Tetraides being less deadly than that between the other combatants, no sooner had they advanced to the middle of the arena than, as by common consent, the rest held back, to see how that contest should be decided, and wait till fiercer weapons might replace the cestus, ere they themselves commenced hostilities. They stood leaning on their arms and apart from each other, gazing on the show, which, if not bloody enough thoroughly to please the populace, they were still inclined to admire, because its origin was of their ancestral Greece.

No person could, at first glance, have seemed less evenly matched than the two antagonists. Tetraides, though not

¹ A little more than £80.

taller than Lydon, weighed considerably more; the natural size of his muscles was increased, to the eyes of the vulgar, by masses of solid flesh; for, as it was a notion that the contest of the cestus fared easiest with him who was plumpest, Tetraides had encouraged to the utmost his hereditary predisposition to the portly. His shoulders were vast, and his lower limbs thick-set, double-jointed, and slightly curved outward in that formation which takes so much from beauty to give so largely to strength. But Lydon, except that he was slender even almost to meagreness, was beautifully and delicately proportioned; and the skilful might have perceived that, with much less compass of muscle than his foe, that which he had was more seasoned,—iron and compact. In proportion, too, as he wanted flesh, he was likely to possess activity; and a haughty smile on his resolute face, which strongly contrasted the solid heaviness of his enemy's, gave assurance to those who beheld it, and united their hope to their pity: so that, despite the disparity of their seeming strength, the cry of the multitude was nearly as loud for Lydon as for Tetraides.

Whoever is acquainted with the modern prize-ring— whoever has witnessed the heavy and disabling strokes which the human fist, skilfully directed, hath the power to bestow— may easily understand how much that happy facility would be increased by a band carried by thongs of leather round the arm as high as the elbow, and terribly strengthened about the knuckles by a plate of iron, and sometimes a plummet of lead. Yet this, which was meant to increase, perhaps rather diminished, the interest of the fray; for it necessarily shortened its duration. A very few blows, successfully and scientifically *planted*, might suffice to bring the contest to a close; and the battle did not, therefore, often allow full scope for the energy, fortitude, and dogged perseverance that we technically style *pluck*, which not unusually wins the day against superior science, and which heightens to so painful a delight the interest in the battle and the sympathy for the brave.

“Guard thyself!” growled Tetraides, moving nearer and nearer to his foe, who rather shifted round him than receded.

Lydon did not answer, save by a scornful glance of his quick, vigilant eye. Tetrades struck: it was as the blow of a smith on a vice; Lydon sank suddenly on one knee,—the blow passed over his head. Not so harmless was Lydon's retaliation: he quickly sprung to his feet, and aimed his cestus full on the broad breast of his antagonist. Tetrades reeled; the populace shouted.

"You are unlucky to-day," said Lepidus to Clodius: "you have lost one bet; you will lose another."

"By the gods! my bronzes go to the auctioneer if that is the case. I have no less than a hundred sestertia¹ upon Tetrades. Ha, ha! see how he rallies! That was a home stroke; he has cut open Lydon's shoulder. A Tetrades! a Tetrades!"

"But Lydon is not disheartened. By Pollux! how well he keeps his temper! See how dexterously he avoids those hammer-like hands,—dodging now here, now there,—circling round and round! Ah, poor Lydon! he has it again."

"Three to one still on Tetrades! What say you, Lepidus?"

"Well, nine sestertia to three—be it so! What! again, Lydon? He stops—he gasps for breath. By the gods, he is down! No, he is again on his legs. Brave Lydon! Tetrades is encouraged; he laughs loud; he rushes on him."

"Fool! success blinds him: he should be cautious. Lydon's eye is like a lynx's!" said Clodius, between his teeth.

"Ha, Clodius! saw you that? Your man totters! Another blow; he falls—he falls!"

"Earth revives him, then. He is once more up; but the blood rolls down his face."

"By the thunderer! Lydon wins it. See how he presses on him! That blow on the temple would have crushed an ox; it *has* crushed Tetrades. He falls again; he cannot move: *habet! habet!*"

"*Habet!*" repeated Pansa. "Take them out and give them the armor and swords."

"Noble editor," said the officers, "we fear that Tetrades will not recover in time; howbeit, we will try."

¹ Above £800.

“Do so.”

In a few minutes the officers who had dragged off the stunned and insensible gladiator, returned with rueful countenances. They feared for his life; he was utterly incapacitated from re-entering the arena.

“In that case,” said Pansa, “hold Lydon a *subditius*; and the first gladiator that is vanquished, let Lydon supply his place with the victor.”

The people shouted their applause at this sentence: then they again sunk into deep silence. The trumpet sounded loudly. The four combatants stood each against each in prepared and stern array.

“Dost thou recognize the Romans, my Clodius? Are they among the celebrated, or are they merely *ordinarii*?”

“Eumolpus is a good second-rate swordsman, my Lepidus. Nepimus, the lesser man, I have never seen before; but he is the son of one of the imperial *fiscales*,¹ and brought up in a proper school; doubtless they will show sport, but I have no heart for the game; I cannot win back my money: I am undone. Curses on that Lydon! who could have supposed he was so dexterous or so lucky?”

“Well, Clodius, shall I take compassion on you, and accept your own terms with these Romans?”

“An even ten sestertia on Eumolpus, then?”

“What! when Nepimus is untried? Nay, nay; that is too bad.”

“Well, ten to eight?”

“Agreed.”

While the contest in the amphitheatre had thus commenced, there was one in the loftier benches for whom it had assumed, indeed, a poignant, a stifling interest. The aged father of Lydon, despite his Christian horror of the spectacle, in his agonized anxiety for his son had not been able to resist being the spectator of his fate. One amidst a fierce crowd of strangers—the lowest rabble of the populace—the old man saw, felt nothing, but the form, the presence of his brave son! Not a sound had escaped his lips when twice he had seen him

¹ Gladiators maintained by the emperor.

fall to the earth ; only he had turned paler, and his limbs trembled. But he had uttered one low cry when he saw him victorious, unconscious, alas ! of the more fearful battle to which that victory was but a prelude.

“ My gallant boy ! ” said he, and wiped his eyes.

“ Is he thy son ? ” said a brawny fellow to the right of the Nazarene ; “ he has fought well : let us see how he does by and by. Hark ! he is to fight the first victor. Now, old boy, pray the gods that that victor be neither of the Romans, nor, next to them, the giant Niger ! ”

The old man sat down again and covered his face. The fray for the moment was indifferent to him ; Lydon was not one of the combatants. Yet, yet the thought flashed across him — the fray was indeed of deadly interest ; the first who fell was to make way for Lydon ! He started, and bent down, with straining eyes and clasped hands, to view the encounter.

The first interest was attracted towards the combat of Niger with Sporus ; for this species of contest, from the fatal result which usually attended it, and from the great science it required in either antagonist, was always peculiarly inviting to the spectators.

They stood at a considerable distance from each other. The singular helmet which Sporus wore (the visor of which was down) concealed his face ; but the features of Niger attracted a fearful and universal interest from their compressed and vigilant ferocity. Thus they stood for some moments, each eyeing each, until Sporus began slowly, and with great caution, to advance, holding his sword pointed, like a modern fencer's, at the breast of his foe. Niger retreated as his antagonist advanced, gathering up his net with his right hand, and never taking his small glittering eye from the movements of the swordsman. Suddenly when Sporus had approached nearly at arm's length, the retiarius threw himself forward, and cast his net. A quick inflection of body saved the gladiator from the deadly snare ! He uttered a sharp cry of joy and rage, and rushed upon Niger : but Niger had already drawn in his net, thrown it across his shoulders, and now fled round the lists

with a swiftness which the *secutor*¹ in vain endeavored to equal. The people laughed and shouted aloud, to see the ineffectual efforts of the broad-shouldered gladiator to overtake the flying giant: when, at that moment, their attention was turned from these to the two Roman combatants.

They had placed themselves at the onset face to face, at the distance of modern fencers from each other: but the extreme caution which both evinced at first had prevented any warmth of engagement, and allowed the spectators full leisure to interest themselves in the battle between Sporus and his foe. But the Romans were now heated into full and fierce encounter: they pushed, returned, advanced on, retreated from, each other with all that careful yet scarcely perceptible caution which characterizes men well experienced and equally matched. But at this moment Eumolpus, the elder gladiator, by that dexterous back-stroke which was considered in the arena so difficult to avoid, had wounded Nepimus in the side. The people shouted; Lepidus turned pale.

“Ho!” said Clodius, “the game is nearly over. If Eumolpus fights now the quiet fight, the other will gradually bleed himself away.”

“But, thank the gods! he does *not* fight the backward fight. See! he presses hard upon Nepimus. By Mars! but Nepimus had him there! the helmet rang again! Clodius, I shall win!”

“Why do I ever bet but at the dice?” groaned Clodius to himself; “or why cannot one cog a gladiator?”

“A Sporus! a Sporus!” shouted the populace, as Niger, having now suddenly paused, had again cast his net, and again unsuccessfully. He had not retreated this time with sufficient agility; the sword of Sporus had inflicted a severe wound upon his right leg; and, incapacitated to fly, he was pressed hard by the fierce swordsman. His great height and length of arm still continued, however, to give him no despicable advantages; and steadily keeping his tri-

¹ So called, from the office of that tribe of gladiators, in *following* the foe the moment the net was cast, in order to smite him ere he could have time to rearrange it.

dent at the front of his foe, he repelled him successfully for several minutes. Sporus now tried, by great rapidity of evolution, to get round his antagonist, who necessarily moved with pain and slowness. In so doing, he lost his caution, he advanced too near to the giant, raised his arm to strike, and received the three points of the fatal spear full in his breast! He sank on his knee. In a moment more the deadly net was cast over him, he struggled against its meshes in vain; again — again — again he writhed mutely beneath the fresh strokes of the trident; his blood flowed fast through the net and redly over the sand. He lowered his arms in acknowledgment of defeat.

The conquering retiarius withdrew his net, and leaning on his spear, looked to the audience for their judgment. Slowly, too, at the same moment the vanquished gladiator rolled his dim and despairing eyes around the theatre. From row to row, from bench to bench, there glared upon him but merciless and unpitying eyes.

Hushed was the roar, the murmur! The silence was dread, for in it was no sympathy; not a hand — no, not even a woman's hand — gave the signal of charity and life! Sporus had never been popular in the arena; and lately the interest of the combat had been excited on behalf of the wounded Niger. The people were warmed into blood: the *mimic* fight had ceased to charm; the interest had mounted up to the desire of sacrifice and the thirst of death!

The gladiator felt that his doom was sealed: he uttered no prayer, no groan. The people gave the signal of death! In dogged but agonized submission he bent his neck to receive the fatal stroke. And now, as the spear of the retiarius was not a weapon to inflict instant and certain death, there stalked into the arena a grim and fatal form, brandishing a short, sharp sword, and with features utterly concealed beneath its visor. With slow and measured steps this dismal headsman approached the gladiator, still kneeling, laid the left hand on his humbled crest, drew the edge of the blade across his neck, turned round to the assembly, lest, in the last moment, remorse should come upon them; the dread signal continued the same:

the blade glittered brightly in the air, fell, and the gladiator rolled upon the sand; his limbs quivered, were still: he was a corpse.¹

His body was dragged at once from the arena through the gate of death, and thrown into the gloomy den termed technically the spoliarium; and ere it had well reached that destination the strife between the remaining combatants was decided. The sword of Eumolpus had inflicted the death-wound upon the less experienced combatant. A new victim was added to the receptacle of the slain.

Throughout that mighty assembly there now ran a universal movement; the people breathed more freely, and resettled themselves in their seats. A grateful shower was cast over every row from the concealed conduits. In cool and luxurious pleasure they talked over the late spectacle of blood. Eumolpus removed his helmet, and wiped his brows; his close-curved hair and short beard, his noble Roman features and bright dark eye attracted the general admiration. He was fresh, unwounded, unfatigued.

The editor paused, and proclaimed aloud that, as Niger's wound disabled him from again entering the arena, Lydon was to be the successor to the slaughtered Nepimus, and the new combatant of Eumolpus.

"Yet, Lydon," added he, "if thou wouldst decline the combat with one so brave and tried, thou mayst have full liberty to do so. Eumolpus is not the antagonist that was originally decreed for thee. Thou knowest best how far thou canst cope with him. If thou failest, thy doom is honorable death; if thou conquerest, out of my own purse I will double the stipulated prize."

The people shouted applause. Lydon stood in the lists; he gazed around; high above he beheld the pale face, the straining eyes, of his father. He turned away irresolute for a moment. No! the conquest of the cestus was not sufficient: he had not yet won the prize of victory; his father was still a slave!

¹ See the engraving from the friezes of Pompeii, in the work on that city published in the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," vol. ii. p. 211.

"Noble ædile!" he replied, in a firm and deep tone, "I shrink not from this combat. For the honor of Pompeii I demand that one trained by its long-celebrated lanista shall do battle with this Roman."

The people shouted louder than before.

"Four to one against Lydon!" said Clodius to Lepidus.

"I would not take twenty to one! Why, Eumolpus is a very Achilles, and this poor fellow is but a *tiro*!"

Eumolpus gazed hard on the face of Lydon; he smiled: yet the smile was followed by a slight and scarce audible sigh, a touch of compassionate emotion, which custom conquered the moment the heart acknowledged it.

And now both, clad in complete armor, the sword drawn, the visor closed, the two last combatants of the arena (ere man, at least, was matched with beast) stood opposed to each other.

It was just at this time that a letter was delivered to the prætor by one of the attendants of the arena: he removed the cincture, glanced over it for a moment; his countenance betrayed surprise and embarrassment. He re-read the letter, and then muttering, "Tush, it is impossible! the man must be drunk, even in the morning, to dream of such follies!" threw it carelessly aside, and gravely settled himself once more in the attitude of attention to the sports.

The interest of the public was wound up very high. Eumolpus had at first won their favor; but the gallantry of Lydon, and his well-timed allusion to the honor of the Pompeian lanista, had afterwards given the latter the preference in their eyes.

"Holla, old fellow!" said Medon's neighbor to him, "your son is hardly matched; but never fear, the editor will not permit him to be slain, — no, nor the people neither; he has behaved too bravely for that. Ha! that was a home thrust! well averted, by Pollux! At him again, Lydon! They stop to breathe! What art thou muttering, old boy?"

"Prayers!" answered Medon, with a more calm and hopeful mien than he had yet maintained.

"Prayers! trifles! The time for gods to carry a man away

in a cloud is gone now! Ha! Jupiter! what a blow! Thy side, thy side! take care of thy side, Lydon!"

There was a convulsive tremor throughout the assembly. A fierce blow from Eumolpus, full on the crest, had brought Lydon to his knee.

"*Habet!* [he has it!]" cried a shrill female voice; "he has it!"

It was the voice of the girl who had so anxiously anticipated the sacrifice of some criminal to the beasts.

"Be silent, child!" said the wife of Pansa, haughtily. "*Non habet!* [he is *not* wounded!]"

"I wish he were, if only to spite old surly Medon," muttered the girl.

Meanwhile Lydon, who had hitherto defended himself with great skill and valor, began to give way before the vigorous assaults of the practised Roman; his arm grew tired, his eye dizzy, he breathed hard and painfully. The combatants paused again for breath.

"Young man," said Eumolpus, in a low voice, "desist; I will wound thee slightly, then lower thy arms; thou hast propitiated the editor and the mob; thou wilt be honorably saved!"

"And my father still enslaved!" groaned Lydon to himself. "No! death or his freedom!"

At that thought, and seeing that, his strength not being equal to the endurance of the Roman, everything depended on a sudden and desperate effort, he threw himself fiercely on Eumolpus; the Roman warily retreated; Lydon thrust again; Eumolpus drew himself aside; the sword grazed his cuirass; Lydon's breast was exposed; the Roman plunged his sword through the joints of the armor, not meaning, however, to inflict a deep wound; Lydon, weak and exhausted, fell forward, fell right on the point: it passed through and through, even to the back. Eumolpus drew forth his blade; Lydon still made an effort to regain his balance; his sword left his grasp; he struck mechanically at the gladiator with his naked hand, and fell prostrate on the arena. With one accord, editor and assembly made the signal of mercy; the officers of the arena

approached; they took off the helmet of the vanquished. He still breathed; his eyes rolled fiercely on his foe; the savageness he had acquired in his calling glared from his gaze, and lowered upon the brow darkened already with the shades of death; then, with a convulsive groan, with a half start, he lifted his eyes above. They rested not on the face of the editor nor on the pitying brows of his relenting judges. He saw them not; they were as if the vast space was desolate and bare; one pale agonizing face alone was all he recognized; one cry of a broken heart was all that, amidst the murmurs and the shouts of the populace, reached his ear. The ferocity vanished from his brow; a soft, a tender expression of sanctifying but despairing filial love played over his features,—played, waned, darkened. His face suddenly became locked and rigid, resuming its former fierceness. He fell upon the earth.

“Look to him,” said the ædile; “he has done his duty.”

The officers dragged him off to the spoliarium.

“A true type of glory and of its fate!” murmured Arbaces to himself; and his eye, glancing round the amphitheatre, betrayed so much of disdain and scorn, that whoever encountered it felt his breath suddenly arrested, and his emotions frozen into one sensation of abasement and of awe.

Again rich perfumes were wafted around the theatre; the attendants sprinkled fresh sand over the arena.

“Bring forth the lion and Glaucus the Athenian,” said the editor.

And a deep and breathless hush of overwrought interest, and intense (yet, strange to say, not displeasing) terror lay, like a mighty and awful dream, over the assembly.

CHAPTER III.

SALLUST AND NYDIA'S LETTER.

THRICE had Sallust awakened from his morning sleep, and thrice, recollecting that his friend was that day to perish, had he turned himself with a deep sigh once more to court oblivion. His sole object in life was to avoid pain; and where he could not avoid, at least to forget it.

At length, unable any longer to steep his conscience in slumber, he raised himself from his recumbent posture, and discovered his favorite freedman sitting by his bedside as usual; for Sallust, who, as I have said, had a gentlemanlike taste for the polite letters, was accustomed to be read to for an hour or so previous to his rising in the morning.

“No books to-day! no more Tibullus! no more Pindar for me! Pindar! alas, alas! the very name recalls those games to which our arena is the savage successor. Has it begun, — the amphitheatre? Are its rites commenced?”

“Long since, O Sallust! Did you not hear the trumpets and the trampling feet?”

“Ay, ay; but the gods be thanked, I was drowsy, and had only to turn round to fall asleep again.”

“The gladiators must have been long in the ring.”

“The wretches! None of my people have gone to the spectacle?”

“Assuredly not; your orders were too strict.”

“That is well; would the day were over! What is that letter yonder on the table?”

“That! Oh, the letter brought to you last night, when you were too — too —”

“Drunk to read it, I suppose. No matter, it cannot be of much importance.”

“Shall I open it for you, Sallust?”

“Do: anything to divert my thoughts, Poor Glaucus!”

The freedman opened the letter. "What! Greek?" said he: "Some learned lady, I suppose." He glanced over the letter, and for some moments the irregular lines traced by the blind girl's hand puzzled him. Suddenly, however, his countenance exhibited emotion and surprise. "Good gods! noble Sallust! what have we done not to attend to this before? Hear me read!

"Nydia, the slave, to Sallust, the friend of Glaucus. I am a prisoner in the house of Arbaces. Hasten to the prætor! procure my release, and we shall yet save Glaucus from the lion. There is another prisoner within these walls, whose witness can exonerate the Athenian from the charge against him; one who saw the crime, who can prove the criminal in a villain hitherto unsuspected. Fly! hasten! quick! quick! Bring with you armed men, lest resistance be made, and a cunning and dexterous smith; for the dungeon of my fellow-prisoner is thick and strong. Oh! by thy right hand, and thy father's ashes, lose not a moment!"

"Great Jove!" exclaimed Sallust, starting, "and this day — nay, within this hour, perhaps, he dies. What is to be done? I will instantly to the prætor."

"Nay; not so. The prætor (as well as Pansa, the editor himself) is the creature of the mob; and the mob will not hear of delay; they will not be balked in the very moment of expectation. Besides, the publicity of the appeal would forewarn the cunning Egyptian. It is evident that he has some interest in these concealments. No; fortunately, thy slaves are in thy house."

"I seize thy meaning," interrupted Sallust; "arm the slaves instantly. The streets are empty. We will ourselves hasten to the house of Arbaces and release the prisoners. Quick! quick! What ho! Davus there! My gown and sandals, the papyrus and a reed.¹ I will write to the prætor, to beseech him to delay the sentence of Glaucus, for that, within an hour, we may yet prove him innocent. So, so; that is

¹ The reed (*calamus*) was used for writing on papyrus and parchment; the stilus for writing on waxen tablets, plates of metal, etc. Letters were written sometimes on tablets, sometimes on papyrus.

well. Hasten with this, Davus, to the prætor, at the amphitheatre. See it given to his own hand. Now then, O ye gods! whose providence Epicurus denied, befriend me, and I will call Epicurus a liar!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMPHITHEATRE ONCE MORE.

GLAUCUS and Olinthus had been placed together in that gloomy and narrow cell in which the criminals of the arena awaited their last and fearful struggle. Their eyes, of late accustomed to the darkness, scanned the faces of each other in this awful hour, and by that dim light, the paleness, which chased away the natural hues from either cheek, assumed a yet more ashy and ghastly whiteness. Yet their brows were erect and dauntless, their limbs did not tremble, their lips were compressed and rigid. The religion of the one, the pride of the other, the conscious innocence of both, and, it may be, the support derived from their mutual companionship, elevated the victim into the hero.

"Hark! hearest thou that shout? They are growling over their human blood," said Olinthus.

"I hear; my heart grows sick; but the gods support me."

"The gods! O rash young man! in this hour recognize only the One God. Have I not taught thee in the dungeon, wept for thee, prayed for thee? In my zeal and in my agony, have I not thought more of thy salvation than my own?"

"Brave friend!" answered Glaucus, solemnly, "I have listened to thee with awe, with wonder, and with a secret tendency towards conviction. Had our lives been spared, I might gradually have weaned myself from the tenets of my own faith, and inclined to thine; but, in this last hour it were a craven thing, and a base, to yield to hasty terror what should only be the result of lengthened meditation. Were I to embrace thy creed, and cast down my father's gods, should I not be bribed

by thy promise of heaven, or awed by thy threats of hell? Olinthus, no! Think we of each other with equal charity,— I honoring thy sincerity, thou pitying my blindness or my obdurate courage. As have been my deeds, such will be my reward; and the Power or Powers above will not judge harshly of human error when it is linked with honesty of purpose and truth of heart. Speak we no more of this. Hush! Dost thou hear them drag yon heavy body through the passage? Such as that clay will be ours soon."

"O Heaven! O Christ! already I behold ye!" cried the fervent Olinthus, lifting up his hands; "I tremble not: I rejoice that the prison-house shall be soon broken."

Glaucus bowed his head in silence. He felt the distinction between his fortitude and that of his fellow-sufferer. The heathen did not tremble; but the Christian exulted.

The door swung gratingly back, the gleam of spears shot along the walls.

"Glaucus the Athenian, thy time has come," said a loud and clear voice; "the lion awaits thee."

"I am ready," said the Athenian. "Brother and co-mate, one last embrace! Bless me, and farewell!"

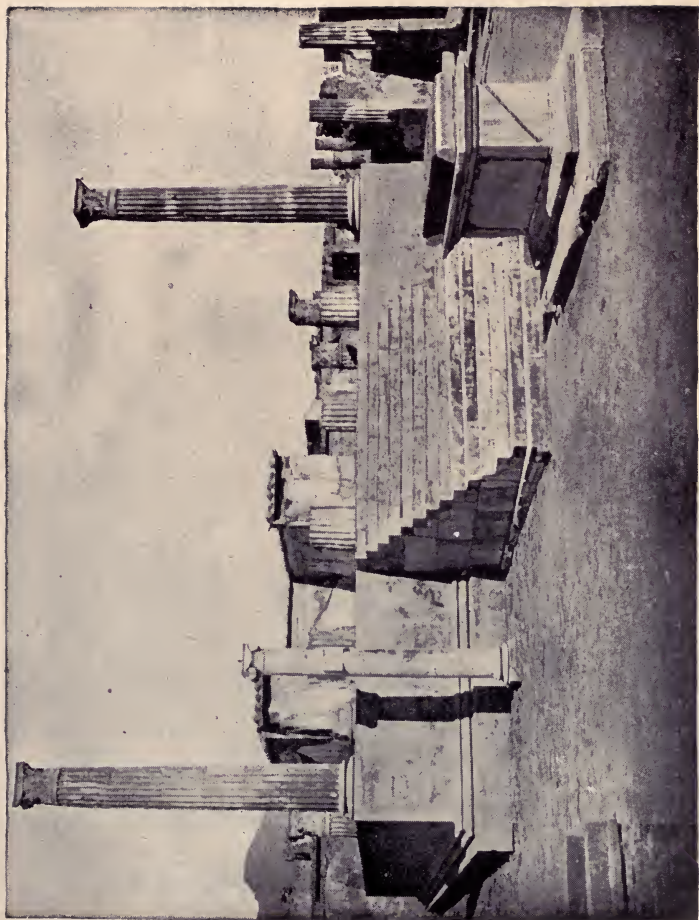
The Christian opened his arms; he clasped the young heathen to his breast; he kissed his forehead and cheek; he sobbed aloud; his tears flowed fast and hot over the features of his new friend.

"Oh, could I have converted thee, I had not wept! Oh, that I might say to thee, 'We two shall sup this night in Paradise!'"

"It may be so yet," answered the Greek, with a tremulous voice. "They whom death part not, may meet yet beyond the grave: on the earth, on the beautiful, the beloved earth, farewell forever! Worthy officer, I attend you."

Glaucus tore himself away; and when he came forth into the air, its breath, which, though sunless, was hot and arid, smote witheringly upon him. His frame, not yet restored from the effects of the deadly draught, shrank and trembled. The officers supported him.

"Courage!" said one; "thou art young, active, well-knit.



THE TEMPLE OF VENUS.

They give thee a weapon! despair not, and thou mayst yet conquer."

Glaucus did not reply; but, ashamed of his infirmity, he made a desperate and convulsive effort, and regained the firmness of his nerves. They anointed his body, completely naked, save by a cincture round his loins, placed the stilus (vain weapon!) in his hand, and led him into the arena.

And now when the Greek saw the eyes of thousands and tens of thousands upon him, he no longer felt that he was mortal. All evidence of fear, all fear itself, was gone. A red and haughty flush spread over the paleness of his features; he towered aloft to the full of his glorious stature. In the elastic beauty of his limbs and form, in his intent but unfrowning brow, in the high disdain, and in the indomitable soul, which breathed visibly, which spoke audibly, from his attitude, his lip, his eye, he seemed the very incarnation, vivid and corporeal, of the valor of his land, of the divinity of its worship, at once a hero and a god!

The murmur of hatred and horror at his crime, which had greeted his entrance, died into the silence of involuntary admiration and half-compassionate respect; and with a quick and convulsive sigh, that seemed to move the whole mass of life as if it were one body, the gaze of the spectators turned from the Athenian to a dark uncouth object in the centre of the arena. It was the grated den of the lion!

"By Venus, how warm it is!" said Fulvia; "yet there is no sun. Would that those stupid sailors¹ could have fastened up that gap in the awning!"

"Oh, it is warm, indeed! I turn sick, I faint!" said the wife of Pansa: even her experienced stoicism giving way at the struggle about to take place.

The lion had been kept without food for twenty-four hours, and the animal had, during the whole morning, testified a singular and restless uneasiness, which the keeper had attributed to the pangs of hunger. Yet its bearing seemed rather that of fear than of rage; its roar was painful and distressed; it

¹ Sailors were generally employed in fastening the *velaria* of the amphitheatre.

hung its head, snuffed the air through the bars, then lay down, started again, and again uttered its wild and far-resounding cries. And now, in its den, it lay utterly dumb and mute, with distended nostrils forced hard against the grating, and disturbing, with a heavy breath, the sand below on the arena.

The editor's lip quivered, and his cheek grew pale; he looked anxiously around, hesitated, delayed; the crowd became impatient. Slowly he gave the signal; the keeper, who was behind the den, cautiously removed the grating, and the lion leaped forth with a mighty and glad roar of release. The keeper hastily retreated through the grated passage leading from the arena, and left the lord of the forest — and his prey.

Glaucus had bent his limbs so as to give himself the firmest posture at the expected rush of the lion, with his small and shining weapon raised on high, in the faint hope that *one* well-directed thrust (for he knew that he should have time but for *one*) might penetrate through the eye to the brain of his grim foe.

But, to the unutterable astonishment of all, the beast seemed not even aware of the presence of the criminal.

At the first moment of its release it halted abruptly in the arena, raised itself half on end, snuffing the upward air with impatient sighs; then suddenly it sprang forward, but not on the Athenian. At half-speed it circled round and round the space, turning its vast head from side to side with an anxious and perturbed gaze, as if seeking only some avenue of escape; once or twice it endeavored to leap up the parapet that divided it from the audience, and, on failing, uttered rather a baffled howl than its deep-toned and kingly roar. It evinced no sign, either of wrath or hunger; its tail drooped along the sand, instead of lashing its gaunt sides; and its eye, though it wandered at times to Glaucus, rolled again listlessly from him. At length, as if tired of attempting to escape, it crept with a moan into its cage, and once more laid itself down to rest.

The first surprise of the assembly at the apathy of the lion soon grew converted into resentment at its cowardice; and the populace already merged their pity for the fate of Glaucus into angry compassion for their own disappointment.

The editor called to the keeper.

"How is this? Take the goad, prick him forth, and then close the door of the den."

As the keeper, with some fear, but more astonishment, was preparing to obey, a loud cry was heard at one of the entrances of the arena; there was a confusion, a bustle, voices of remonstrance suddenly breaking forth, and suddenly silenced at the reply. All eyes turned in wonder, at the interruption, towards the quarter of the disturbance; the crowd gave way, and suddenly Sallust appeared on the senatorial benches, his hair dishevelled, breathless, heated, half exhausted. He cast his eyes hastily around the ring. "Remove the Athenian," he cried: "haste, he is innocent! Arrest Arbaces the Egyptian: HE is the murderer of Apæcides!"

"Art thou mad, O Sallust!" said the prætor, rising from his seat. "What means this raving?"

"Remove the Athenian! Quick! or his blood be on your head. Prætor, delay, and you answer with your own life to the emperor! I bring with me the eye-witness to the death of the priest Apæcides. Room there! stand back! give way! People of Pompeii, fix every eye upon Arbaces: there he sits! Room there for the priest Calenus!"

Pale, haggard, fresh from the jaws of famine and of death, his face fallen, his eyes dull as a vulture's, his broad frame gaunt as a skeleton, Calenus was supported into the very row in which Arbaces sat. His releasers had given him sparingly of food; but the chief sustenance that nerved his feeble limbs was revenge!

"The priest Calenus! Calenus!" cried the mob. "Is it he? No, it is a dead man!"

"It is the priest Calenus," said the prætor, gravely. "What hast thou to say?"

"Arbaces of Egypt is the murderer of Apæcides, the priest of Isis; these eyes saw him deal the blow. It is from the dungeon into which he plunged me, it is from the darkness and horror of a death by famine, that the gods have raised me to proclaim his crime! Release the Athenian — *he* is innocent!"

"It is for this, then, that the lion spared him. A miracle! a miracle!" cried Pansa.

"A miracle! a miracle!" shouted the people; "remove the Athenian — *Arbaces to the lion!*"

And that shout echoed from hill to vale, from coast to sea, "*Arbaces to the lion!*"

"Officers, remove the accused Glaucus: remove, but guard him yet," said the prætor. "The gods lavish their wonders upon this day."

As the prætor gave the word of release, there was a cry of joy, — a female voice, a child's voice, and it was of joy! It rang through the heart of the assembly with electric force, — it was touching, it was holy, that child's voice! And the populace echoed it back with sympathizing congratulation!

"Silence!" said the grave prætor: "who is there?"

"The blind girl, Nydia," answered Sallust; "it is her hand that has raised Calenus from the grave, and delivered Glaucus from the lion."

"Of this hereafter," said the prætor. "Calenus, priest of Isis, thou accusest Arbaces of the murder of Apæcides?"

"I do."

"Thou didst behold the deed?"

"Prætor, with these eyes —"

"Enough at present; the details must be reserved for more suiting time and place. Arbaces of Egypt, thou hearest the charge against thee; thou hast not yet spoken: what hast thou to say?"

The gaze of the crowd had been long riveted on Arbaces; but not until the confusion which he had betrayed at the first charge of Sallust and the entrance of Calenus had subsided. At the shout, "*Arbaces to the lion!*" he had indeed trembled, and the dark bronze of his cheek had taken a paler hue. But he had soon recovered his haughtiness and self-control. Proudly he returned the angry glare of the countless eyes around him; and replying now to the question of the prætor, he said, in that accent so peculiarly tranquil and commanding, which characterized his tones, —

"Prætor, this charge is so mad that it scarcely deserves

reply. My first accuser is the noble Sallust, the most intimate friend of Glaucus; my second is a priest: I revere his garb and calling, but, people of Pompeii! ye know somewhat of the character of Calenus; he is griping and gold-thirsty to a proverb; the witness of such men is to be bought! Prætor, I am innocent!"

"Sallust," said the magistrate, "where found you Calenus?"

"In the dungeons of Arbaces."

"Egyptian," said the prætor, frowning, "thou didst, then, dare to imprison a priest of the gods: and wherefore?"

"Hear me," answered Arbaces, rising calmly, but with agitation visible in his face. "This man came to threaten that he would make against me the charge he has now made, unless I would purchase his silence with half my fortune: I remonstrated, in vain. Peace there; let not the priest interrupt me! Noble prætor, and ye, O people! I was a stranger in the land; I knew myself innocent of crime, but the witness of a priest against me might yet destroy me. In my perplexity I decoyed him to the cell whence he has been released, on pretence that it was the coffer-house of my gold. I resolved to detain him there until the fate of the true criminal was sealed, and his threats could avail no longer; but I meant no worse. I may have erred, but who amongst ye will not acknowledge the equity of self-preservation? Were I guilty, why was the witness of this priest silent at the trial! *Then* I had not detained or concealed him. Why did he not proclaim my guilt when I proclaimed that of Glaucus? Prætor, this needs an answer. For the rest, I throw myself on your laws. I demand their protection. Remove hence the accused and the accuser. I will willingly meet, and cheerfully abide by, the decision of the legitimate tribunal. This is no place for further parley."

"He says right," said the prætor. "Ho! guards, remove Arbaces, guard Calenus! Sallust, we hold you responsible for your accusation. Let the sports be resumed."

"What!" cried Calenus, turning round to the people, "shall Isis be thus contemned? Shall the blood of Apæcidas yet cry for vengeance? Shall justice be delayed now, that it may be frustrated hereafter? Shall the lion be cheated of his

lawful prey? A god! a god! I feel the god rush to my lips! *To the lion — to the lion with Arbaces!*”

His exhausted frame could support no longer the ferocious malice of the priest; he sank on the ground in strong convulsions; the foam gathered to his mouth; he was as a man, indeed, whom a supernatural power had entered. The people saw and shuddered.

“It is a god that inspires the holy man! *To the lion with the Egyptian!*”

With that cry up sprang, on moved, thousands upon thousands! They rushed from the heights; they poured down in the direction of the Egyptian. In vain did the ædile command; in vain did the prætor lift his voice and proclaim the law. The people had been already rendered savage by the exhibition of blood; they thirsted for more; their superstition was aided by their ferocity. Aroused, inflamed by the spectacle of their victims, they forgot the authority of their rulers. It was one of those dread popular convulsions common to crowds wholly ignorant, half free and half servile; and which the peculiar constitution of the Roman provinces so frequently exhibited. The power of the prætor was as a reed beneath the whirlwind; still, at his word the guards had drawn themselves along the lower benches, on which the upper classes sat separate from the vulgar. They made but a feeble barrier; the waves of the human sea halted for a moment, to enable Arbaces to count the exact moment of his doom! In despair, and in a terror which beat down even pride, he glanced his eyes over the rolling and rushing crowd, when, right above them, through the wide chasm which had been left in the velaria, he beheld a strange and awful apparition; he beheld, and his craft restored his courage!

He stretched his hand on high; over his lofty brow and royal features there came an expression of unutterable solemnity and command.

“Behold!” he shouted with a voice of thunder, which stilled the roar of the crowd; “behold how the gods protect the guiltless! The fires of the avenging Orcus burst forth against the false witness of my accusers!”

The eyes of the crowd followed the gesture of the Egyptian, and beheld, with ineffable dismay, a vast vapor shooting from the summit of Vesuvius, in the form of a gigantic pine-tree,¹ the trunk, blackness, the branches, fire, — a fire that shifted and wavered in its hues with every moment, now fiercely luminous, now of a dull and dying red, that again blazed terrifically forth with intolerable glare.

There was a dead, heart-sunken silence, through which there suddenly broke the roar of the lion, which was echoed back from within the building by the sharper and fiercer yells of its fellow-beast. Dread seers were they of the Burden of the Atmosphere, and wild prophets of the wrath to come!

Then there arose on high the universal shrieks of women; the men stared at each other, but were dumb. At that moment they felt the earth shake beneath their feet; the walls of the theatre trembled, and beyond in the distance they heard the crash of falling roofs; an instant more and the mountain-cloud seemed to roll towards them, dark and rapid, like a torrent; at the same time it cast forth from its bosom a shower of ashes mixed with vast fragments of burning stone! Over the crushing vines, over the desolate streets, over the amphitheatre itself, far and wide, with many a mighty splash in the agitated sea, fell that awful shower!

No longer thought the crowd of justice or of Arbaces; safety for themselves was their sole thought. Each turned to fly, — each dashing, pressing, crushing, against the other. Trampling recklessly over the fallen, amidst groans, and oaths, and prayers, and sudden shrieks, the enormous crowd vomited itself forth through the numerous passages. Whither should they fly? Some, anticipating a second earthquake, hastened to their homes to load themselves with their more costly goods, and escape while it was yet time; others, dreading the showers of ashes that now fell fast, torrent upon torrent, over the streets, rushed under the roofs of the nearest houses, or temples, or sheds, — shelter of any kind, — for protection from

¹ Pliny.

the terrors of the open air. But darker, and larger, and mightier, spread the cloud above them. It was a sudden and more ghastly Night rushing upon the realm of Noon!

CHAPTER V.

THE CELL OF THE PRISONER AND THE DEN OF THE DEAD.— GRIEF UNCONSCIOUS OF HORROR.

STUNNED by his reprieve, doubting that he was awake, Glaucus had been led by the officers of the arena into a small cell within the walls of the theatre. They threw a loose robe over his form, and crowded round him in congratulation and wonder. There was an impatient and fretful cry without the cell; the throng gave way, and the blind girl, led by some gentler hand, flung herself at the feet of Glaucus.

“It is *I* who have saved thee,” she sobbed; “now let me die!”

“Nydia, my child! my preserver!”

“Oh, let me feel thy touch, thy breath! Yes, yes, thou livest! We are not too late! That dread door, methought it would never yield! And Calenus,—oh! his voice was as the dying wind among tombs: we had to wait,—gods! it seemed hours ere food and wine restored to him something of strength. But thou livest! thou livest yet! and I—I have saved thee!”

This affecting scene was soon interrupted by the event just described.

“The mountain! the earthquake!” resounded from side to side. The officers fled with the rest; they left Glaucus and Nydia to save themselves as they might.

As the sense of the dangers around them flashed on the Athenian, his generous heart recurred to Clinthus. He, too, was reprieved from the tiger by the hand of the gods; should he be left to a no less fatal death in the neighboring cell? Taking Nydia by the hand, Glaucus hurried across the pas-

sages ; he gained the den of the Christian ! He found Olinthus kneeling and in prayer.

“ Arise ! arise ! my friend,” he cried. “ Save thyself, and fly ! See ! Nature is thy dread deliverer ! ” He led forth the bewildered Christian, and pointed to a cloud which advanced darker and darker, disgorging forth showers of ashes and pumice-stones, and bade him hearken to the cries and trampling rush of the scattered crowd.

“ This is the hand of God, — God be praised ! ” said Olinthus, devoutly.

“ Fly ! seek thy brethren ! Concert with them thy escape. Farewell ! ”

Olinthus did not answer, neither did he mark the retreating form of his friend. High thoughts and solemn absorbed his soul ; and in the enthusiasm of his kindling heart he exulted in the mercy of God rather than trembled at the evidence of His power.

At length he roused himself, and hurried on, he scarce knew whither.

The open doors of a dark, desolate cell suddenly appeared on his path ; through the gloom within there flared and flickered a single lamp, and by its light he saw three grim and naked forms stretched on the earth in death. His feet were suddenly arrested ; for amidst the terrors of that drear recess, the spoliarium of the arena, he heard a low voice calling on the name of Christ.

He could not resist lingering at that appeal : he entered the den, and his feet were dabbled in the slow streams of blood that gushed from the corpses over the sand.

“ Who,” said the Nazarene, “ calls upon the Son of God ? ”

No answer came forth ; and turning round, Olinthus beheld, by the light of the lamp, an old gray-headed man sitting on the floor, and supporting in his lap the head of one of the dead. The features of the dead man were firmly and rigidly locked in the last sleep ; but over the lip there played a fierce smile — not the Christian’s smile of hope, but the dark sneer of hatred and defiance. Yet on the face still lingered the beautiful roundness of early youth. The hair curled thick

and glossy over the unwrinkled brow, and the down of manhood but slightly shaded the marble of the hueless cheek. And over this face bent one of such unutterable sadness, of such yearning tenderness, of such fond and such deep despair! The tears of the old man fell fast and hot, but he did not feel them; and when his lips moved, and he mechanically uttered the prayer of his benign and hopeful faith, neither his heart nor his sense responded to the words: it was but the involuntary emotion that broke from the lethargy of his mind. His boy was dead, and had died for him, and the old man's heart was broken.

"Medon!" said Olinthus, pityingly, "arise, and fly! God is forth upon the wings of the elements! The New Gomorrah is doomed! Fly, ere the fires consume thee!"

"He was ever so full of life! he *cannot* be dead! Come hither! place your hand on his heart; sure it beats yet?"

"Brother, the soul has fled! We will remember it in our prayers. Thou canst not reanimate the dumb clay. Come, come—hark! while I speak, yon crashing walls!—hark! yon agonizing cries! Not a moment is to be lost! Come!"

"I hear nothing," said Medon, shaking his gray hair. "The poor boy,—his love murdered him!"

"Come! come! forgive this friendly force."

"What! Who would sever the father from the son?" And Medon clasped the body tightly in his embrace, and covered it with passionate kisses. "Go!" said he, lifting up his face for one moment. "Go! we must be alone!"

"Alas!" said the compassionate Nazarene, "Death hath severed ye already!"

The old man smiled very calmly. "No, no, no!" he muttered, his voice growing lower with each word,— "Death has been more kind!"

With that his head drooped on his son's breast, his arms relaxed their grasp. Olinthus caught him by the hand; the pulse had ceased to beat! The last words of the father were the words of truth,— *Death had been more kind.*

Meanwhile Glaucus and Nydia were pacing swiftly up the perilous and fearful streets. The Athenian had learned from

his preserver that Ione was yet in the house of Arbaces. Thither he fled, to release — to save her! The few slaves whom the Egyptian had left at his mansion when he had repaired in long procession to the amphitheatre had been able to offer no resistance to the armed band of Sallust; and when afterwards the volcano broke forth, they had huddled together, stunned and frightened, in the inmost recesses of the house. Even the tall Ethiopian had forsaken his post at the door; and Glaucus (who left Nydia without — the poor Nydia, jealous once more, even in such an hour!) passed on through the vast hall without meeting one from whom to learn the chamber of Ione. Even as he passed, however, the darkness that covered the heavens increased so rapidly that it was with difficulty he could guide his steps. The flower-wreathed columns seemed to reel and tremble, and with every instant he heard the ashes fall cranchingly into the roofless peristyle. He ascended to the upper rooms; breathless he paced along, shouting out aloud the name of Ione; and at length he heard, at the end of a gallery, a voice, — *her* voice, in wondering reply. To rush forward, to shatter the door, to seize Ione in his arms, to hurry from the mansion, seemed to him the work of an instant! Scarce had he gained the spot where Nydia was, than he heard steps advancing towards the house, and recognized the voice of Arbaces, who had returned to seek his wealth and Ione ere he fled from the doomed Pompeii. But so dense was already the reeking atmosphere, that the foes saw not each other, though so near, save that, dimly in the gloom, Glaucus caught the moving outline of the snowy robes of the Egyptian.

They hastened onward, — those three. Alas! whither? They now saw not a step before them, — the blackness became utter. They were encompassed with doubt and horror; and the death he had escaped seemed to Glaucus only to have changed its form and augmented its victims.

CHAPTER VI.

CALENUS AND BURBO. — DIOMED AND CLODIUS. — THE GIRL OF THE AMPHITHEATRE AND JULIA.

THE sudden catastrophe which had, as it were, riven the very bonds of society, and left prisoner and jailer alike free, had soon rid Calenus of the guards to whose care the prætor had consigned him. And when the darkness and the crowd separated the priest from his attendants, he hastened with trembling steps towards the temple of his goddess. As he crept along, and ere the darkness was complete, he felt himself suddenly caught by the robe, and a voice muttered in his ear, —

“Hist! Calenus! an awful hour!”

“Ay! by my father’s head! Who art thou? Thy face is dim, and thy voice is strange!”

“Not know thy Burbo? Fie!”

“Gods! how the darkness gathers! Ho, ho! by yon terrific mountain what sudden blazes of lightning!¹ How they dart and quiver! Hades is loosed on earth!”

“Tush! thou believest not these things, Calenus! Now is the time to make our fortune!”

“Ha!”

“Listen! Thy temple is full of gold and precious mummies. Let us load ourselves with them, and then hasten to the sea and embark. None will ever ask an account of the doings of this day.”

“Burbo, thou art right! Hush! and follow me into the temple. Who cares now, who sees now, whether thou art a priest or not? Follow, and we will share.”

In the precincts of the temple were many priests gathered around the altars, praying, weeping, grovelling in the dust. Impostors in safety, they were not the less superstitious in

¹ Volcanic lightnings. These phenomena were especially the characteristic of the long subsequent eruption of 1779, and their evidence is visible in the tokens of that more awful one now so imperfectly described.

danger. Calenus passed them, and entered the chamber yet to be seen in the south side of the court. Burbo followed him; the priest struck a light. Wine and viands strewed the table, the remains of a sacrificial feast.

"A man who has hungered forty-eight hours," muttered Calenus, "has an appetite even in such a time." He seized on the food and devoured it greedily. Nothing could, perhaps, be more unnaturally horrid than the selfish baseness of these villains; for there is nothing more loathsome than the valor of avarice. Plunder and sacrilege while the pillars of the world tottered to and fro! What an increase to the terrors of nature can be made by the vices of man!

"Wilt thou never have done?" said Burbo, impatiently; "thy face purples and thine eyes start already."

"It is not every day one has such a right to be hungry. O Jupiter! what sound is that? The hissing of fiery water! What! does the cloud give rain as well as flame! Ha! what! shrieks? And, Burbo, how silent all is now! Look forth!"

Amidst the other horrors, the mighty mountain now cast up columns of boiling water. Blent and kneaded with the half-burning ashes, the streams fell like seething mud over the streets in frequent intervals. And full, where the priests of Isis had now cowered around the altars, on which they had vainly sought to kindle fires and pour incense, one of the fiercest of those deadly torrents, mingled with immense fragments of scoria, had poured its rage. Over the bended forms of the priests it dashed: that cry had been of death; that silence had been of eternity. The ashes, the pitchy stream, sprinkled the altars, covered the pavement, and half concealed the quivering corpses of the priests.

"They are dead," said Burbo, terrified for the first time, and hurrying back into the cell. "I thought not the danger was so near and fatal."

The two wretches stood staring at each other; you might have heard their hearts beat! Calenus, the less bold by nature, but the more griping, recovered first.

"We must to our task, and away!" he said, in a low whisper, frightened at his own voice. He stepped to the threshold,

paused, crossed over the heated floor and his dead brethren to the sacred chapel, and called to Burbo to follow; but the gladiator quaked, and drew back.

“So much the better,” thought Calenus; “the more will be *my* booty.” Hastily he loaded himself with the more portable treasures of the temple, and thinking no more of his comrade, hurried from the sacred place. A sudden flash of lightning from the mount showed to Burbo, who stood motionless at the threshold, the flying and laden form of the priest. He took heart; he stepped forth to join him, when a tremendous shower of ashes fell right before his feet. The gladiator shrank back once more. Darkness closed him in. But the shower continued fast, fast; its heaps rose high and suffocatingly; deathly vapors steamed from them. The wretch gasped for breath; he sought in despair again to fly: the ashes had blocked up the threshold; he shrieked as his feet shrank from the boiling fluid. How could he escape? He could not climb to the open space; nay, were he able, he could not brave its horrors. It were best to remain in the cell, protected, at least, from the fatal air. He sat down and clenched his teeth. By degrees the atmosphere from without — stifling and venomous — crept into the chamber. He could endure it no longer. His eyes, glaring round, rested on a sacrificial axe, which some priest had left in the chamber: he seized it. With the desperate strength of his gigantic arm he attempted to hew his way through the walls.

Meanwhile the streets were already thinned; the crowd had hastened to disperse itself under shelter; the ashes began to fill up the lower parts of the town; but here and there you heard the steps of fugitives cranching them warily, or saw their pale and haggard faces by the blue glare of the lightning, or the more unsteady glare of torches, by which they endeavored to steer their steps. But ever and anon the boiling water, or the stragglng ashes, mysterious and gusty winds, rising and dying in a breath, extinguished these wandering lights, and with them the last living hope of those who bore them.

In the street that leads to the gate of Herculaneum, Clodius now bent his perplexed and doubtful way. “If I can gain the open country,” thought he, “doubtless there will be various

vehicles beyond the gate; and Herculaneum is not far distant. Thank Mercury! I have little to lose, and that little is about me!"

"Holloa! help there, — help!" cried a querulous and frightened voice. "I have fallen down, my torch has gone out, my slaves have deserted me. I am Diomed, — the rich Diomed; ten thousand sesterces to him who helps me!"

At the same moment Clodius felt himself caught by the feet. "Ill fortune to thee; let me go, fool!" said the gambler.

"Oh, help me up! give me thy hand!"

"There, rise!"

"Is this Clodius? I know the voice! Whither fliest thou?"

"Towards Herculaneum."

"Blessed be the gods! our way is the same, then, as far as the gate. Why not take refuge in my villa? Thou knowest the long range of subterranean cellars beneath the basement, — that shelter what shower can penetrate?"

"You speak well," said Clodius, musingly. "And by storing the cellar with food, we can remain there even some days, should these wondrous storms endure so long."

"Oh, blessed be he who invented gates to a city!" cried Diomed. "See, they have placed a light within yon arch: by that let us guide our steps."

The air was now still for a few minutes; the lamp from the gate streamed out far and clear; the fugitives hurried on, they gained the gate, they passed by the Roman sentry; the lightning flashed over his livid face and polished helmet, but his stern features were composed even in their awe. He remained erect and motionless at his post. That hour itself had not animated the machine of the ruthless majesty of Rome into the reasoning and self-acting man. There he stood, amidst the crashing elements; he had not received the permission to desert his station and escape.¹

Diomed and his companions hurried on, when suddenly a female form rushed athwart their way. It was the girl whose ominous voice had been raised so often and so gladly in anticipation of "the merry show!"

¹ The skeletons of more than one sentry were found at their posts.

"O Diomed," she cried, "shelter! shelter! See," — pointing to an infant clasped to her breast, — "see this little one; it is mine, — the child of shame! I have never owned it till this hour. But *now* I remember I am a mother. I have plucked it from the cradle of its nurse; *she* had fled. Who could think of the babe in such an hour but she who bore it? Save it! save it!"

"Curses on thy shrill voice! Away, harlot," muttered Clodius between his ground teeth.

"Nay, girl," said the more humane Diomed: "follow if thou wilt. This way, this way: to the vaults."

They hurried on; they arrived at the house of Diomed; they laughed aloud as they crossed the threshold, for they deemed the danger over.

Diomed ordered his slaves to carry down into the subterranean gallery before described a profusion of food, and oil for lights; and there Julia, Clodius, the mother and her babe, the greater part of the slaves, and some frightened visitors and clients of the neighborhood, sought their shelter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROGRESS OF THE DESTRUCTION.

THE cloud, which had scattered so deep a murkiness over the day, had now settled into a solid and impenetrable mass. It resembled less even the thickest gloom of night in the open air than the close and blind darkness of some narrow room.¹ But in proportion as the blackness gathered did the lightnings around Vesuvius increase in their vivid and scorching glare. Nor was their horrible beauty confined to the usual hues of fire; no rainbow ever rivalled their varying and prodigal dyes. Now brightly blue as the most azure depth of a southern sky; now of a livid and snake-like green, darting restlessly to and fro, as the folds of an enormous serpent; now of a lurid and intolerable crimson, gushing forth through the columns of

¹ Pliny.

smoke, far and wide, and lighting up the whole city from arch to arch; then suddenly dying into a sickly paleness, like the ghost of their own life.

In the pauses of the showers you heard the rumbling of the earth beneath, and the groaning waves of the tortured sea; or, lower still, and audible but to the watch of intensest fear, the grinding and hissing murmur of the escaping gases through the chasms of the distant mountain. Sometimes the cloud appeared to break from its solid mass, and, by the lightning, to assume quaint and vast mimeries of human or of monster shapes, striding across the gloom, hurtling one upon the other, and vanishing swiftly into the turbulent abyss of shade; so that to the eyes and fancies of the affrighted wanderers, the unsubstantial vapors were as the bodily forms of gigantic foes, the agents of terror and of death.¹

The ashes in many places were already knee-deep; and the boiling showers which came from the steaming breath of the volcano forced their way into the houses, bearing with them a strong and suffocating vapor. In some places, immense fragments of rock, hurled upon the house-roofs, bore down along the streets masses of confused ruin, which yet more and more, with every hour, obstructed the way; and as the day advanced, the motion of the earth was more sensibly felt; the footing seemed to slide and creep, nor could chariot or litter be kept steady, even on the most level ground.

Sometimes the huger stones, striking against each other as they fell, broke into countless fragments, emitting sparks of fire, which caught whatever was combustible within their reach; and along the plains beyond the city the darkness was now terribly relieved, for several houses, and even vineyards, had been set on flames; and at various intervals the fires rose sullenly and fiercely against the solid gloom. To add to this partial relief of the darkness, the citizens had, here and there, in the more public places, such as the porticos of temples and the entrances to the forum, endeavored to place rows of torches; but these rarely continued long; the showers and the winds extinguished them, and the sudden darkness in-^{to}

¹ Dion Cassius.

which their sudden birth was converted had something in it doubly terrible and doubly impressing on the impotence of human hopes, the lesson of despair.

Frequently, by the momentary light of these torches, parties of fugitives encountered each other, some hurrying towards the sea, others flying from the sea back to the land; for the ocean had retreated rapidly from the shore: an utter darkness lay over it, and upon its groaning and tossing waves the storm of cinders and rock fell without the protection which the streets and roofs afforded to the land. Wild, haggard, ghastly with supernatural fears, these groups encountered each other, but without the leisure to speak, to consult, to advise; for the showers fell now frequently, though not continuously, extinguishing the lights, which showed to each band the death-like faces of the other, and hurrying all to seek refuge beneath the nearest shelter. The whole elements of civilization were broken up. Ever and anon, by the flickering lights, you saw the thief hastening by the most solemn authorities of the law, laden with, and fearfully chuckling over, the produce of his sudden gains. If, in the darkness, wife was separated from husband, or parent from child, vain was the hope of reunion. Each hurried blindly and confusedly on. Nothing in all the various and complicated machinery of social life was left, save the primal law of self-preservation!

Through this awful scene did the Athenian make his way, accompanied by Ione and the blind girl. Suddenly a rush of hundreds, in their path to the sea, swept by them. Nydia was torn from the side of Glaucus, who, with Ione, was borne rapidly onward; and when the crowd (whose forms they saw not, so thick was the gloom) were gone, Nydia was still separated from their side. Glaucus shouted her name. No answer came. They retraced their steps,—in vain: they could not discover her; it was evident that she had been swept along some opposite direction by the human current. Their friend, their preserver, was lost! And hitherto Nydia had been their guide. *Her blindness rendered the scene familiar to her alone.* Accustomed, through a perpetual night, to thread the windings of the city, she had led them unerr-

ingly towards the sea-shore, by which they had resolved to hazard an escape. Now, which way could they wend? All was rayless to them, — a maze without a clew. Wearied, despondent, bewildered, they, however, passed along, the ashes falling upon their heads, the fragmentary stones dashing up in sparkles before their feet.

“Alas! alas!” murmured Ione, “I can go no farther; my steps sink among the scorching cinders. Fly, dearest! — beloved, fly! and leave me to my fate!”

“Hush, my betrothed! my bride! Death with thee is sweeter than life without thee! Yet, whither — oh! whither, can we direct ourselves through the gloom? Already it seems that we have made but a circle, and are in the very spot which we quitted an hour ago.”

“O gods! yon rock, — see, it hath riven the roof before us! It is death to move through the streets!”

“Blessed lightning! See, Ione — see! the portico of the Temple of Fortune is before us. Let us creep beneath it; it will protect us from the showers.”

He caught his beloved in his arms, and with difficulty and labor gained the temple. He bore her to the remoter and more sheltered part of the portico, and leaned over her that he might shield her with his own form from the lightning and the showers! The beauty and the unselfishness of love could hallow even that dismal time!

“Who is there?” said the trembling and hollow voice of one who had preceded them in their place of refuge. “Yet what matters? The crush of the ruined world forbids to us friends or foes.”

Ione turned at the sound of that voice, and, with a faint shriek, cowered again beneath the arms of Glaucus: and he, looking in the direction of the voice, beheld the cause of her alarm. Through the darkness glared forth two burning eyes, — the lightning flashed and lingered athwart the temple, — and Glaucus, with a shudder, perceived the lion to which he had been doomed couched beneath the pillars; and, close beside it, unwitting of the vicinity, lay the giant form of him who had accosted them, — the wounded gladiator, Niger.

That lightning had revealed to each other the form of beast and man ; yet the instinct of both was quelled. Nay, the lion crept near and nearer to the gladiator, as for companionship ; and the gladiator did not recede or tremble. The Revolution of Nature had dissolved her lighter terrors as well as her wonted ties.

While they were thus terribly protected, a group of men and women, bearing torches, passed by the temple. They were of the congregation of the Nazarenes, and a sublime and unearthly emotion had not, indeed, quelled their awe, but it had robbed awe of fear. They had long believed, according to the error of the early Christians, that the Last Day was at hand ; they imagined now that the day had come.

“Woe! woe!” cried, in a shrill and piercing voice, the elder at their head. “Behold! the Lord descendeth to judgment! He maketh fire come down from heaven in the sight of men! Woe! woe! ye strong and mighty! Woe to ye of the fasces and the purple! Woe to the idolater and the worshipper of the beast! Woe to ye who pour forth the blood of saints, and gloat over the death-pangs of the sons of God! Woe to the harlot of the sea! Woe! woe!”

And with a loud and deep chorus the troop chanted forth along the wild horrors of the air, “Woe to the harlot of the sea! Woe! woe!”

The Nazarenes paced slowly on, their torches still flickering in the storm, their voices still raised in menace and solemn warning, till, lost amid the windings in the streets, the darkness of the atmosphere and the silence of death again fell over the scene.

There was one of the frequent pauses in the showers, and Glaucus encouraged Ione once more to proceed. Just as they stood, hesitating, on the last step of the portico, an old man, with a bag in his right hand and leaning upon a youth, tottered by. The youth bore a torch. Glaucus recognized the two as father and son, — miser and prodigal.

“Father,” said the youth, “if you cannot move more swiftly, I must leave you, or we *both* perish!”

“Fly, boy, then, and leave thy sire!”

"But I cannot fly to starve; give me thy bag of gold!"
And the youth snatched at it.

"Wretch! wouldst thou rob thy father?"

"Ay! who can tell the tale in this hour? Miser, perish!"

The boy struck the old man to the ground, plucked the bag from his relaxing hand, and fled onward with a shrill yell.

"Ye gods!" cried Glaucus; "are ye blind, then, even in the dark? Such crimes may well confound the guiltless with the guilty in one common ruin. Ione, on! on!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES ENCOUNTERS GLAUCUS AND IONE.

ADVANCING, as men grope for escape in a dungeon, Ione and her lover continued their uncertain way. At the moments when the volcanic lightnings lingered over the streets, they were enabled, by that awful light, to steer and guide their progress: yet little did the view it presented to them cheer or encourage their path. In parts, where the ashes lay dry and uncommixed with the boiling torrents cast upward from the mountain at capricious intervals, the surface of the earth presented a leprous and ghastly white. In other places, cinder and rock lay matted in heaps, from beneath which emerged the half-hid limbs of some crushed and mangled fugitive. The groans of the dying were broken by wild shrieks of women's terror, now near, now distant, which, when heard in the utter darkness, were rendered doubly appalling by the crushing sense of helplessness and the uncertainty of the perils around; and clear and distinct through all were the mighty and various noises from the Fatal Mountain, — its rushing winds, its whirling torrents, and from time to time the burst and roar of some more fiery and fierce explosion. And ever as the winds swept howling along the street they bore sharp streams of burning dust, and such sickening and poisonous vapors as took away, for the instant, breath and consciousness, followed

by a rapid revulsion of the arrested blood, and a tingling sensation of agony trembling through every nerve and fibre of the frame.

“Oh, Glaucus, my beloved! my own! take me to thy arms! One embrace! let me feel thy arms around me, and in that embrace let me die; I can no more!”

“For my sake, for my life, courage yet, sweet Ione: my life is linked with thine. And see — torches — this way! Lo! how they brave the wind! Ha! they live through the storm, doubtless fugitives to the sea! we will join them.”

As if to aid and reanimate the lovers, the winds and showers came to a sudden pause; the atmosphere was profoundly still, the mountain seemed at rest, gathering, perhaps, fresh fury for its next burst; the torch-bearers moved quickly on. “We are nearing the sea,” said, in a calm voice, the person at their head. “Liberty and wealth to each slave who survives this day! Courage! I tell you that the gods themselves have assured me of deliverance! On!”

Redly and steadily the torches flashed full on the eyes of Glaucus and Ione, who lay trembling and exhausted on his bosom. Several slaves were bearing, by the light, panniers and coffers, heavily laden; in front of them, a drawn sword in his hand, towered the lofty form of Arbaces.

“By my fathers!” cried the Egyptian, “Fate smiles upon me even through these horrors, and, amidst the dreaddest aspects of woe and death, bodes me happiness and love. Away, Greek! I claim my ward, Ione!”

“Traitor and murderer!” cried Glaucus, glaring upon his foe, “Nemesis hath guided thee to my revenge, — a just sacrifice to the shades of Hades, that now seemed loosed on earth! Approach, touch but the hand of Ione, and thy weapon shall be as a reed: I will tear thee limb from limb!”

Suddenly, as he spoke, the place became lighted with an intense and lurid glow. Bright and gigantic through the darkness, which closed around it like the walls of hell, the mountain shone, — a pile of fire! Its summit seemed riven in two; or rather, above its surface there seemed to rise two monster shapes, each confronting each, as Demons contending

for a World. These were of one deep blood-red hue of fire, which lighted up the whole atmosphere far and wide; but, *below*, the nether part of the mountain was still dark and shrouded, save in three places, adown which flowed serpentine and irregular rivers of the molten lava.¹ Darkly red through the profound gloom of their banks, they flowed slowly on, as towards the devoted city. Over the broadest there seemed to spring a cragged and stupendous arch, from which, as from the jaws of hell, gushed the sources of the sudden Phlegethon; and through the stilled air was heard the rattling of the fragments of rock, hurtling one upon another as they were borne down the fiery cataracts, darkening, for one instant, the spot where they fell, and suffused, the next, in the burnished hues of the flood along which they floated!

The slaves shrieked aloud, and, cowering, hid their faces. The Egyptian himself stood transfixed to the spot, the glow lighting up his commanding features and jewelled robes. High behind him rose a tall column that supported the bronze statue of Augustus; and the imperial image seemed changed to a shape of fire!

With his left hand circled round the form of Ione, with his right arm raised in menace, and grasping the stilus which was to have been his weapon in the arena, and which he still fortunately bore about him, with his brow knit, his lips apart, the wrath and menace of human passions arrested as by a charm, upon his features, Glaucus fronted the Egyptian!

Arbaces turned his eyes from the mountain; they rested on the form of Glaucus! He paused a moment. "Why," he muttered, "should I hesitate? Did not the stars foretell the only crisis of imminent peril to which I was subjected? Is not that peril past?"

"The soul," cried he aloud, "can brave the wreck of worlds and the wrath of imaginary gods! By that soul will I conquer to the last! Advance, slaves! Athenian, resist me, and thy blood be on thine own head! Thus, then, I regain Ione!"

He advanced one step; it was his last on earth! The ground shook beneath him with a convulsion that cast all around upon

¹ See note (a) at the end

its surface. A simultaneous crash resounded through the city, as down toppled many a roof and pillar! The lightning, as if caught by the metal, lingered an instant on the Imperial Statue, then shivered bronze and column! Down fell the ruin, echoing along the street, and riving the solid pavement where it crashed! The prophecy of the stars was fulfilled.

The sound, the shock, stunned the Athenian for several moments. When he recovered, the light still illumined the scene, the earth still slid and trembled beneath! Ione lay senseless on the ground; but he saw her not yet: his eyes were fixed upon a ghastly face that seemed to emerge, without limbs or trunk, from the huge fragments of the shattered column, a face of unutterable pain, agony, and despair! The eyes shut and opened rapidly, as if sense were not yet fled; the lips quivered and grinned; then sudden stillness and darkness fell over the features, yet retaining that aspect of horror never to be forgotten!

So perished the wise Magician, the great Arbaces, the Her-
mes of the Burning Belt, the last of the royalty of Egypt!

CHAPTER IX.

THE DESPAIR OF THE LOVERS. — THE CONDITION OF THE MULTITUDE.

GLAUCUS turned in gratitude but in awe, caught Ione once more in his arms, and fled along the street, that was yet intensely luminous. But suddenly a duller shade fell over the air. Instinctively he turned to the mountain, and behold! one of the two gigantic crests, into which the summit had been divided, rocked and wavered to and fro; and then, with a sound, the mightiness of which no language can describe, it fell from its burning base, and rushed, an avalanche of fire, down the sides of the mountain! At the same instant gushed forth a volume of blackest smoke, rolling on over air, sea, and earth.

Another — and another — and another shower of ashes far more profuse than before, scattered fresh desolation along the streets. Darkness once more wrapped them as a veil; and Glaucus, his bold heart at last quelled and despairing, sank beneath the cover of an arch, and, clasping Ione to his heart, — a bride on that couch of ruin, — resigned himself to die.

Meanwhile Nydia, when separated by the throng from Glaucus and Ione, had in vain endeavored to regain them. In vain she raised that plaintive cry so peculiar to the blind; it was lost amidst a thousand shrieks of more selfish terror. Again and again she returned to the spot where they had been divided, — to find her companions gone, to seize every fugitive, to inquire of Glaucus, to be dashed aside in the impatience of distraction. Who in that hour spared one thought to his neighbor? Perhaps in scenes of universal horror, nothing is more horrid than the unnatural selfishness they engender. At length it occurred to Nydia, that as it had been resolved to seek the sea-shore for escape, her most probable chance of rejoining her companions would be to persevere in that direction. Guiding her steps, then, by the staff which she always carried, she continued, with incredible dexterity, to avoid the masses of ruin that encumbered the path, to thread the streets, and unerringly (so blessed now was that accustomed darkness, so afflicting in ordinary life!) to take the nearest direction to the sea-side.

Poor girl! her courage was beautiful to behold, and Fate seemed to favor one so helpless. The boiling torrents touched her not, save by the general rain which accompanied them; the huge fragments of scoria shivered the pavement before and beside her, but spared that frail form: and when the lesser ashes fell over her, she shook them away with a slight tremor,¹ and dauntlessly resumed her course.

Weak, exposed yet fearless, supported but by one wish, she was a very emblem of Psyche in her wanderings; of Hope, walking through the Valley of the Shadow; of the soul it-

¹ "A heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which every now and then we were obliged to shake off, otherwise we should have been crushed and buried in the heap." — *Pliny*.

self, lone but undaunted, amidst the dangers and the snares of life!

Her path was, however, constantly impeded by the crowds that now groped amidst the gloom, now fled in the temporary glare of the lightnings across the scene; and at length, a group of torch-bearers rushing full against her, she was thrown down with some violence.

“What!” said the voice of one of the party, “is this the brave blind girl? By Bacchus, she must not be left here to die! Up! my Thessalian! So—so. Are you hurt? That’s well. Come along with us! we are for the shore!”

“O Sallust! It is thy voice! The gods be thanked! Glaucus! Glaucus! have ye seen him?”

“Not I. He is doubtless out of the city by this time. The gods who saved him from the lion will save him from the burning mountain.”

As the kindly epicure thus encouraged Nydia, he drew her along with him towards the sea, heeding not her passionate entreaties that he would linger yet a while to search for Glaucus; and still, in the accent of despair, she continued to shriek out that beloved name, which, amidst all the roar of the convulsed elements, kept alive a music at her heart.

The sudden illumination, the bursts of the floods of lava, and the earthquake, which we have already described, chanced when Sallust and his party had just gained the direct path leading from the city to the port; and here they were arrested by an immense crowd, more than half the population of the city. They spread along the field without the walls, thousands upon thousands, uncertain whither to fly. The sea had retired far from the shore; and they who had fled to it had been so terrified by the agitation and preternatural shrinking of the element, the gasping forms of the uncouth sea things which the waves had left upon the sand, and by the sound of the huge stones cast from the mountain into the deep, that they had returned again to the land, as presenting the less frightful aspect of the two. Thus the two streams of human beings, the one seaward, the other *from* the sea, had met together, feeling a sad comfort in numbers, arrested in despair and doubt.

“The world is to be destroyed by fire,” said an old man in long loose robes, a philosopher of the Stoic school: “Stoic and Epicurean wisdom have alike agreed in this prediction; and the hour is come!”

“Yea; the hour is come!” cried a loud voice, solemn but not fearful.

Those around turned in dismay. The voice came from above them. It was the voice of Olinthus, who, surrounded by his Christian friends, stood upon an abrupt eminence on which the old Greek colonists had raised a temple to Apollo, now timeworn and half in ruin.

As he spoke, there came that sudden illumination which had heralded the death of Arbaces, and glowing over that mighty multitude, awed, crouching, breathless, never on earth had the faces of men seemed so haggard; never had meeting of mortal beings been so stamped with the horror and sublimity of dread; never, till the last trumpet sounds, shall such meeting be seen again! And above rose the form of Olinthus, with outstretched arm and prophet brow, girt with the living fires. And the crowd knew the face of him they had doomed to the fangs of the beast, *then* their victim, *now* their warner; and through the stillness again came his ominous voice, —

“The hour is come!”

The Christians repeated the cry. It was caught up; it was echoed from side to side; woman and man, childhood and old age, repeated, not aloud, but in a smothered and dreary murmur, —

“THE HOUR IS COME!”

At that moment a wild yell burst through the air; and, thinking only of escape, whither it knew not, the terrible tiger of the desert leaped amongst the throng and hurried through its parted streams. And so came the earthquake, and so darkness once more fell over the earth!

And now new fugitives arrived. Grasping the treasures no longer destined for their lord, the slaves of Arbaces joined the throng. One only of their torches yet flickered on. It was borne by Sosia; and its light falling on the face of Nydia, he recognized the Thessalian.

“What avails thy liberty now, blind girl?” said the slave.

“Who art thou? Canst thou tell me of Glaucus?”

“Ay; I saw him but a few minutes since.”

“Blessed be thy head! where?”

“Couched beneath the arch of the forum, dead or dying! Gone to rejoin Arbaces, who is no more!”

Nydia uttered not a word; she slid from the side of Sallust; silently she glided through those behind her; and retraced her steps to the city. She gained the forum, the arch; she stooped down, she felt around, she called on the name of Glaucus.

A weak voice answered, “Who calls on me? Is it the voice of the Shades? Lo! I am prepared!”

“Arise! follow me! Take my hand! Glaucus, thou shalt be saved!”

In wonder and sudden hope, Glaucus arose. “Nydia still? Ah! thou, then, art safe!”

The tender joy of his voice pierced the heart of the poor Thessalian, and she blessed him for his thought of her.

Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus followed his guide. With admirable discretion she avoided the path which led to the crowd she had just quitted, and, by another route, sought the shore.

After many pauses and incredible perseverance, they gained the sea, and joined a group, who, bolder than the rest, resolved to hazard any peril rather than continue in such a scene. In darkness they put forth to sea; but, as they cleared the land and caught new aspects of the mountain, its channels of molten fire threw a partial redness over the waves.

Utterly exhausted and worn out, Ione slept on the breast of Glaucus, and Nydia lay at his feet. Meanwhile the showers of dust and ashes, still borne aloft, fell into the wave, and scattered their snows over the deck. Far and wide, borne by the winds, those showers descended upon the remotest climes, startling even the swarthy African, and whirled along the antique soil of Syria and of Egypt.¹

¹ Dion Cassius.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEXT MORNING. — THE FATE OF NYDIA.

AND meekly, softly, beautifully dawned at last the light over the trembling deep! The winds were sinking into rest; the foam died from the glowing azure of that delicious sea. Around the east, thin mists caught gradually the rosy hues that heralded the morning; Light was about to resume her reign. Yet still, dark and massive in the distance, lay the broken fragments of the destroying cloud, from which red streaks, burning dimlier and more dim, betrayed the yet rolling fires of the mountain of the "Scorched Fields." The white walls and gleaming columns that had adorned the lovely coasts were no more. Sullen and dull were the shores so lately crested by the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The darlings of the Deep were snatched from her embrace! Century after century shall the mighty Mother stretch forth her azure arms, and know them not, moaning round the sepulchres of the Lost!

There was no *shout* from the mariners at the dawning light; it had come too gradually, and they were too wearied for such sudden bursts of joy; but there was a low, deep *murmur* of thankfulness amidst those watchers of the long night. They looked at each other and smiled; they took heart; they felt once more that there was a world around and a God above them! And in the feeling that the worst was passed, the over-wearied ones turned round, and fell placidly to sleep. In the growing light of the skies there came the silence which night had wanted, and the bark drifted calmly onward to its port. A few other vessels, bearing similar fugitives, might be seen in the expanse, apparently motionless, yet gliding also on. There was a sense of security, of companionship, and of hope, in the sight of their slender masts and white sails. What beloved friends, lost and missed in the gloom, might they not bear to safety and to shelter!

In the silence of the general sleep, Nydia rose gently. She bent over the face of Glaucus, she inhaled the deep breath of his heavy slumber; timidly and sadly she kissed his brow, his lips. She felt for his hand; it was locked in that of Ione: she sighed deeply, and her face darkened. Again she kissed his brow, and with her hair wiped from it the damps of night. "May the gods bless you, Athenian!" she murmured: "may you be happy with your beloved one; may you sometimes remember Nydia! Alas! she is of no further use on earth!"

With these words she turned away. Slowly she crept along by the *fori*, or platforms, to the farther side of the vessel, and pausing, bent low over the deep; the cool spray dashed upward on her feverish brow. "It is the kiss of death," she said; "it is welcome." The balmy air played through her waving tresses; she put them from her face, and raised those eyes — so tender, though so lightless — to the sky, whose soft face she had never seen!

"No, no!" she said, half aloud, and in a musing and thoughtful tone, "I cannot endure it; this jealous, exacting love, — it shatters my whole soul in madness! I might harm him again, wretch that I was! I have saved him, twice saved him, happy, happy thought: why not *die* happy? It is the last glad thought I can ever know. O sacred Sea! I hear thy voice invitingly: it hath a freshening and joyous call. They say that in thy embrace is dishonor, that thy victims cross not the fatal Styx: be it so! I would not meet him in the Shades, for I should meet him still with *her*! Rest, rest, rest! there is no other Elysium for a heart like mine!"

A sailor, half dozing on the deck, heard a slight splash on the waters. Drowsily he looked up, and behind, as the vessel merrily bounded on, he fancied he saw something white above the waves; but it vanished in an instant. He turned round again, and dreamed of his home and children.

When the lovers awoke, their first thought was of each other, their next of Nydia! She was not to be found: none had seen her since the night. Every crevice of the vessel was searched; there was no trace of her. Mysterious from first to last, the blind Thessalian had vanished forever from the

living world! They guessed her fate in silence: and Glaucus and Ione, while they drew nearer to each other (feeling each other the world itself), forgot their deliverance, and wept as for a departed sister.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

WHEREIN ALL THINGS CEASE.

Letter from Glaucus to Sallust, ten years after the destruction of Pompeii.

ATHENS.

“GLAUCUS to his beloved Sallust, greeting and health! You request me to visit you at Rome: no, Sallust, come rather to me at Athens! I have forsworn the Imperial City, its tumult and hollow joys. In my own land henceforth I dwell forever. The ghosts of our departed greatness are dearer to me than the gaudy life of your loud prosperity. There is a charm to me which no other spot can supply, in the porticos hallowed still by holy and venerable shades. In the olive-groves of Ilissus I still hear the voice of poetry: on the heights of Phyle the clouds of twilight seem yet the shrouds of departed freedom,—the heralds, the heralds of the morrow that shall come! You smile at my enthusiasm, Sallust! Better be hopeful in chains than resigned to their glitter. You tell me you are sure that I cannot enjoy life in these melancholy haunts of a fallen majesty. You dwell with rapture on the Roman splendors, and the luxuries of the imperial court. My Sallust, ‘*non sum qualis eram*’ (I am not what I was)! The events of my life have sobered the bounding blood of my youth. My health has never quite recovered its wonted elasticity ere it felt the pangs of disease, and languished in the damps of a criminal’s dungeon. My mind has never shaken off the dark shadow of the Last Day of Pompeii, the horror and the desolation of that awful ruin! Our beloved, our remembered Nydia! I have reared a tomb to her shade, and I see it every day from the window of my study. It keeps alive in me a tender recollection—a not unpleasing sadness—which are but a fitting homage to her fidelity, and the mysteriousness of her early death. Ione gathers the flowers, but my own hand wreathes them daily around the tomb! She was worthy of a tomb in Athens!

“You speak of the growing sect of the Christians at Rome. Sallust, to you I may confide my secret; I have pondered much over that faith, — I have adopted it. After the destruction of Pompeii, I met once more with Olinthus, — saved, alas! only for a day, and falling afterwards a martyr to the indomitable energy of his zeal. In my preservation from the lion and the earthquake he taught me to behold the hand of the unknown God! I listened, believed, adored! My own, my more than ever beloved Ione has also embraced the creed, — a creed, Sallust, which, shedding light over this world, gathers its concentrated glory, like a sunset, over the next! We know that we are united in the soul, as in the flesh, forever and forever! Ages may roll on, our very dust be dissolved, the earth shrivelled like a scroll; but round and round the circle of eternity rolls the wheel of life, imperishable, unceasing! And as the earth from the sun, so immortality drinks happiness from virtue, which is the smile upon the face of God! Visit me, then, Sallust; bring with you the learned scrolls of Epicurus, Pythagoras, Diogenes; arm yourself for defeat; and let us, amidst the groves of Academus, dispute, under a surer guide than any granted to our fathers, on the mighty problem of the true ends of life and the nature of the soul.

“Ione — at that name my heart yet beats — Ione is by my side as I write: I lift my eyes, and meet her smile. The sunlight quivers over Hymettus, and along my garden I hear the hum of the summer bees. Am I happy, ask you? Oh, what can Rome give me equal to what I possess at Athens? Here, everything awakens the soul and inspires the affections; the trees, the waters, the hills, the skies, are those of Athens! — fair, though mourning, — mother of the Poetry and the Wisdom of the World. In my hall I see the marble faces of my ancestors. In the Ceramicus I survey their tombs! In the streets, I behold the hand of Phidias and the soul of Pericles. Harmodius, Aristogiton, *they* are everywhere; but in our hearts — in *mine*, at least — they shall not perish! If anything can make me forget that I am an Athenian and not free, it is partly the soothing, the love — watchful, vivid, sleepless — of Ione: a love that has taken a new sentiment in our new creed¹: a love which none of our poets, beautiful though they be, had shadowed forth in description; for, mingled with religion, it partakes of religion; it is blended with pure and unworldly thoughts; it is that which we may hope to carry through eternity, and keep, therefore, white and unsullied, that we may not blush to confess it to our God! This is the true type of the dark fable of our Grecian Eros and Psyche;

¹ See note (b) at the end.

it is, in truth, the soul asleep in the arms of love. And if this, our love, support me partly against the fever of the desire for freedom, my religion supports me more; for whenever I would grasp the sword and sound the shell, and rush to a new Marathon (but Marathon without victory), I feel my despair at the chilling thought of my country's impotence, the crushing weight of the Roman yoke, comforted, at least, by the thought that earth is but the beginning of life; that the glory of a few years matters little in the vast space of eternity; that there is no perfect freedom till the chains of clay fall from the soul, and all space, all time, become its heritage and domain. Yet, Sallust, some mixture of the soft Greek blood still mingles with my faith. I can share not the zeal of those who see crime and eternal wrath in men who cannot believe as they. I shudder not at the creed of others. I dare not *curse* them; I pray the great Father to *convert*. This lukewarmness exposes me to some suspicion amongst the Christians: but I forgive it; and, not offending openly the prejudices of the crowd, I am thus enabled to protect my brethren from the danger of the law, and the consequences of their own zeal. If moderation seem to me the natural creature of benevolence, it gives, also, the greatest scope to beneficence.

“Such, then, O Sallust! is my life, such my opinions. In this manner I greet existence and await death. And thou, glad-hearted and kindly pupil of Epicurus, thou — But come hither, and see what enjoyments, what hopes are ours; and not the splendor of imperial banquets, nor the shouts of the crowded circus, nor the noisy forum, nor the glittering theatre, nor the luxuriant gardens, nor the voluptuous baths of Rome, shall seem to thee to constitute a life of more vivid and uninterrupted happiness than that which thou so unreasonably pitiest as the career of Glaucus the Athenian! Farewell!”

Nearly seventeen centuries had rolled away when the city of Pompeii was disinterred from its silent tomb,¹ all vivid with undimmed hues; its walls fresh as if painted yesterday; not a hue faded on the rich mosaic of its floors; in its forum the half-finished columns as left by the workman's hand; in its gardens the sacrificial tripod; in its halls the chest of treasure; in its baths the strigil; in its theatres the counter of admission; in its saloons the furniture and the lamp; in its triclinia the fragments of the last feast; in its cubicula the perfumes

¹ Destroyed A. D. 79; first discovered A. D. 1750.

and the rouge of faded beauty; and everywhere the bones and skeletons of those who once moved the springs of that minute yet gorgeous machine of luxury and of life! ¹

In the house of Diomed, in the subterranean vaults, twenty skeletons (one of a babe) were discovered in one spot by the door, covered by a fine ashen dust, that had evidently been wafted slowly through the apertures until it had filled the whole space. There were jewels and coins, candelabra for unavailing light, and wine hardened in the amphoræ for a prolongation of agonized life. The sand, consolidated by damps, had taken the forms of the skeletons as in a cast; and the traveller may yet see the impression of a female neck and bosom of young and round proportions, — the trace of the fated Julia! It seems to the inquirer as if the air had been gradually changed into a sulphurous vapor; the inmates of the vaults had rushed to the door, to find it closed and blocked up by the scoria without, and in their attempts to force it had been suffocated with the atmosphere.

In the garden was found a skeleton with a key by its bony hand, and near it a bag of coins. This is believed to have been the master of the house, — the unfortunate Diomed, who had probably sought to escape by the garden, and been destroyed either by the vapors or some fragment of stone. Beside some silver vases lay another skeleton, probably of a slave.

The houses of Sallust and of Pansa, the Temple of Isis, with the juggling concealments behind the statues, — the lurking-place of its holy oracles, — are now bared to the gaze of the curious. In one of the chambers of that temple was found a huge skeleton with an axe beside it: two walls had been pierced by the axe; the victim could penetrate no farther. In the midst of the city was found another skeleton, by the side of which was a heap of coins, and many of the mystic ornaments of the fane of Isis. Death had fallen upon him in his avarice, and Calenus perished simultaneously with Burbo! As the excavators cleared on through the mass of ruin, they found the skeleton of a man literally severed in two

¹ See note (c) at the end.

by a prostrate column ; the skull was of so striking a conformation, so boldly marked in its intellectual as well as its worse physical developments, that it has excited the constant speculation of every itinerant believer in the theories of Spurzheim, who has gazed upon that ruined palace of the mind. Still, after the lapse of ages, the traveller may survey that airy hall, within whose cunning galleries and elaborate chambers once thought, reasoned, dreamed, and sinned, the soul of Arbaces the Egyptian.

Viewing the various witnesses of a social system which has passed from the world forever, — a stranger, from that remote barbarian Isle which the Imperial Roman shivered when he named, paused amidst the delights of the soft Campania and composed this history !



RUINS OF THE HOUSE OF PANSA.

NOTES.

NOTES TO BOOK I.

(a) p. 6 — “Flowers more alluring to the ancient Italians than to their descendants,” etc.

The modern Italians, especially those of the more southern parts of Italy, have a peculiar horror of perfumes; they consider them remarkably unwholesome; and the Roman or Neapolitan lady requests her visitors not to use them. What is very strange, the nostril so susceptible of a perfume is wonderfully obtuse to its reverse. You may literally call Rome, “*Sentina Gentium*,” — the sink of nations.

(b) p. 27. — “The sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius.”

A very curious and interesting treatise might be written on the parasites of Greece and Rome. In the former, they were more degraded than in the latter country. The *Epistles* of Alciphron express, in a lively manner, the insults which they underwent for the sake of a dinner: one man complains that fish-sauce was thrown into his eyes, that he was beat on the head, and given to eat stones smeared with honey; while a courtesan threw at him a bladder filled with blood, which burst on his face and covered him with the stream. The manner in which these parasites repaid the hospitality of their hosts was, like that of modern diners-out, by witty jokes and amusing stories; sometimes they indulged practical jokes on each other, “boxing one another’s ears.” The magistrates at Athens appear to have looked very sternly upon these humble buffoons, and they complain of stripes and a prison with no philosophical resignation. In fact, the parasite seems at Athens to have answered the purpose of the fool of the Middle Ages; but he was far more worthless and perhaps more witty; the associate of courtesans, uniting the pimp with the buffoon. This is a character peculiar to Greece. The Latin comic writers made indeed prodigal use of the parasite; yet he appears at Rome to have held a somewhat higher rank, and to have met with a somewhat milder treatment, than at Athens. Nor do the delineations of Terence, which, in portraying Athenian manners, probably soften down whatever would have been exaggerated to a Roman audience, present so degraded or so abandoned a character as the parasite of Alciphron and Athenæus. The more haughty and fastidious Romans often disdained indeed to admit such buffoons as compan-

ions, and hired (as we may note in Pliny's *Epistles*) fools or mountebanks, to entertain their guests and to supply the place of the Grecian parasite. When (be it observed) Clodius is styled parasite in the text, the reader must take the modern, not the ancient interpretation of the word.

A very feeble, but very flattering reflex of a parasite was the umbra or shadow, who accompanied any invited guest, and who was sometimes a man of equal consequence, though usually a poor relative or an humble friend; in modern cant, "a toady." Such is the umbra of our friend Clodius.

(c) p. 30 — "The dice in summer, and I an ædile!"

All games of chance were forbidden by law ("Vetitâ legibus aleâ." — *Horat. Od.* xxiv. 1, 3), except "in Saturnalibus," during the month of December; the ædiles were charged with enforcing this law, which, like all laws against gaming, in all times, was wholly ineffectual.

(d) p. 37. — "The small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis."

Sylla is said to have transported to Italy the worship of the Egyptian Isis.¹ It soon became "the rage," and was peculiarly in vogue with the Roman ladies. Its priesthood were sworn to chastity, and, like all such brotherhoods, were noted for their licentiousness. Juvenal styles the priestesses by a name (*Isiacæ lenæ*) that denotes how convenient they were to lovers, and under the mantle of night many an amorous intrigue was carried on in the purlieus of the sacred temples. A lady vowed for so many nights to watch by the shrine of Isis: it was a sacrifice of continence towards her husband, to be bestowed on her lover! While one passion of human nature was thus appealed to, another scarcely less strong was also pressed into the service of the goddess, namely, Credulity. The priests of Isis arrogated a knowledge of magic and of the future. Among women of all classes, and among many of the harder sex, the Egyptian sorceries were consulted and revered as oracles. Voltaire, with much plausible ingenuity, endeavors to prove that the gypsies are a remnant of the ancient priests and priestesses of Isis, intermixed with those of the goddess of Syria. In the time of Apuleius these holy impostors had lost their dignity and importance; despised and poor, they wandered from place to place selling prophecies and curing disorders; and Voltaire shrewdly bids us remark that Apuleius has not forgot their peculiar skill in filching from outhouses and courtyards; afterwards they practised palmistry and singular dances (query, the Bohemian dances?). "Such," says the too-conclusive Frenchman, "such has been the end of the ancient religion of Isis and Osiris, whose very names still impress us with awe!" At the time in which my story is cast, the worship of Isis was, however, in the highest repute; and the wealthy devotees sent even to the Nile, that they might sprinkle its mysterious waters over the altars of the goddess. I have introduced the ibis in the sketch of the temple of Isis, although it has been supposed that that bird languished and died when

¹ In the Campanian cities the trade with Alexandria was probably more efficacious than the piety of Sylla (no very popular example, perhaps) in establishing the worship of the favorite deity of Egypt.

taken from Egypt. But from various reasons, too long now to enumerate, I incline to believe that the ibis was by no means unfrequent in the Italian temples of Isis, though it rarely lived long, and refused to breed in a foreign climate.

NOTE TO BOOK II.

(a) p. 144. — “The marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius.”

During the earlier ages of the Christian epoch, the heathen philosophy, especially of Pythagoras and of Plato, had become debased and adulterated, not only by the wildest mysticism, but the most chimerical dreams of magic. Pythagoras, indeed, scarcely merited a nobler destiny; for though he was an exceedingly clever man, he was a most prodigious mountebank, and was exactly formed to be the great father of a school of magicians. Pythagoras himself either cultivated magic or arrogated its attributes, and his followers told marvellous tales of his writing on the moon's disk, and appearing in several places at once. His golden rules and his golden thigh were in especial veneration in Magna Græcia, and out of his doctrines of occult numbers his followers extracted numbers of doctrines. The most remarkable of the later impostors who succeed him was Apollonius of Tyana, referred to in the text. All sorts of prodigies accompanied the birth of this gentleman. Proteus, the Egyptian god, foretold to his mother, yet pregnant, that it was he himself (Proteus) who was about to reappear in the world through her agency. After this, Proteus might well be considered to possess the power of transformation! Apollonius knew the language of birds, read men's thoughts in their bosoms, and walked about with a familiar spirit. He was a devil of a fellow with a devil, and induced a mob to stone a poor demon of venerable and mendicant appearance, who after the lapidary operation changed into a huge dog. He raised the dead, passed a night with Achilles, and, when Domitian was murdered, he called out aloud (though at Ephesus at the moment), “Strike the tyrant!” The end of so honest and great a man was worthy his life. It would seem that he ascended into heaven. What less could be expected of one who had stoned the devil! Should any English writer meditate a new Faust, I recommend to him Apollonius.

But the magicians of *this* sort were philosophers (!), excellent men and pious; there were others of a far darker and deadlier knowledge, the followers of the Goetic magic; in other words, the Black Art. Both of these, the Goetic and the Theurgic, seem to be of Egyptian origin; and it is evident, at least, that their practitioners appeared to pride themselves on drawing their chief secrets from that ancient source, and both are intimately connected with astrology. In attributing to Arbaces the knowledge and the repute of magic, as well as that of the science of the stars, I am, therefore, perfectly in accordance with the spirit of his time and the circumstances of his birth. He is a characteristic of that age. At one time I purposed to have developed and detailed more than I have done the pretensions of Arbaces to the mastery of his art, and to have initiated the reader into the various sorceries of the period. But

as the character of the Egyptian grew upon me, I felt that it was necessary to be sparing of that machinery which, thanks to the march of knowledge, every one now may fancy he can detect. Such as he is, Arbaces is become too much of an intellectual creation to demand a frequent repetition of the coarser and more physical materials of terror. I suffered him, then, merely to demonstrate his capacities in the elementary and obvious secrets of his craft, and leave the subtler magic he possesses to rest in mystery and shadow.

As to the Witch of Vesuvius, her spells and her philtres, her cavern and its appliances, however familiar to us of the North, are faithful also to her time and nation. A witch of a lighter character, and manners less ascetic the learned reader will remember with delight in the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius; and the reader who is *not* learned is recommended to the spirited translations of that enchanting romance by Taylor.

NOTE TO BOOK III.

(a) p. 163 — “The influence of the evil eye.”

This superstition, to which I have more than once alluded throughout this work, still flourishes in Magna Græcia, with scarcely diminished vigor. I remember conversing at Naples with a lady of the highest rank, and of intellect and information very uncommon amongst the noble Italians of either sex, when I suddenly observed her change color, and make a rapid and singular motion with her finger. “My God, that man!” she whispered, tremblingly.

“What man?”

“See! the Count —! he has just entered!”

“He ought to be much flattered to cause such emotion; doubtless he has been one of the Signora’s admirers?”

“Admirer! Heaven forbid. He has the evil eye! His look fell full upon me. Something dreadful will certainly happen.”

“I see nothing remarkable in his eyes.”

“So much the worse. The danger is greater for being disguised. He is a terrible man. The last time he looked upon my husband, it was at cards, and he lost half his income at a sitting; his ill-luck was miraculous. The Count met my little boy in the gardens, and the poor child broke his arm that evening. Oh! what shall I do? Something dreadful will certainly happen; and, heavens! he is admiring my cap!”

“Does every one find the eyes of the Count equally fatal, and his admiration equally exciting?”

“Every one — he is universally dreaded; and, what is very strange, he is so angry if he sees you avoid him!”

“That is very strange indeed, — the wretch!”

At Naples the superstition works well for the jewellers, — so many charms and talismans as they sell for the ominous fascination of the *mal-occhio*! In Pompeii the talismans were equally numerous, but not always of so elegant a shape, nor of so decorous a character. But, generally speaking, a coral ornament was, as it now is, among the favorite averters of the evil influence. The Thebans about Pontus were supposed to have an hereditary claim to this

charming attribute, and could even kill grown-up men with a glance. As for Africa, where the belief also still exists, certain families could not only destroy children, but wither up trees: they did this, not with curses but praises. The *malus oculus* was not always different from the eyes of other people. But persons, especially of the fairer sex, with double pupils to the organ, were above all to be shunned and dreaded. The Illyrians were said to possess this fatal deformity. In all countries, even in the North, the eye has ever been held the chief seat of fascination; but now-a-days, ladies with a single pupil manage the work of destruction pretty easily. So much do we improve upon our forefathers!

NOTE TO BOOK IV.

(a) p. 376.

“ We care not for gods up above us, —
We know there ’s no god for this earth, boys ! ”

The doctrines of Epicurus himself are pure and simple. Far from denying the existence of diviner powers, Velleius (the defender and explainer of his philosophy in Cicero’s dialogue on the nature of the gods) asserts “ that Epicurus was the first who saw that there were gods, from the impression which Nature herself makes on the minds of all men.” He imagined the belief of the Deity to be an innate or antecedent notion (*πρόληψις*) of the mind, — a doctrine of which modern metaphysicians (certainly not Epicureans) have largely availed themselves! He believed that worship was due to the divine powers from the veneration which felicity and excellence command, and not from any dread of their vengeance or awe of their power: a sublime and fearless philosophy, suitable perhaps to half a dozen great and refined spirits, but which would present no check to the passions of the mass of mankind. According to him, the gods were far too agreeably employed in contemplating their own happiness to trouble their heads about the sorrows and the joys, the quarrels and the cares, the petty and transitory affairs of man. For this earth they were unsympathizing abstractions: —

“ Wrapt up in majesty divine,
Can they regard on what we dine ! ”

Cotta, who, in the dialogue referred to, attacks the philosophy of Epicurus with great pleasantry, and considerable, though not uniform, success, draws the evident and practical corollary from the theory that asserts the non-interference of the gods. “ How,” says he, “ can there be sanctity, if the gods regard not human affairs? If the Deity show no benevolence to man, let us dismiss Him at once. Why should I entreat Him to be propitious? He cannot be propitious, — since, according to you, favor and benevolence are only the effects of imbecility.” Cotta, indeed, quotes from Posidonius (*De Naturâ Deorum*), to prove that Epicurus did not really believe in the existence of a God; but that his concession of a being wholly nugatory was merely a precaution against accusations of atheism. “ Epicurus could not be such a fool,” says Cotta, “ as sincerely to believe that a Deity has the members of a man without the power to use them, — a *thin pellucidity*, regarding no one and doing

nothing." And, whether this be true or false concerning Epicurus, it is certain that, to all effects and purposes, his later disciples were but refining atheists. The sentiments uttered in the song in the text are precisely those professed in sober prose by the graceful philosophers of the garden, who, as they had wholly perverted the morals of Epicurus, which are at once pure and practical, found it a much easier task to corrupt his metaphysics, which are equally dangerous and visionary.

NOTES TO BOOK V.

(a) p. 430. — "Rivers of the molten lava."

Various theories as to the exact mode by which Pompeii was destroyed have been invented by the ingenious. I have adopted that which is the most generally received, and which, upon inspecting the strata, appears the only one admissible by common sense; namely, a destruction by showers of ashes and boiling water, mingled with frequent irruptions of large stones, and aided by partial convulsions of the earth. Herculaneum, on the contrary, appears to have received not only the showers of ashes, but also inundations from molten lava; and the streams referred to in the text must be considered as destined for that city rather than for Pompeii. The volcanic lightnings introduced in my description were evidently among the engines of ruin at Pompeii. Papyrus and other of the more inflammable materials are found in a burnt state. Some substances in metal are partially melted; and a bronze statue is completely shivered, as by lightning. Upon the whole (excepting only the inevitable poetic license of shortening the time which the destruction occupied), I believe my description of that awful event is very little assisted by invention, and will be found not the less accurate for its appearance in a Romance.

(b) p. 439. — "A love that has taken a new sentiment in our new creed."

What we now term and feel to be *sentiment* in love was very little known amongst the ancients, and at this day is scarcely acknowledged out of Christendom. It is a feeling intimately connected with, not a belief, but a *conviction*, that the passion is of the soul, and, like the soul, immortal. Chateaubriand, in that work so full both of error and of truth, his essay on *The Genius of Christianity*, has referred to this sentiment with his usual eloquence. It makes, indeed, the great distinction between the amatory poetry of the moderns and that of the ancients. And I have thought that I might, with some consonance to truth and nature, attribute the consciousness of this sentiment to Glaucus after his conversion to Christianity, though he is only able vaguely to guess at, rather than thoroughly to explain, its cause.

(c) p. 441. — "And everywhere the bones and skeletons of those who once moved the springs of that minute yet gorgeous machine of luxury and of life!"

At present (1834) there have been about three hundred and fifty or four hundred skeletons discovered in Pompeii; but as a great part of the city is

yet to be disinterred, we can scarcely calculate the number of those who perished in the destruction. Still, however, we have every reason to conclude that they were very few in proportion to those who escaped. The ashes had been evidently cleared away from many of the houses, no doubt for the purpose of recovering whatever treasures had been left behind. The mansion of our friend Sallust is one of those thus revisited. The skeletons which, re-animated for a while, the reader has seen play their brief parts upon the stage, under the names of Burbo, Calenus, Diomed, Julia, and Arbaces, were found exactly as described in the text. May they have been reanimated more successfully for the pleasure of the reader than they have been for the solace of the author, who has vainly endeavored, in the work which he now concludes, to beguile the most painful, gloomy, and despondent period of a life, in the web of which has been woven less of white than the world may deem! But like most other friends, the Imagination is capricious, and forsakes us often at the moment in which we most need its aid. As we grow older, we begin to learn that, of the two, our more faithful and steadfast comforter is — Custom. But I should apologize for this sudden and unseasonable indulgence of a momentary weakness it is *but* for a moment. With returning health returns also that energy without which the soul were given us in vain, and which enables us calmly to face the evils of our being and resolutely to fulfil its objects. There is but one philosophy (though there are a thousand schools), and its name is Fortitude.

“ TO BEAR IS TO CONQUER OUR FATE ! ”

THE END.

THE DISOWNED

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

IN this edition of a work composed in early youth, I have not attempted to remove those faults of construction which may be sufficiently apparent in the plot, but which could not indeed be thoroughly rectified without re-writing the whole work. I can only hope that with the defects of inexperience may be found some of the merits of frank and artless enthusiasm. I have, however, lightened the narrative of certain episodical and irrelevant passages, and relieved the general style of some boyish extravagances of diction. At the time this work was written I was deeply engaged in the study of metaphysics and ethics, and out of that study grew the character of Algernon Mordaunt. He is represented as a type of the Heroism of Christian Philosophy, — a union of love and knowledge placed in the midst of sorrow, and labouring on through the pilgrimage of life, strong in the fortitude that comes from belief in Heaven.

E. B. L.

KNEBORTH, May 3, 1852.

THE DISOWNED.

CHAPTER I.

I'LL tell you a story if you please to attend.

G. KNIGHT: *Limbo.*

It was the evening of a soft, warm day in the May of 17—. The sun had already set, and the twilight was gathering slowly over the large, still masses of wood which lay on either side of one of those green lanes so peculiar to England. Here and there, the outline of the trees irregularly shrunk back from the road, leaving broad patches of waste land covered with fern and the yellow blossoms of the dwarf furze, and at more distant intervals thick clusters of rushes, from which came the small hum of gnats, — those “evening revelers” alternately rising and sinking in the customary manner of their unknown sports, — till, as the shadows grew darker and darker, their thin and airy shapes were no longer distinguishable, and no solitary token of life or motion broke the voiceless monotony of the surrounding woods.

The first sound which invaded the silence came from the light, quick footsteps of a person whose youth betrayed itself in its elastic and unmeasured tread, and in the gay, free carol which broke out by fits and starts upon the gentle stillness of the evening.

There was something rather indicative of poetical taste than musical science in the selection of this vesper hymn, which always commenced with, —

“T is merry, 't is merry, in good green wood,”

and never proceeded a syllable further than the end of the second line, —

“When birds are about and singing;”

from the last word of which, after a brief pause, it invariably started forth into joyous “iteration.”

Presently a heavier, yet still more rapid, step than that of the youth was heard behind; and, as it overtook the latter, a loud, clear, good-humoured voice gave the salutation of the evening. The tone in which this courtesy was returned was frank, distinct, and peculiarly harmonious.

“Good evening, my friend. How far is it to W——? I hope I am not out of the direct road?”

“To W——, sir?” said the man, touching his hat, as he perceived, in spite of the dusk, something in the air and voice of his new acquaintance which called for a greater degree of respect than he was at first disposed to accord to a pedestrian traveller, — “to W——, sir? why, you will not surely go there to-night? it is more than eight miles distant, and the roads none of the best.”

“Now, a curse on all rogues!” quoth the youth, with a serious sort of vivacity. “Why, the miller at the foot of the hill assured me I should be at my journey’s end in less than an hour.”

“He may have said right, sir,” returned the man, “yet you will not reach W—— in twice that time.”

“How do you mean?” said the younger stranger.

“Why, that you may for once force a miller to speak truth in spite of himself, and make a public-house, about three miles hence, the end of your day’s journey.”

“Thank you for the hint,” said the youth. “Does the house you speak of lie on the road-side?”

“No, sir: the lane branches off about two miles hence, and you must then turn to the right; but *till* then our way is the same, and if you would not prefer your own company to mine we can trudge on together.”

“With all my heart,” rejoined the younger stranger; “and not the less willingly from the brisk pace you walk. I

thought I had few equals in pedestrianism; but it should not be for a small wager that I would undertake to keep up with you."

"Perhaps, sir," said the man, laughing, "I have had in the course of my life a better usage and a longer experience of my heels than you have."

Somewhat startled by a speech of so equivocal a meaning, the youth, for the first time, turned round to examine, as well as the increasing darkness would permit, the size and appearance of his companion. He was not perhaps too well satisfied with his survey. His fellow pedestrian was about six feet high, and of a corresponding girth of limb and frame, which would have made him fearful odds in any encounter where bodily strength was the best means of conquest. Notwithstanding the mildness of the weather, he was closely buttoned in a rough great-coat, which was well calculated to give all due effect to the athletic proportions of the wearer.

There was a pause of some moments.

"This is but a wild, savage sort of scene for England, sir, in this day of new-fashioned ploughs and farming improvements," said the tall stranger, looking round at the ragged wastes and grim woods, which lay steeped in the shade beside and before them.

"True," answered the youth; "and in a few years agricultural innovation will scarcely leave, even in these wastes, a single furze-blossom for the bee or a tuft of green-sward for the grasshopper; but, however unpleasant the change may be for us foot-travellers, we must not repine at what they tell us is so sure a witness of the prosperity of the country."

"*They* tell us! *who* tell us?" exclaimed the stranger, with great vivacity. "Is it the puny and spiritless artisan, or the debased and crippled slave of the counter and the till, or the sallow speculator on morals, who would mete us out our liberty, our happiness, our very feelings by the yard and inch and fraction? No, no, let *them* follow what the books and precepts of their own wisdom teach them; let them cultivate more highly the lands they have already parcelled out by dikes and fences, and leave, though at scanty intervals, some

green patches of unpolluted land for the poor man's beast and the free man's foot."

"You are an enthusiast on this subject," said the younger traveller, not a little surprised at the tone and words of the last speech; "and if I were not just about to commence the world with a firm persuasion that enthusiasm on any matter is a great obstacle to success, I could be as warm though not so eloquent as yourself."

"Ah, sir," said the stranger, sinking into a more natural and careless tone, "I have a better right than I imagine you can claim to repine or even to inveigh against the boundaries which are, day by day and hour by hour, encroaching upon what I have learned to look upon as my own territory. You were, just before I joined you, singing an old song; I honour you for your taste: and no offence, sir, but a sort of fellowship in feeling made me take the liberty to accost you. I am no very great scholar in other things; but I owe my present circumstances of life solely to my fondness for those old songs and quaint madrigals. And I believe no person can better apply to himself Will Shakspeare's invitation, —

"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.'"

Relieved from his former fear, but with increased curiosity at this quotation, which was half said, half sung, in a tone which seemed to evince a hearty relish for the sense of the words, the youth replied, —

"Truly, I did not expect to meet among the travellers of this wild country with so well-stored a memory. And, indeed, I should have imagined that the only persons to whom your verses could exactly have applied were those honourable vagrants from the Nile whom in vulgar language we term gypsies."

“Precisely so, sir,” answered the tall stranger, indifferently; “precisely so. It is to that ancient body that I belong.”

“The devil you do!” quoth the youth, in unsophisticated surprise; “the progress of education is indeed astonishing!”

“Why,” answered the stranger, laughing, “to tell you the truth, sir, I am a gypsy by inclination, not birth. The illustrious Bamfylde Moore Carew is not the only example of one of gentle blood and honourable education whom the fleshpots of Egypt have seduced.”

“I congratulate myself,” quoth the youth, in a tone that might have been in jest, “upon becoming acquainted with a character at once so respectable and so novel; and, to return your quotation in the way of a compliment, I cry out with the most fashionable author of Elizabeth’s days, —

“O for a bowl of fat Canary,
Rich Palermo, sparkling Sherry,”

in order to drink to our better acquaintance.”

“Thank you, sir, — thank you,” cried the strange gypsy, seemingly delighted with the spirit with which his young acquaintance appeared to enter into his character, and his quotation from a class of authors at that time much less known and appreciated than at present; “and if you have seen already enough of the world to take up with ale when neither Canary, Palermo, nor Sherry are forthcoming, I will promise, at least, to pledge you in large draughts of that homely beverage. What say you to passing a night with us? our tents are yet more at hand than the public-house of which I spoke to you.”

The young man hesitated a moment, then replied, —

“I will answer you frankly, my friend, even though I may find cause to repent my confidence. I have a few guineas about me, which, though not a large sum, are *my all*. Now, however ancient and honourable your fraternity may be, they labour under a sad confusion, I fear, in their ideas of *meum* and *tuum*.”

“Faith, sir, I believe you are right; and were you some years older, I think you would not have favoured me with the same disclosure you have done now; but you may be quite

easy on that score. If you were made of gold, the rascals would not filch off the corner of your garment as long as you were under my protection. Does this assurance satisfy you?"

"Perfectly," said the youth; "and now how far are we from your encampment? I assure you I am all eagerness to be among a set of which I have witnessed such a specimen."

"Nay, nay," returned the gypsy, "you must not judge of all my brethren by me: I confess that they are but a rough tribe. However, I love them dearly; and am only the more inclined to think them honest to each other, because they are rogues to all the rest of the world."

By this time our travellers had advanced nearly two miles since they had commenced companionship; and at a turn in the lane, about three hundred yards farther on, they caught a glimpse of a distant fire burning brightly through the dim trees. They quickened their pace, and striking a little out of their path into a common, soon approached two tents, the Arab homes of the vagrant and singular people with whom the gypsy claimed brotherhood and alliance.

CHAPTER II.

HERE we securely live and eat
The cream of meat;
And keep eternal fires
By which we sit and *do divine*.

HERRICK: *Ode to Sir Clipseby Crew.*

AROUND a fire which blazed and crackled beneath the large seething-pot, that seemed an emblem of the mystery and a promise of the good cheer which are the supposed characteristics of the gypsy race, were grouped seven or eight persons, upon whose swarthy and strong countenances the irregular and fitful flame cast a picturesque and not unbecoming glow. All of these, with the exception of an old crone who was tending

the pot, and a little boy who was feeding the fire with sundry fragments of stolen wood, started to their feet upon the entrance of the stranger.

“What ho! my bob cuffs,” cried the gypsy guide, “I have brought you a gentry cove, to whom you will show all proper respect: and hark ye, my maunders, if ye dare beg, borrow, or steal a single croker, — ay, but a bawbee of him, I’ll — but ye know me.” The gypsy stopped abruptly, and turned an eye, in which menace vainly struggled with good-humour, upon each of his brethren, as they submissively bowed to him and his *protégé*, and poured forth a profusion of promises, to which their admonitor did not even condescend to listen. He threw off his great-coat, doubled it down by the best place near the fire, and made the youth forthwith possess himself of the seat it afforded. He then lifted the cover of the mysterious caldron. “Well, Mort,” cried he to the old woman, as he bent wistfully down, “what have we here?”

“Two ducks, three chickens, and a rabbit, with some potatoes,” growled the old hag, who claimed the usual privilege of her culinary office, to be as ill-tempered as she pleased.

“Good!” said the gypsy; “and now, Mim, my cull, go to the other tent, and ask its inhabitants, in my name, to come here and sup; bid them bring *their* caldron to eke out ours: I’ll find the lush.”

With these words (which Mim, a short, swarthy member of the gang, with a countenance too astute to be pleasing, instantly started forth to obey) the gypsy stretched himself at full length by the youth’s side, and began reminding him, with some jocularity and at some length, of his promise to drink to their better acquaintance.

Something there was in the scene, the fire, the caldron, the intent figure and withered countenance of the old woman, the grouping of the other forms, the rude but not unpicturesque tent, the dark still woods on either side, with the deep and cloudless skies above, as the stars broke forth one by one upon the silent air, which (to use the orthodox phrase of the novelist) would not have been wholly unworthy the bold pencil of Salvator himself.

The youth eyed, with that involuntary respect which personal advantages always command, the large yet symmetrical proportions of his wild companion; nor was the face which belonged to that frame much less deserving of attention. Though not handsome, it was both shrewd and prepossessing in its expression; the forehead was prominent, the brows overhung the eyes, which were large, dark, and, unlike those of the tribe in general, rather calm than brilliant; the complexion, though sun-burnt, was not swarthy, and the face was carefully and cleanly shaved, so as to give all due advantage of contrast to the brown luxuriant locks which fell rather in flakes than curls, on either side of the healthful and manly cheeks. In age, he was about thirty-five, and, though his air and mien were assuredly not lofty nor aristocratic, yet they were strikingly above the bearing of his vagabond companions: those companions were in all respects of the ordinary race of gypsies; the cunning and flashing eye, the raven locks, the dazzling teeth, the bronzed colour, and the low, slight, active form, were as strongly their distinguishing characteristics as the tokens of all their tribe.

But to these, the appearance of the youth presented a striking and beautiful contrast.

He had only just passed the stage of boyhood, perhaps he might have seen eighteen summers, probably not so many. He had, in imitation of his companion, and perhaps from mistaken courtesy to his new society, doffed his hat; and the attitude which he had chosen fully developed the noble and intellectual turn of his head and throat. His hair, as yet preserved from the disfiguring fashions of the day, was of a deep auburn, which was rapidly becoming of a more chestnut hue, and curled in short close curls from the nape of the neck to the commencement of a forehead singularly white and high. His brows finely and lightly pencilled, and his long lashes of the darkest dye, gave a deeper and perhaps softer shade than they otherwise would have worn to eyes quick and observant in their expression and of a light hazel in their colour. His cheek was very fair, and the red light of the fire cast an artificial tint of increased glow upon a complexion that had naturally

rather bloom than colour; while a dark riding frock set off in their full beauty the fine outline of his chest and the slender symmetry of his frame.

But it was neither his features nor his form, eminently handsome as they were, which gave the principal charm to the young stranger's appearance: it was the strikingly bold, buoyant, frank, and almost joyous expression which presided over all. *There* seemed to dwell the first glow and life of youth, undimmed by a single fear and unbaflled in a single hope. *There* were the elastic spring, the inexhaustible wealth of energies which defied in their exulting pride the heaviness of sorrow and the harassments of time. It was a face that, while it filled you with some melancholy foreboding of the changes and chances which must, in the inevitable course of fate, cloud the openness of the unwrinkled brow, and soberize the fire of the daring and restless eye, instilled also within you some assurance of triumph, and some omen of success, — a vague but powerful sympathy with the adventurous and cheerful spirit which appeared literally to speak in its expression. It was a face you might imagine in one born under a prosperous star; and you felt, as you gazed, a confidence in that bright countenance, which, like the shield of the British Prince,¹ seemed possessed with a spell to charm into impotence the evil spirits who menaced its possessor.

"Well, sir," said his friend, the gypsy, who had in his turn been surveying with admiration the sinewy and agile frame of his young guest, "well, sir, how fares your appetite? Old Dame Bingo will be mortally offended if you do not do ample justice to her good cheer."

"If so," answered our traveller, who, young as he was, had learnt already the grand secret of making in every situation a female friend, "if so, I shall be likely to offend her still more."

"And how, my pretty master?" said the old crone with an iron smile.

"Why, I shall be bold enough to reconcile matters with a kiss, Mrs. Bingo," answered the youth.

¹Prince Arthur. — See "The Faërie Queene."

“Ha! ha!” shouted the tall gypsy; “it is many a long day since my old Mort slapped a gallant’s face for such an affront. But here come our messmates. Good evening, my mumpers; make your bows to this gentleman who has come to bowse with us to-night. ’Gad, we ’ll show him that old ale’s none the worse for keeping company with the moon’s darlings. Come, sit down, sit down. Where’s the cloth, ye ill-mannered loons, and the knives and platters? Have we no holiday customs for strangers, think ye? Mim, my cove, off to *my* caravan; bring out the knives, and all other rattletraps; and harkye, my cuffin, this small key opens the inner hole, where you will find two barrels; bring one of them. I’ll warrant it of the best, for the brewer himself drank some of the same sort but two hours before I *nimm’d* them. Come, stump, my cull, make yourself wings. Ho, Dame Bingo, is not that pot of thine seething yet? Ah, my young gentleman, you commence betimes; so much the better; if love’s a summer’s day, we all know how early a summer morning begins,” added the jovial Egyptian in a lower voice (feeling perhaps that he was only understood by himself), as he gazed complacently on the youth, who, with that happy facility of making himself everywhere at home so uncommon to his countrymen, was already paying compliments suited to their understanding to two fair daughters of the tribe who had entered with the new-comers. Yet had he too much craft or delicacy, call it which you will, to continue his addresses to that limit where ridicule or jealousy from the male part of the assemblage might commence; on the contrary, he soon turned to the men, and addressed them with a familiarity so frank and so suited to their taste that he grew no less rapidly in their favour than he had already done in that of the women, and when the contents of the two caldrons were at length set upon the coarse but clean cloth which in honour of his arrival covered the sod, it was in the midst of a loud and universal peal of laughter which some broad witticism of the young stranger had produced that the party sat down to their repast.

Bright were the eyes and sleek the tresses of the damsel who placed herself by the side of the stranger, and many were the

alluring glances and insinuated compliments which replied to his open admiration and profuse flattery; but still there was nothing exclusive in his attentions; perhaps an ignorance of the customs of his entertainers, and a consequent discreet fear of offending them, restrained him; or perhaps he found ample food for occupation in the plentiful dainties which his host heaped before him.

“Now tell me,” said the gypsy chief (for chief he appeared to be), “if we lead not a merrier life than you dreamt of? or would you have us change our coarse fare and our simple tents, our vigorous limbs and free hearts, for the meagre board, the monotonous chamber, the diseased frame, and the toiling, careful, and withered spirit of some miserable mechanic?”

“Change!” cried the youth, with an earnestness which, if affected, was an exquisite counterfeit, “by Heaven, I would change with you myself.”

“Bravo, my fine cove!” cried the host, and all the gang echoed their sympathy with his applause.

The youth continued: “Meat, and that plentiful; ale, and that strong; women, and those pretty ones: what can man desire more?”

“Ay,” cried the host, “and all for nothing,—no, not even a tax; who else in this kingdom can say that? Come, Mim, push round the ale.”

And the ale *was* pushed round, and if coarse the merriment, loud at least was the laugh that rang ever and anon from the old tent; and though, at moments, something in the guest's eye and lip might have seemed, to a very shrewd observer, a little wandering and absent, yet, upon the whole, he was almost as much at ease as the rest, and if he was not quite as talkative he was to the full as noisy.

By degrees, as the hour grew later and the barrel less heavy, the conversation changed into one universal clatter. Some told their feats in beggary; others, their achievements in theft; not a viand they had fed on but had its appropriate legend; even the old rabbit, which had been as tough as old rabbit can well be, had not been honestly taken from his burrow; no less a person than Mim himself had purloined it

from a widow's footman who was carrying it to an old maid from her nephew the Squire.

"Silence," cried the host, who loved talking as well as the rest, and who for the last ten minutes had been vainly endeavouring to obtain attention. "Silence! my maunders, it's late, and we shall have the queer cuffs¹ upon us if we keep it up much longer. What, ho, Mim, are you still gabbling at the foot of the table when your betters are talking? As sure as my name's King Cole, I'll choke you with your own rabbit skin, if you don't hush your prating cheat, — nay, never look so abashed: if you *will* make a noise, come forward, and sing us a gypsy song. You see, my young sir," turning to his guest, "that we are not without our pretensions to the fine arts."

At this order, Mim started forth, and taking his station at the right hand of the *soi-disant* King Cole, began the following song, the chorus of which was chanted in full diapason by the whole group, with the additional force of emphasis that knives, feet, and fists could bestow:—

THE GYPSY'S SONG.

The king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,

And the cit to his bilking board:

But we are not bound to an acre of ground,

For our home is the houseless sward.

We sow not, nor toil; yet we glean from the soil

As much as its reapers do;

And wherever we rove, we feed on the cove

Who gibes at the mumping crew.

CHORUS.— So the king to his hall, etc.

We care not a straw for the limbs of the law,

Nor a fig for the *cuffin queer*:

While Hodge and his neighbour shall lavish and labour,

Our tent is as sure of its cheer.

CHORUS.— So the king to his hall, etc.

The worst have an awe of the *harman's*² claw,

And the best will avoid the *trap*;³

But our wealth is as free of the bailiff's *see*

As our necks of the twisting *crap*.⁴

CHORUS.— So the king to his hall, etc.

¹ Magistrates.

² Constable.

³ Bailiff.

⁴ Gallows.

They say it is sweet to win the meat
 For the which one has sorely wrought;
 But I never could find that we lacked the mind
 For the food that has cost us nought!

CHORUS. — So the king to his hall, etc.

And when we have ceased from our fearless feast
 Why, our *jigger*¹ will need no bars;
 Our sentry shall be on the owlet's tree,
 And our lamps the glorious stars.

CHORUS.

So the king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,
 And the cit to his bilking board;
 But we are not bound to an acre of ground,
 For our home is the houseless sward.

Rude as was this lawless stave, the spirit with which it was sung atoned to the young stranger for its obscurity and quaintness; as for his host, that curious personage took a lusty and prominent part in the chorus; nor did the old woods refuse their share of the burden, but sent back a merry echo to the chief's deep voice and the harsher notes of his jovial brethren.

When the glee had ceased, King Cole rose, the whole band followed his example, the cloth was cleared in a trice, the barrel — oh! what a falling off was there! — was rolled into a corner of the tent, and the crew to whom the awning belonged began to settle themselves to rest; while those who owned the other encampment marched forth, with King Cole at their head. Leaning with no light weight upon his guest's arm, the lover of ancient minstrelsy poured into the youth's ear a strain of eulogy, rather eloquent than coherent, upon the scene they had just witnessed.

“What,” cried his majesty in an enthusiastic tone, “what can be so truly regal as our state? Can any man control us? Are we not above all laws? Are we not the most despotic of kings? Nay, more than the kings of earth, are we not the kings of Fairyland itself? Do we not realize the golden dreams of the old rhymers, luxurious dogs that they were? Who would not cry out, —

¹ Door.

“Blest silent groves! Oh, may ye be
 Forever Mirth’s best nursery!
 May pure Contents
 Forever pitch *their tents*

Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains.”

Uttering this notable extract from the thrice-honoured Sir Henry Wotton, King Cole turned abruptly from the common, entered the wood which skirted it, and, only attended by his guest and his minister Mim, came suddenly, by an unexpected and picturesque opening in the trees, upon one of those itinerant vehicles termed caravans; he ascended the few steps which led to the entrance, opened the door, and was instantly in the arms of a pretty and young woman. On seeing our hero (for such we fear the youth is likely to become), she drew back with a blush not often found upon regal cheeks.

“Pooh,” said King Cole, half tauntingly, half fondly, “pooh, Lucy, blushes are garden flowers, and ought never to be found wild in the woods:” then changing his tone, he said, “come, put some fresh straw in the corner, this stranger honours our palace to-night; Mim, unload thyself of our royal treasures; watch without and vanish from within!”

Depositing on his majesty’s floor the appurtenances of the regal supper-table, Mim made his respectful adieus and disappeared; meanwhile the queen scattered some fresh straw over a mattress in the narrow chamber, and, laying over all a sheet of singularly snowy hue, made her guest some apology for the badness of his lodging; this King Cole interrupted by a most elaborately noisy yawn and a declaration of extreme sleepiness. “Now, Lucy, let us leave the gentleman to what he will like better than soft words even from a queen. Good night, sir, we shall be stirring at daybreak;” and with this farewell King Cole took the lady’s arm, and retired with her into an inner compartment of the caravan.

Left to himself, our hero looked round with surprise at the exceeding neatness which reigned over the whole apartment. But what chiefly engrossed the attention of one to whose early habits books had always been treasures were several volumes, ranged in comely shelves, fenced with wirework, on either

side of the fireplace. "Courage," thought he, as he stretched himself on his humble couch, "my adventures have commenced well: a gypsy tent, to be sure, is nothing very new; but a gypsy who quotes poetry, and enjoys a modest wife, speaks better than books do for the improvement of the world!"

CHAPTER III.

HATH not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? — *As You Like It.*

THE sun broke cheerfully through the small lattice of the caravan, as the youth opened his eyes and saw the good-humoured countenance of his gypsy host bending over him complacently.

"You slept so soundly, sir, that I did not like to disturb you; but my good wife only waits your rising to have all ready for breakfast."

"It were a thousand pities," cried the guest, leaping from his bed, "that so pretty a face should look cross on my account, so I will not keep her waiting an instant."

The gypsy smiled, as he answered, "I require no professional help from the devil, sir, to foretell your fortune."

"No! — and what is it?"

"Honour, reputation, success: all that are ever won by a soft tongue, if it be backed by a bold heart."

Bright and keen was the flash which shot over the countenance of the one for whom this prediction was made, as he listened to it with a fondness for which his reason rebuked him.

He turned aside with a sigh, which did not escape the gypsy, and bathed his face in the water which the provident hand of the good woman had set out for his lavations.

"Well," said his host, when the youth had finished his brief

toilet, "suppose we breathe the fresh air, while Lucy smooths your bed and prepares the breakfast?"

"With all my heart," replied the youth, and they descended the steps which led into the wood. It was a beautiful, fresh morning; the air was like a draught from a Spirit's fountain, and filled the heart with new youth and the blood with a rapturous delight; the leaves — the green, green leaves of spring — were quivering on the trees, among which the happy birds fluttered and breathed the gladness of their souls in song. While the dewdrops that —

"strewed

A baptism o'er the flowers" —

gave back in their million mirrors the reflected smiles of the cloudless and rejoicing sun.

"Nature," said the gypsy, "has bestowed on her children a gorgeous present in such a morning."

"True," said the youth; "and you, of us two, perhaps only deserve it; as for me, when I think of the long road of dust, heat, and toil, that lies before me, I could almost wish to stop here and ask an admission into the gypsy's tents."

"You could not do a wiser thing!" said the gypsy, gravely.

"But fate leaves me no choice," continued the youth, as seriously as if he were in earnest; "and I must quit you immediately after I have a second time tasted of your hospitable fare."

"If it must be so," answered the gypsy, "I will see you, at least, a mile or two on your road." The youth thanked him for a promise which his curiosity made acceptable, and they turned once more to the caravan.

The meal, however obtained, met with as much honour as it could possibly have received from the farmer from whom its materials were borrowed.

It was not without complacency that the worthy pair beheld the notice their guest lavished upon a fair, curly-headed boy of about three years old, the sole child and idol of the gypsy potentates. But they did not perceive, when the youth rose to depart, that he slipped into the folds of the child's dress a ring of some value, the only one he possessed.

“And now,” said he, after having thanked his entertainers for their hospitality, “I must say good-by to your flock, and set out upon my day’s journey.”

Lucy, despite her bashfulness, shook hands with her handsome guest; and the latter, accompanied by the gypsy chief, strolled down to the encampments.

Open and free was his parting farewell to the inmates of the two tents, and liberal was the hand which showered upon all — especially on the damsel who had been his *Thais* of the evening feast — the silver coins which made no inconsiderable portion of his present property.

It was amidst the oracular wishes and favourable predictions of the whole crew that he recommenced his journey with the gypsy chief.

When the tents were fairly out of sight, and not till then, King Cole broke the silence which had as yet subsisted between them.

“I suppose, my young gentleman, that you expect to meet some of your friends or relations at W——? I know not what they will say when they hear where you have spent the night.”

“Indeed!” said the youth; “whoever hears my adventures, relation or not, will be delighted with my description; but in sober earnest, I expect to find no one at W—— more my friend than a surly innkeeper, unless it be his dog.”

“Why, they surely do not suffer a stripling of your youth and evident quality to wander alone!” cried King Cole, in undisguised surprise.

The young traveller made no prompt answer, but bent down as if to pluck a wild-flower which grew by the road-side: after a pause, he said, —

“Nay, Master Cole, you must not set me the example of playing the inquisitor, or you cannot guess how troublesome I shall be. To tell you the truth, I am dying with curiosity to know something more about you than you may be disposed to tell me: you have already confessed that, however boon companions your gypsies may be, it is not among gypsies that you were born and bred.”

King Cole laughed: perhaps he was not ill pleased by the curiosity of his guest, nor by the opportunity it afforded him of being his own hero.

"My story, sir," said he, "would be soon told, if you thought it worth the hearing, nor does it contain anything which should prevent my telling it."

"If so," quoth the youth, "I shall conceive your satisfying my request a still greater favour than those you have already bestowed upon me."

The gypsy relaxed his pace into an indolent saunter, as he commenced: —

"The first scene that I remember was similar to that which you witnessed last night. The savage tent, and the green moor; the fagot blaze; the eternal pot, with its hissing note of preparation; the old dame who tended it, and the ragged urchins who learned from its contents the first reward of theft and the earliest temptation to it, — all these are blended into agreeable confusion as the primal impressions of my childhood. The woman who nurtured me as my mother was rather capricious than kind, and my infancy passed away, like that of more favoured scions of fortune, in alternate chastisement and caresses. In good truth, Kinching Meg had the shrillest voice and the heaviest hand of the whole crew; and I cannot complain of injustice, since she treated me no worse than the rest. Notwithstanding the irregularity of my education, I grew up strong and healthy, and my reputed mother had taught me so much fear for herself that she left me none for anything else; accordingly, I became bold, reckless, and adventurous, and at the age of thirteen was as thorough a reprobate as the tribe could desire. At that time a singular change befell me: we (that is, my mother and myself) were begging not many miles hence at the door of a rich man's house in which the mistress lay on her death-bed. That mistress was my *real* mother, from whom Meg had stolen me in the first year of existence. Whether it was through the fear of conscience or the hope of reward, no sooner had Meg learnt the dangerous state of my poor mother, the constant grief, which they said had been the sole though slow cause of her disease, and the large sums which had been

repeatedly offered for my recovery ; no sooner, I say, did Meg ascertain all these particulars than she fought her way up to the sick-chamber, fell on her knees before the bed, owned her crime, and produced myself. Various little proofs of time, place, circumstance ; the clothing I had worn when stolen, and which was still preserved, joined to the striking likeness I bore to both my parents, especially to my father, silenced all doubt and incredulity : I was welcomed home with a joy which it is in vain to describe. My return seemed to recall my mother from the grave ; she lingered on for many months longer than her physicians thought it possible, and when she died her last words commended me to my father's protection.

“My surviving parent needed no such request. He lavished upon me all that superfluity of fondness and food of which those good people who are resolved to spoil their children are so prodigal. He could not bear the idea of sending me to school ; accordingly he took a tutor for me, — a simple-hearted, gentle, kind man, who possessed a vast store of learning rather curious than useful. He was a tolerable, and at least an enthusiastic antiquarian, a more than tolerable poetaster ; and he had a prodigious budget full of old ballads and songs, which *he* loved better to teach and *I* to learn, than all the ‘Latin, Greek, geography, astronomy, and the use of the globes,’ which my poor father had so sedulously bargained for.

“Accordingly, I became exceedingly well-informed in all the ‘precious conceits’ and ‘golden garlands’ of our British ancients, and continued exceedingly ignorant of everything else, save and except a few of the most fashionable novels of the day, and the contents of six lying volumes of voyages and travels, which flattered both my appetite for the wonderful and my love of the adventurous. My studies, such as they were, were not by any means suited to curb or direct the vagrant tastes my childhood had acquired : on the contrary, the old poets, with their luxurious description of the ‘green wood’ and the forest life ; the fashionable novelists, with their spirited accounts of the wanderings of some fortunate rogue, and the ingenious travellers, with their wild fables, so dear to the imagination of every boy, only fomented within

me a strong though secret regret at my change of life, and a restless disgust to the tame home and bounded roamings to which I was condemned. When I was about seventeen, my father sold his property (which he had become possessed of in right of my mother), and transferred the purchase money to the security of the Funds. Shortly afterwards he died; the bulk of his fortune became mine; the remainder was settled upon a sister, many years older than myself, whom, in consequence of her marriage and residence in a remote part of Wales, I had never yet seen.

“Now, then, I was perfectly free and unfettered; my guardian lived in Scotland, and left me entirely to the guidance of my tutor, who was both too simple and too indolent to resist my inclinations. I went to London, became acquainted with a set of most royal scamps, frequented the theatres and the taverns, the various resorts which constitute the gayeties of a blood just above the middle class, and was one of the noisiest and wildest ‘blades’ that ever heard the ‘chimes by midnight’ and the magistrate’s lecture for matins. I was a sort of leader among the jolly dogs I consorted with.

“My earlier education gave a raciness and nature to my delineations of ‘life’ which delighted them. But somehow or other I grew wearied of this sort of existence. About a year after I was of age my fortune was more than three parts spent; I fell ill with drinking and grew dull with remorse: need I add that my comrades left me to myself? A fit of the spleen, especially if accompanied with duns, makes one wofully misanthropic; so, when I recovered from my illness, I set out on a tour through Great Britain and France, — alone, and principally on foot. Oh, the rapture of shaking off the half friends and cold formalities of society and finding oneself all unfettered, with no companion but Nature, no guide but youth, and no flatterer but hope!

“Well, my young friend, I travelled for two years, and saw even in that short time enough of this busy world to weary and disgust me with its ordinary customs. I was not made to be polite, still less to be ambitious. I sighed after the

coarse comrades and the free tents of my first associates; and a thousand remembrances of the gypsy wanderings, steeped in all the green and exhilarating colours of childhood, perpetually haunted my mind. On my return from my wanderings I found a letter from my sister, who, having become a widow, had left Wales, and had now fixed her residence in a well-visited watering-place in the west of England. I had never yet seen her, and her letter was a fine-ladylike sort of epistle, with a great deal of romance and a very little sense, written in an extremely pretty hand, and ending with a quotation from Pope (I never could endure Pope, nor indeed any of the poets of the days of Anne and her successors). It was a beautiful season of the year: I had been inured to pedestrian excursions; so I set off on foot to see my nearest surviving relative. On the way, I fell in (though on a very different spot) with the very encampment you saw last night. By heavens, that was a merry meeting to me! I joined, and journeyed with them for several days: never do I remember a happier time. Then, after many years of bondage and stiffness, and accordance with the world, I found myself at ease, like a released bird; with what zest did I join in the rude jokes and the knavish tricks, the stolen feasts and the roofless nights of those careless vagabonds!

“I left my fellow-travellers at the entrance of the town where my sister lived. Now came the contrast. Somewhat hot, rather coarsely clad, and covered with the dust of a long summer's day, I was ushered into a little drawing-room, eighteen feet by twelve, as I was afterwards somewhat pompously informed. A flaunting carpet, green, red, and yellow, covered the floor. A full-length picture of a thin woman, looking most agreeably ill-tempered, stared down at me from the chimney-piece; three stuffed birds—how emblematic of domestic life!—stood stiff and imprisoned, even after death, in a glass cage. A fire-screen and a bright fireplace; chairs covered with holland, to preserve them from the atmosphere; and long mirrors, wrapped as to the frame-work in yellow muslin, to keep off the flies,—finish the panorama of this watering-place mansion. The door opened, silks rustled,

a voice shrieked 'My Brother!' and a figure, a thin figure, the original of the picture over the chimney-piece, rushed in."

"I can well fancy her joy," said the youth.

"You can do no such thing, begging your pardon, sir," resumed King Cole. "She had no joy at all: she was exceedingly surprised and disappointed. In spite of my early adventures, I had nothing picturesque or romantic about me at all. I was very thirsty, and I called for beer; I was very tired, and I lay down on the sofa; I wore thick shoes and small buckles; and my clothes were made God knows where, and were certainly put on God knows how. My sister was miserably ashamed of me: she had not even the manners to disguise it. In a higher rank of life than that which she held she would have suffered far less mortification; for I fancy great people pay but little *real* attention to externals. Even if a man of rank is vulgär, it makes no difference in the orbit in which he moves: but your 'genteel gentlewomen' are so terribly dependent upon what Mrs. Tomkins will say; so very uneasy about their relations and the opinion they are held in; and, above all, so made up of appearances and clothes; so undone if they do not eat, drink, and talk *à la mode*, — that I can fancy no shame like that of my poor sister at having found, and *being found with*, a vulgar brother.

"I saw how unwelcome I was and I did not punish myself by a long visit. I left her house and returned towards London. On my road, I again met with my gypsy friends: the warmth of their welcome enchanted me; you may guess the rest. I stayed with them so long that I could not bear to leave them; I re-entered their crew: I am one among them. Not that I have become altogether and solely of the tribe: I still leave them whenever the whim seizes me, and repair to the great cities and thoroughfares of man. There I am soon driven back again to my favourite and fresh fields, as a reed upon a wild stream is dashed back upon the green rushes from which it has been torn. You perceive that I have many comforts and distinctions above the rest; for, alas, sir, there is no society, however free and democratic, where wealth will not create an aristocracy; the remnant of my fortune provides

me with my unostentatious equipage and the few luxuries it contains; it repays secretly to the poor what my fellow-vagrants occasionally filch from them; it allows me to curb among the crew all the grosser and heavier offences against the law to which want might otherwise compel them; and it serves to keep up that sway and ascendancy which my superior education and fluent spirits enabled me at first to attain. Though not *legally* their king, I assume that title over the few encampments with which I am accustomed to travel; and you perceive that I have given my simple name both to the jocular and kingly dignity of which the old song will often remind you. My story is done."

"Not quite," said his companion: "your wife? How came you by that blessing?"

"Ah! thereby hangs a pretty and a love-sick tale, which would not stand ill in an ancient ballad; but I will content myself with briefly sketching it. Lucy is the daughter of a gentleman farmer: about four years ago I fell in love with her. I wooed her clandestinely, and at last I owned I was a gypsy: I did not add my birth nor fortune; no, I was full of the romance of the Nut-brown Maid's lover, and attempted a trial of woman's affection, which even in these days was not disappointed. Still her father would not consent to our marriage, till very luckily things went bad with him; corn, crops, cattle,—the deuce was in them all; an execution was in his house, and a writ out against his person. I settled these matters for him, and in return received a father-in-law's blessing, and we are now the best friends in the world. Poor Lucy is perfectly reconciled to her caravan and her wandering husband, and has never, I believe, once repented the day on which she became the gypsy's wife!"

"I thank you heartily for your history," said the youth, who had listened very attentively to this detail; "and though my happiness and pursuits are centred in that world which you despise, yet I confess that I feel a sensation very like envy at your singular choice; and I would not dare to ask of my heart whether that choice is not happier, as it is certainly more philosophical, than mine."

They had now reached a part of the road where the country assumed a totally different character; the woods and moors were no longer visible, but a broad and somewhat bleak extent of country lay before them. Here and there only a few solitary trees broke the uniformity of the wide fields and scanty hedgerows, and at distant intervals the thin spires of the scattered churches rose, like the prayers of which they were the symbols, to mingle themselves with heaven.

The gypsy paused: "I will accompany you," said he, "no farther; your way lies straight onwards, and you will reach W—— before noon; farewell, and may God watch over you!"

"Farewell!" said the youth, warmly pressing the hand which was extended to him. "If we ever meet again, it will probably solve a curious riddle; namely, whether *you* are not disgusted with the caravan and *I* with the world!"

"The latter is more likely than the former," said the gypsy, "for one stands a much greater chance of being disgusted with others than with one's self; so changing a little the old lines, I will wish you adieu after my own fashion, namely, in verse, —

"Go, set thy heart on wingèd wealth,
Or unto honour's towers aspire;
But give me freedom and my health,
And there's the sum of my desire!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE letter, madam; have you none for me? — *The Rendezvous.*
Provide surgeons. — *Lover's Progress.*

OUR solitary traveller pursued his way with the light step and gay spirits of youth and health.

"Turn gypsy, indeed!" he said, talking to himself; "there is something better in store for me than that. Ay, I have all the world before me where to choose — *not* my place of rest.

No, many a long year will pass away ere any place of rest will be my choice! I wonder whether I shall find the letter at W——; *the* letter, the last letter I shall ever have from home: but it is no home to me now; and *I—I*, insulted, reviled, trampled upon, without even a name—well, well, I will earn a still fairer one than that of my forefathers. They shall be proud to own me yet.” And with these words the speaker broke off abruptly, with a swelling chest and a flashing eye; and as, an unknown and friendless adventurer, he gazed on the expanded and silent country around him, he felt like Castruccio Castrucani that he could stretch his hands to the east and to the west and exclaim, “Oh, that my power kept pace with my spirit, then should it grasp the corners of the earth!”

The road wound at last from the champaign country, through which it had for some miles extended itself, into a narrow lane, girded on either side by a dead fence. As the youth entered this lane, he was somewhat startled by the abrupt appearance of a horseman, whose steed leaped the hedge so close to our hero as almost to endanger his safety. The rider, a gentleman of about five-and-twenty, pulled up, and in a tone of great courtesy apologized for his inadvertency; the apology was readily admitted, and the horseman rode onwards in the direction of W——.

Trifling as this incident was, the air and mien of the stranger were sufficient to arrest irresistibly the thoughts of the young traveller; and before they had flowed into a fresh channel he found himself in the town and at the door of the inn to which his expedition was bound. He entered the bar; a buxom landlady and a still more buxom daughter were presiding over the spirits of the place.

“You have some boxes and a letter for me, I believe,” said the young gentleman to the comely hostess.

“To *you*, sir!—the name, if you please?”

“To—to—to C——L——,” said the youth; “the initials C. L., to be left till called for.”

“Yes, sir, we *have* some luggage; came last night by the van; and a letter besides, sir, to C. L. also.”

The daughter lifted her large dark eyes at the handsome

stranger, and felt a wonderful curiosity to know what the letter to C. L. could possibly be about; meanwhile mine hostess, raising her hand to a shelf on which stood an Indian slop-basin, the great ornament of the bar at the Golden Fleece, brought from its cavity a well-folded and well-sealed epistle.

"That is it," cried the youth; "show me a private room instantly."

"What *can* he want a private room for?" thought the landlady's daughter.

"Show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. 4, John Merrylack," said the landlady herself.

With an impatient step the owner of the letter followed a slipshod and marvellously unwashed waiter into No. 4, — a small square asylum for town travellers, country yeomen, and "single gentlemen;" presenting, on the one side, an admirable engraving of the Marquis of Granby, and on the other an equally delightful view of the stable-yard.

Mr. C. L. flung himself on a chair (there *were* only four chairs in No. 4), watched the waiter out of the room, seized his letter, broke open the seal, and read — yea, reader, *you* shall read it too — as follows: —

"Enclosed is the sum to which you are entitled; remember, that it is all which you can ever claim at my hands; remember also that *you* have made the choice which now nothing can persuade me to alter. Be the name you have so long iniquitously borne henceforth and always forgotten; upon that condition you may yet hope from my generosity the future assistance which you *must* want, but which you could not ask from my affection. Equally by my heart and my reason you are forever DISOWNED."

The letter fell from the reader's hands. He took up the inclosure: it was an order payable in London for £1,000; to him it seemed like the rental of the Indies.

"Be it so!" he said aloud, and slowly; "be it so! With this will I carve my way: many a name in history was built upon a worse foundation!"

With these words he carefully put up the money, re-read the brief note which enclosed it, tore the latter into pieces, and

then, going towards the aforesaid view of the stable-yard, threw open the window and leaned out, apparently in earnest admiration of two pigs which marched gruntingly towards him, one goat regaling himself upon a cabbage, and a broken-winded, emaciated horse, which having just been what the hostler called "rubbed down," was just going to be what the hostler called "fed."

While engaged in this interesting survey, the clatter of hoofs was suddenly heard upon the rough pavement, a bell rang, a dog barked, the pigs grunted, the hostler ran out, and the stranger, whom our hero had before met on the road, trotted into the yard.

It was evident from the obsequiousness of the attendants that the horseman was a personage of no mean importance; and indeed there was something singularly distinguished and high-bred in his air and carriage.

"Who *can* that be?" said the youth, as the horseman, having dismounted, turned towards the door of the inn: the question was readily answered, "There goes pride and poverty!" said the hostler, "Here comes Squire Mordaunt!" said the landlady.

At the farther end of the stable-yard, through a narrow gate, the youth caught a glimpse of the green sward and the springing flowers of a small garden. Wearied with the sameness of No. 4 rather than with his journey, he sauntered towards the said gate, and, seating himself in a small arbour within the garden, surrendered himself to reflection.

The result of this self-conference was a determination to leave the Golden Fleece by the earliest conveyance which went to that great object and emporium of all his plans and thoughts, London. As, full of this resolution and buried in the dream which it conjured up, he was returning with downcast eyes and unheeding steps through the stable-yard, to the delights of No. 4, he was suddenly accosted by a loud and alarmed voice, —

"For God's sake, sir, look out, or —"

The sentence was broken off, the intended warning came too late, our hero staggered back a few steps, and fell, stunned.

and motionless, against the stable door. Unconsciously he had passed just behind the heels of the stranger's horse, which being by no means in good humour with the clumsy manœuvres of his *shampooer*, the hostler, had taken advantage of the opportunity presented to him of working off his irritability, and had consequently inflicted a severe kick upon the right shoulder of Mr. C. L.

The stranger, honoured by the landlady with the name and title of Squire Mordaunt, was in the yard at the moment. He hastened towards the sufferer, who as yet was scarcely sensible, and led him into the house. The surgeon of the village was sent for and appeared. This disciple of Galen, commonly known by the name of Jeremiah Bossolton, was a gentleman considerably more inclined to breadth than length. He was exactly five feet one inch in height, but thick and solid as a milestone; a wig of modern cut, carefully curled and powdered, gave somewhat of a modish and therefore unseemly grace to a solemn eye; a mouth drawn down at the corners; a nose that had something in it exceedingly consequential; eyebrows sage and shaggy; ears large and fiery; and a chin that would have done honour to a mandarin. Now Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton had a certain peculiarity of speech to which I shall find it difficult to do justice. Nature had impressed upon his mind a prodigious love of the grandiloquent; Mr. Bossolton, therefore, disdained the exact language of the vulgar, and built unto himself a lofty fabric of words in which his sense managed very frequently to lose itself. Moreover, upon beginning a sentence of peculiar dignity, Mr. Bossolton was, it must be confessed, sometimes at a loss to conclude it in a period worthy of the commencement; and this caprice of nature which had endowed him with more words than thoughts (necessity is, indeed, the mother of invention) drove him into a very ingenious method of remedying the deficiency; this was simply the plan of repeating the sense by inverting the sentence.

"How long a period of time," said Mr. Bossolton, "has elapsed since this deeply-to-be-regretted and seriously-to-be-investigated accident occurred?"

“Not many minutes,” said Mordaunt; “make no further delay, I beseech you, but examine the arm; it is not broken, I trust?”

“In this world, Mr. Mordaunt,” said the practitioner, bowing very low, for the person he addressed was of the most ancient lineage in the county, “in this world, Mr. Mordaunt, even at the earliest period of civilization, delay in matters of judgment has ever been considered of such vital importance, and — and such important vitality, that we find it inculcated in the proverbs of the Greeks and the sayings of the Chaldeans as a principle of the most expedient utility, and — and — the most useful expediency!”

“Mr. Bossolton,” said Mordaunt, in a tone of remarkable and even artificial softness and civility, “have the kindness *immediately* to examine this gentleman’s bruises.”

Mr. Bossolton looked up to the calm but haughty face of the speaker, and without a moment’s hesitation proceeded to handle the arm, which was already stripped for his survey.

“It frequently occurs,” said Mr. Bossolton, “in the course of my profession, that the forcible, sudden, and vehement application of any hard substance, like the hoof of a quadruped, to the soft, tender, and carniferous parts of the human frame, such as the arm, occasions a pain — a pang, I should rather say — of the intensest acuteness, and — and of the acutest intensity.”

“Pray, Mr. Bossolton, is the bone broken?” asked Mordaunt.

By this time the patient, who had been hitherto in that languor which extreme pain always produces at first, especially on young frames, was sufficiently recovered to mark and reply to the kind solicitude of the last speaker: “I thank you, sir,” said he with a smile, “for your anxiety, but I feel that the bone is *not* broken; the muscles are a little hurt, that is all.”

“Young gentleman,” said Mr. Bossolton, “you must permit me to say that they who have all their lives been employed in the pursuit, and the investigation, and the analysis of certain studies are in general better acquainted with those studies

than they who have neither given them any importance of consideration — nor — nor any consideration of importance. Establishing this as my hypothesis, I shall now proceed to —”

“Apply immediate remedies, if you please, Mr. Bossolton,” interrupted Mr. Mordaunt, in that sweet and honeyed tone which somehow or other always silenced even the garrulous practitioner.

Driven into taciturnity, Mr. Bossolton again inspected the arm, and proceeded to urge the application of liniments and bandages, which he promised to prepare with the most sollicitudinous despatch and the most despatchful solicitude.



CHAPTER V.

YOUR name, Sir!

Ha! my name, you say — my name?

’Tis well — my name — is — nay, I must consider. — *Pedrillo.*

THIS accident occasioned a delay of some days in the plans of the young gentleman, for whom we trust very soon, both for our own convenience and that of our reader, to find a fitting appellation.

Mr. Mordaunt, after seeing every attention paid to him both surgical and hospitable, took his departure with a promise to call the next day; leaving behind him a strong impression of curiosity and interest to serve our hero as some mental occupation until his return. The bonny landlady came up in a new cap, with blue ribbons, in the course of the evening, to pay a visit of inquiry to the handsome patient, who was removed from the Griffin, No. 4, to the Dragon, No. 8, — a room whose merits were exactly in proportion to its number, namely, twice as great as those of No. 4.

“Well, sir,” said Mrs. Taptape, with a courtesy, “I trust you find yourself better.”

“At *this* moment I do,” said the gallant youth, with a significant air.

“Hem,” quoth the landlady.

A pause ensued. In spite of the compliment, a certain suspicion suddenly darted across the mind of the hostess. Strong as are the prepossessions of the sex, those of the profession are much stronger.

“Honest folk,” thought the landlady, “don’t travel with their initials only; the last ‘Whitehall Evening’ was full of shocking accounts of swindlers and cheats; and I gave nine pounds odd shillings for the silver teapot John has brought him up, — as if the delft one was not good enough for a foot traveller!”

Pursuing these ideas, Mrs. Taptape, looking bashfully down, said, —

“By the by, sir, Mr. Bossolton asked me what name he should put down in his book for the medicines; what would you please me to say, sir?”

“Mr. who?” said the youth, elevating his eyebrows.

“Mr. Bossolton, sir, the apothecary.”

“Oh! Bossolton! very odd name that, — not near so pretty as — dear me, what a beautiful cap that is of yours!” said the young gentleman.

“Lord, sir, do you think so? The ribbon *is* pretty enough; but — but, as I was saying, what name shall I tell Mr. Bossolton to put in his book?” “This,” thought Mrs. Taptape, “is coming to the point.”

“Well!” said the youth, slowly, and as if in a profound reverie, “well, Bossolton is certainly the most singular name I ever heard; he does right to put it in a book: it is quite a curiosity! is he clever?”

“Very, sir,” said the landlady, somewhat sharply; “but it is *your* name, not *his*, that he wishes to put into his book.”

“Mine?” said the youth, who appeared to have been seeking to gain time in order to answer a query which most men find requires very little deliberation, “mine, you say; *my* name is Linden — Clarence Linden — you understand?”

“What a pretty name!” thought the landlady’s daughter,

who was listening at the keyhole; "but how *could* he admire that odious cap of *Ma's!*"

"And, now, landlady, I wish you would send up my boxes; and get me a newspaper, if you please."

"Yes, sir," said the landlady, and she rose to retire.

"I do not think," said the youth to himself, "that I could have hit on a prettier name, and so novel a one too! — Clarence Linden, — why, if I were that pretty girl at the bar I could fall in love with the very words. Shakspeare was quite wrong when he said, —

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

A rose by *any* name would not smell as sweet; if a rose's name was Jeremiah Bossolton, for instance, it would not, to my nerves at least, smell of anything but an apothecary's shop!"

When Mordaunt called the next morning, he found Clarence much better, and carelessly turning over various books, part of the contents of the luggage superscribed C. L. A book of whatever description was among the few companions for whom Mordaunt had neither fastidiousness nor reserve; and the sympathy of taste between him and the sufferer gave rise to a conversation less cold and commonplace than it might otherwise have been. And when Mordaunt, after a stay of some length, rose to depart, he pressed Linden to return his visit before he left that part of the country; his place, he added, was only about five miles distant from W—. Linden, greatly interested in his visitor, was not slow in accepting the invitation, and, perhaps for the first time in his life, Mordaunt was shaking hands with a stranger he had only known two days.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE yet a child, and long before his time,
 He had perceived the presence and the power
 Of greatness.

But eagerly he read, and read again.

Yet still uppermost
 Nature was at his heart, as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
 In all things that from her sweet influence
 Might seek to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.

WORDSWORTH.

ALGERNON MORDAUNT was the last son of an old and honourable race, which had centuries back numbered princes in its line. His parents had had many children, but all (save Algernon, the youngest) died in their infancy. His mother perished in giving him birth. Constitutional infirmity and the care of mercenary nurses contributed to render Algernon a weakly and delicate child: hence came a taste for loneliness and a passion for study; and from these sprung, on the one hand, the fastidiousness and reserve which render us apparently unamiable, and, on the other, the loftiness of spirit and the kindness of heart which are the best and earliest gifts of literature, and more than counterbalance our deficiencies in the "minor morals" due to society by their tendency to increase our attention to the greater ones belonging to mankind. Mr. Mordaunt was a man of luxurious habits and gambling propensities: wedded to London, he left the house of his ancestors to moulder into desertion and decay; but to this home Algernon was constantly consigned during his vacations from school; and its solitude and cheerlessness gave to a disposition naturally

melancholy and thoughtful those colours which subsequent events were calculated to deepen, not efface.

Truth obliges us to state, despite our partiality to Mordaunt, that, when he left his school after a residence of six years, it was with the bitter distinction of having been the most unpopular boy in it. Why, nobody could exactly explain, for his severest enemies could not accuse him of ill-nature, cowardice, or avarice, and these make the three capital offences of a school-boy; but Algernon Mordaunt had already acquired the knowledge of himself, and could explain the cause, though with a bitter and swelling heart. His ill health, his long residence at home, his unfriended and almost orphan situation, his early habits of solitude and reserve, all these, so calculated to make the spirit shrink within itself, made him, on his entrance at school, if not unsocial, *appear* so: this was the primary reason of his unpopularity; the second was that he perceived, for he was sensitive (and consequently acute) to the extreme, the misfortune of his manner, and in his wish to rectify it, it became doubly unprepossessing; to reserve, it now added embarrassment, to coldness, gloom; and the pain he felt in addressing or being addressed by another was naturally and necessarily reciprocal, for the effects of sympathy are nowhere so wonderful, yet so invisible, as in the manners.

By degrees he shunned the intercourse which had for him nothing but distress, and his volatile acquaintances were perhaps the first to set him the example. Often in his solitary walks he stopped afar off to gaze upon the sports which none ever solicited him to share; and as the shout of laughter and of happy hearts came, peal after peal, upon his ear, he turned enviously, yet not malignantly away, with tears, which not all his pride could curb, and muttered to himself, "And these, these hate me!"

There are two feelings common to all high or affectionate natures, — that of extreme susceptibility to opinion and that of extreme bitterness at its injustice. These feelings were Mordaunt's: but the keen edge which one blow injures, the repetition blunts; and by little and little, Algernon became not only accustomed, but, as he persuaded himself, indifferent,

to his want of popularity; his step grew more lofty, and his address more collected, and that which was once diffidence gradually hardened into pride.

His residence at the University was neither without honour nor profit. A college life was then, as now, either the most retired or the most social of all others; we need scarcely say which it was to Mordaunt, but his was the age when solitude is desirable, and when the closet forms the mind better than the world. Driven upon itself, his intellect became inquiring and its resources profound; admitted to their inmost recesses, he revelled among the treasures of ancient lore, and in his dreams of the Nymph and Naiad, or his researches after truth in the deep wells of the Stagyrite or the golden fountains of Plato, he forgot the loneliness of his lot and exhausted the hoarded enthusiasm of his soul.

But his mind, rather thoughtful than imaginative, found no idol like "Divine Philosophy." It delighted to plunge itself into the mazes of metaphysical investigation; to trace the springs of the intellect; to connect the arcana of the universe; to descend into the darkest caverns, or to wind through the minutest mysteries of Nature, and rise, step by step, to that arduous elevation on which Thought stands dizzy and confused, looking beneath upon a clouded earth, and above upon an unfathomable heaven.

Rarely wandering from his chamber, known personally to few and intimately by none, Algernon yet left behind him at the University the most remarkable reputation of his day. He had obtained some of the highest of academical honours, and by that proverbial process of vulgar minds which ever frames the magnificent from the unknown, the seclusion in which he lived and the recondite nature of his favourite pursuits attached to his name a still greater celebrity and interest than all the orthodox and regular dignities he had acquired. There are few men who do not console themselves for not being generally loved, if they can reasonably hope that they are generally esteemed. Mordaunt had now grown reconciled to himself and to his kind. He had opened to his interest a world in his own breast, and it consoled him for his mortification in the world without. But,

better than this, his habits as well as studies had strengthened the principles and confirmed the nobility of his mind. He was not, it is true, more kind, more benevolent, more upright than before; but those virtues now emanated from principle, not emotion: and principle to the mind is what a free constitution is to a people; without that principle or that free constitution, the one may be for the moment as good, the other as happy, but we cannot tell how long the goodness and the happiness will continue.

On leaving the University, his father sent for him to London. He stayed there a short time, and mingled partially in its festivities; but the pleasures of English dissipation have for a century been the same, heartless without gayety, and dull without refinement. Nor could Mordaunt, the most fastidious, yet warm-hearted of human beings, reconcile either his tastes or his affections to the cold insipidities of patrician society. His father's habits and evident distresses deepened his disgust to his situation; for the habits were incurable and the distresses increasing; and nothing but a circumstance which Mordaunt did not then understand prevented the final sale of an estate already little better than a pompous incumbrance.

It was therefore with the half painful, half pleasurable sensation with which we avoid contemplating a ruin we cannot prevent that Mordaunt set out upon that Continental tour deemed then so necessary a part of education. His father, on taking leave of him, seemed deeply affected. "Go, my son," said he, "may God bless you, and not punish me too severely. I have wronged you deeply, and I cannot bear to look upon your face."

To these words Algernon attached a general, but they cloaked a peculiar, meaning: in three years, he returned to England; his father had been dead some months, and the signification of his parting address was already deciphered,—of this hereafter.

In his travels Mordaunt encountered an Englishman whose name I will not yet mention: a person of great reputed wealth; a merchant, yet a man of pleasure; a voluptuary in

life, yet a saint in reputation; or, to abstain from the antithetical analysis of a character which will not be corporeally presented to the reader till our tale is considerably advanced, one who drew from nature a singular combination of shrewd but false conclusions, and a peculiar philosophy, destined hereafter to contrast the colours and prove the practical utility of that which was espoused by Mordaunt.

There can be no education in which the lessons of the world do not form a share. Experience, in expanding Algernon's powers, had ripened his virtues. Nor had the years which had converted knowledge into wisdom failed in imparting polish to refinement. His person had acquired a greater grace, and his manners an easier dignity than before. His noble and generous mind had worked its impress upon his features and his mien; and those who could overcome the first coldness and shrinking hauteur of his address found it required no minute examination to discover the real expression of the eloquent eye and the kindling lip.

He had not been long returned before he found two enemies to his tranquillity, — the one was love, the other appeared in the more formidable guise of a claimant to his estate. Before Algernon was aware of the nature of the latter he went to consult with his lawyer.

“If the claim be just, I shall not, of course, proceed to law,” said Mordaunt.

“But without the estate, sir, you have nothing!”

“True,” said Algernon, calmly.

But the claim was not just, and to law he went.

In this lawsuit, however, he had one assistant in an old relation, who had seen, indeed, but very little of him, but who compassionated his circumstances, and above all hated his opponent. This relation was rich and childless; and there were not wanting those who predicted that his money would ultimately discharge the mortgages and repair the house of the young representative of the Mordaunt honours. But the old kinsman was obstinate, self-willed, and under the absolute dominion of patrician pride; and it was by no means improbable that the independence of Mordaunt's character would

soon create a disunion between them, by clashing against the peculiarities of his relation's temper.

It was a clear and sunny morning when Linden, tolerably recovered of his hurt, set out upon a sober and aged pony, which after some natural pangs of shame he had hired of his landlord, to Mordaunt Court.

Mordaunt's house was situated in the midst of a wild and extensive park, surrounded with woods, and interspersed with trees of the stateliest growth, now scattered into irregular groups, now marshalled into sweeping avenues; while, ever and anon, Linden caught glimpses of a rapid and brawling rivulet, which in many a slight but sounding waterfall gave a music strange and spirit-like to the thick copses and forest glades through which it went exulting on its way. The deer lay half concealed by the fern among which they couched, turning their stately crests towards the stranger, but not stirring from their rest; while from the summit of beeches which would have shamed the pavilion of Tityrus the rooks — those monks of the feathered people — were loud in their confused but not displeasing confabulations.

As Linden approached the house, he was struck with the melancholy air of desolation which spread over and around it: fragments of stone, above which clomb the rank weed, insolently proclaiming the triumph of Nature's meanest offspring over the wrecks of art; a moat dried up; a railing once of massive gilding, intended to fence a lofty terrace on the right from the incursions of the deer, but which, shattered and decayed, now seemed to ask with the satirist, —

“To what end did our lavish ancestors
Erect of old these stately piles of ours?”

— a chapel on the left, perfectly in ruins, — all appeared strikingly to denote that time had outstripped fortune, and that the years, which alike hallow and destroy, had broken the consequence, in deepening the antiquity, of the House of Mordaunt.

The building itself agreed but too well with the tokens of decay around it; most of the windows were shut up, and the

shutters of dark oak, richly gilt, contrasted forcibly with the shattered panes and mouldered framing of the glass. It was a house of irregular architecture. Originally built in the fifteenth century, it had received its last improvement, with the most lavish expense, during the reign of Anne; and it united the Gallic magnificence of the latter period with the strength and grandeur of the former; it was in a great part overgrown with ivy, and, where that insidious ornament had not reached, the signs of decay, and even ruin, were fully visible. The sun itself, bright and cheering as it shone over Nature, making the green sod glow like emeralds, and the rivulet flash in its beam, like one of those streams of real light, imagined by Swedenborg in his visions of heaven, and clothing tree and fell, brake and hillock, with the lavish hues of infant summer, — the sun itself only made more desolate, because more conspicuous, the venerable fabric, which the youthful traveller frequently paused more accurately to survey, and its laughing and sportive beams playing over chink and crevice, seemed almost as insolent and untimeous as the mirth of the young mocking the silent grief of some gray-headed and solitary mourner.

Clarence had now reached the porch, and the sound of the shrill bell he touched rang with a strange note through the general stillness of the place. A single servant appeared, and ushered Clarence through a screen hall, hung round with relics of armour, and ornamented on the side opposite the music gallery with a solitary picture of gigantic size, and exhibiting the full length of the gaunt person and sable steed of that Sir Piers de Mordaunt who had so signalized himself in the field in which Henry of Richmond changed his coronet for a crown. Through this hall Clarence was led to a small chamber clothed with uncouth and tattered arras, in which, seemingly immersed in papers, he found the owner of the domain.

“Your studies,” said Linden, after the salutations of the day, “seem to harmonize with the venerable antiquity of your home;” and he pointed to the crabbed characters and faded ink of the papers on the table.

“So they ought,” answered Mordaunt, with a faint smile;

“for they are called from their quiet archives in order to support my struggle for that home. But I fear the struggle is in vain, and that the quibbles of law will transfer into other hands a possession I am foolish enough to value the more from my inability to maintain it.”

Something of this Clarence had before learned from the communicative gossip of his landlady; and less desirous to satisfy his curiosity than to lead the conversation from a topic which he felt must be so unwelcome to Mordaunt, he expressed a wish to see the state apartments of the house. With something of shame at the neglect they had necessarily experienced, and something of pride at the splendour which no neglect could efface, Mordaunt yielded to the request, and led the way up a staircase of black oak, the walls and ceiling of which were covered with frescoes of Italian art, to a suite of apartments in which time and dust seemed the only tenants. Lingeringly did Clarence gaze upon the rich velvet, the costly mirrors, the motley paintings of a hundred ancestors, and the antique cabinets, containing, among the most hoarded relics of the Mordaunt race, curiosities which the hereditary enthusiasm of a line of cavaliers had treasured as the most sacred of heirlooms, and which, even to the philosophical mind of Mordaunt, possessed a value he did not seek too minutely to analyze. Here was the goblet from which the first prince of Tudor had drunk after the field of Bosworth. Here the ring with which the chivalrous Francis the First had rewarded a signal feat of that famous Robert de Mordaunt, who, as a poor but adventurous cadet of the house, had brought to the “first gentleman of France” the assistance of his sword. Here was the glove which Sir Walter had received from the royal hand of Elizabeth, and worn in the lists upon a crest which the lance of no antagonist in that knightly court could abase. And here, more sacred than all, because connected with the memory of misfortune, was a small box of silver which the last king of a fated line had placed in the hands of the gray-headed descendant of that Sir Walter after the battle of the Boyne, saying, “Keep this, Sir Everard Mordaunt, for the sake of one who has purchased the luxury of gratitude at the price of a throne!”

As Clarence glanced from these relics to the figure of Mordaunt, who stood at a little distance leaning against the window, with arms folded on his breast and with eyes abstractedly wandering over the noble woods and extended park, which spread below, he could not but feel that if birth had indeed the power of setting its seal upon the form, it was never more conspicuous than in the broad front and lofty air of the last descendant of the race by whose memorials he was surrounded. Touched by the fallen fortunes of Mordaunt, and interested by the uncertainty which the chances of law threw over his future fate, Clarence could not resist exclaiming, with some warmth and abruptness, —

“And by what subterfuge or cavil does the present claimant of these estates hope to dislodge their rightful possessor?”

“Why,” answered Mordaunt, “it is a long story in detail, but briefly told in epitome. My father was a man whose habits greatly exceeded his fortune, and a few months after his death, Mr. Vavasour, a distant relation, produced a paper, by which it appeared that my father had, for a certain sum of ready money, disposed of his estates to this Mr. Vavasour, upon condition that they should not be claimed nor the treaty divulged till after his death; the reason for this proviso seems to have been the shame my father felt for his exchange, and his fear of the censures of that world to which he was always devoted.”

“But how unjust to you!” said Clarence.

“Not so much so as it seems,” said Mordaunt, deprecatingly; “for I was then but a sickly boy, and according to the physicians, and I sincerely believe according also to my poor father’s belief, almost certain of a premature death. In that case Vavasour would have been the nearest heir; and this expectancy, by the by, joined to the mortgages on the property, made the sum given ridiculously disproportioned to the value of the estate. I must confess that the news came upon me like a thunderbolt. I should have yielded up possession immediately, but was informed by my lawyers that my father had no legal right to dispose of the property; the discussion of that right forms the ground of the present lawsuit. But,” continued Mordaunt, proudly, yet mournfully, “I am prepared for the

worst; if, indeed, I should call that the worst which can affect neither intellect nor health nor character nor conscience."

Clarence was silent, and Mordaunt after a brief pause once more resumed his guidance. Their tour ended in a large library filled with books, and this Mordaunt informed his guest was his chosen sitting-room.

An old carved table was covered with works which for the most part possessed for the young mind of Clarence, more accustomed to imagine than reflect, but a very feeble attraction; on looking over them, he, however, found, half hid by a huge folio of Hobbes, and another of Locke, a volume of Milton's poems; this paved the way to a conversation in which both had an equal interest, for both were enthusiastic in the character and genius of that wonderful man, for whom "the divine and solemn countenance of Freedom" was dearer than the light of day, and whose solitary spell, accomplishing what the whole family of earth once vainly began upon the plain of Shinar, has built of materials more imperishable than "slime and brick" "a city and a tower whose summit *has* reached to heaven."

It was with mutual satisfaction that Mordaunt and his guest continued their commune till the hour of dinner was announced to them by a bell, which, formerly intended as an alarum, now served the peaceful purpose of a more agreeable summons.

The same servant who had admitted Clarence ushered them through the great hall into the dining-room, and was their solitary attendant during their repast.

The temper of Mordaunt was essentially grave and earnest, and his conversation almost invariably took the tone of his mind; this made their conference turn upon less minute and commonplace topics than one between such new acquaintances, especially of different ages, usually does.

"You will positively go to London to-morrow, then?" said Mordaunt, as the servant, removing the appurtenances of dinner, left them alone.

"Positively," answered Clarence. "I go there to carve my own fortunes, and, to say truth, I am impatient to begin."

Mordaunt looked earnestly at the frank face of the speaker,

and wondered that one so young, so well-educated, and, from his air and manner, evidently of gentle blood, should appear so utterly thrown upon his own resources.

"I wish you success," said he, after a pause; "and it is a noble part of the organization of this world that, by increasing those riches which are beyond fortune, we do in general take the surest method of obtaining those which are in its reach."

Clarence looked inquiringly at Mordaunt, who, perceiving it, continued, "I see that I should explain myself further. I will do so by using the thoughts of a mind not the least beautiful and accomplished which this country has produced. 'Of all which belongs to us,' said Bolingbroke, 'the least valuable parts can alone fall under the will of others. *Whatever is best is safest*; lies out of the reach of human power; can neither be given nor taken away. Such is this great and beautiful work of Nature, the world. Such is the mind of man, which contemplates and admires the world whereof it makes the noblest part. These are inseparably ours, and as long as we remain in one we shall enjoy the other.'"

"Beautiful, indeed!" exclaimed Clarence, with the enthusiasm of a young and pure heart, to which every loftier sentiment is always beautiful.

"And true as beautiful!" said Mordaunt. "Nor is this all, for the mind can even dispense with that world 'of which it forms a part' if we can create within it a world still more inaccessible to chance. But (and I now return to and explain my former observation) the means by which we can effect this *peculiar* world can be rendered equally subservient to our advancement and prosperity in that which we share in common with our race; for the riches which by the aid of wisdom we heap up in the storehouses of the mind are, though not the only, the most customary coin by which external prosperity is bought. So that the philosophy which can alone give independence to ourselves becomes, under the name of honesty, the best policy in commerce with our kind."

In conversation of this nature, which the sincerity and lofty enthusiasm of Mordaunt rendered interesting to Clarence, despite the distaste to the serious so ordinary to youth, the

hours passed on, till the increasing evening warned Linden to depart.

“Adieu!” said he to Mordaunt. “I know not when we shall meet again, but if we ever do, I will make it my boast, whether in prosperity or misfortune, not to have forgotten the pleasure I have this day enjoyed!”

Returning his guest’s farewell with a warmth unusual to his manner, Mordaunt followed him to the door and saw him depart.

Fate ordained that they should pursue in very different paths their several destinies; nor did it afford them an opportunity of meeting again, till years and events had severely tried the virtue of one and materially altered the prospects of the other.

The next morning Clarence Linden was on his road to London.



CHAPTER VII.

“UPON my word,” cries Jones, “thou art a very odd fellow, and I like thy humour extremely.”—FIELDING.

THE rumbling and jolting vehicle which conveyed Clarence to the metropolis stopped at the door of a tavern in Holborn. Linden was ushered into a close coffee-room and presented with a bill of fare. While he was deliberating between the respective merits of mutton chops and beefsteaks, a man with a brown coat, brown breeches, and a brown wig, walked into the room; he cast a curious glance at Clarence and then turned to the waiter.

“A pair of slippers!”

“Yes, sir,” and the waiter disappeared.

“I suppose,” said the brown gentleman to Clarence, “I suppose, sir, you are the gentleman just come to town?”

“You are right, sir,” said Clarence.

"Very well, very well indeed," resumed the stranger, musingly. "I took the liberty of looking at your boxes in the passage; I knew a lady, sir, a relation of yours, I think."

"Sir!" exclaimed Linden, colouring violently.

"At least I suppose, for her name was just the same as yours, only, at least, one letter difference between them: yours is *Linden* I see, sir; hers was *Minden*. Am I right in my conjecture that you are related to her?"

"Sir," answered Clarence, gravely, "notwithstanding the similarity of our names, we are not related."

"Very extraordinary," replied the stranger.

"Very," repeated Linden.

"I had the honour, sir," said the brown gentleman, "to make Mrs. Minden many presents of value, and I should have been very happy to have obliged you in the same manner, had you been in any way connected with that worthy gentlewoman."

"You are very kind," said Linden, "you are very kind; and since such were your intentions, I believe I *must* have been connected with Mrs. Minden. At all events, as you justly observe, there is only the difference of a letter between our — names, a discrepancy too slight, I am sure, to alter your benevolent intentions."

Here the waiter returned with the slippers.

The stranger slowly unbuttoned his gaiters. "Sir," said he to Linden, "we will renew our conversation presently."

No sooner had the generous friend of Mrs. Minden deposited his feet in their easy tenements than he quitted the room.

"Pray," said Linden to the waiter, when he had ordered his simple repast, "who is that gentleman in brown?"

"*Mr. Brown*," replied the waiter.

"And who or what is Mr. Brown?" asked our hero.

Before the waiter could reply, Mr. Brown returned, with a large bandbox, carefully enveloped in a blue handkerchief. "You come from —, sir?" said Mr. Brown, quietly seating himself at the same table as Linden.

"No, sir, I do not."

"From —, then?"

“No, sir, — from W ———.”

“W ———? — ay — well, I knew a lady with a name very like W ——— (the late Lady Waddilove) extremely well. I made her some valuable presents: her ladyship was very sensible of it.”

“I don’t doubt it, sir,” replied Clarence; “such instances of general beneficence rarely occur!”

“I have some magnificent relics of her ladyship in this box,” returned Mr. Brown.

“Really! then she was no less generous than yourself, I presume?”

“Yes, her ladyship *was* remarkably generous. About a week before she died (the late Lady Waddilove was quite sensible of her danger), she called me to her, — ‘Brown,’ said she, ‘you are a good creature; I have had my most valuable things from you. I am not ungrateful: I will leave you — *my maid!* She is as clever as you are and as good.’ I took the hint, sir, and married. It was an excellent bargain. My wife is a charming woman; she entirely fitted up Mrs. Minden’s wardrobe and I furnished the house. Mrs. Minden was greatly indebted to us.”

“Heaven help me!” thought Clarence, “the man is certainly mad.”

The waiter entered with the dinner; and Mr. Brown, who seemed to have a delicate aversion to any conversation in the presence of the Ganymede of the Holborn tavern, immediately ceased his communications; meanwhile, Clarence took the opportunity to survey him more minutely than he had hitherto done.

His new acquaintance was in age about forty-eight; in stature, rather under the middle height; and thin, dried, withered, yet muscular withal, like a man who, in stinting his stomach for the sake of economy, does not the less enjoy the power of undergoing any fatigue or exertion that an object of adequate importance may demand. We have said already that he was attired, like twilight, “in a suit of sober brown;” and there was a formality, a precision, and a cat-like sort of cleanliness in his garb, which savoured strongly of the

respectable coxcombray of the counting-house. His face was lean, it is true, but not emaciated; and his complexion, sallow and austere, harmonized well with the colours of his clothing. An eye of the darkest hazel, sharp, shrewd, and flashing at times, especially at the mention of the euphonious name of Lady Waddilove,—a name frequently upon the lips of the inheritor of her abigail,—with a fire that might be called brilliant, was of that modest species which can seldom encounter the straightforward glance of another; on the contrary, it seemed restlessly uneasy in any settled place, and wandered from ceiling to floor, and corner to corner, with an inquisitive though apparently careless glance, as if seeking for something to admire or haply to appropriate; it also seemed to be the especial care of Mr. Brown to veil, as far as he was able, the vivacity of his looks beneath an expression of open and unheeding good-nature, an expression strangely enough contrasting with the closeness and sagacity which Nature had indelibly stamped upon features pointed, aquiline, and impressed with a strong mixture of the Judaical physiognomy. The manner and bearing of this gentleman partook of the same undecided character as his countenance: they seemed to be struggling between civility and impudence; a real eagerness to make the acquaintance of the person he addressed, and an assumed recklessness of the advantages which that acquaintance could bestow;—it was like the behaviour of a man who is desirous of having the best possible motives imputed to him, but is fearful lest that desire should not be utterly fulfilled. At the first glance you would have pledged yourself for his respectability; at the second, you would have half suspected him to be a rogue; and, after you had been half an hour in his company, you would confess yourself in the obscurest doubt which was the better guess, the first or the last.

“Waiter!” said Mr. Brown, looking enviously at the viands upon which Linden, having satisfied his curiosity, was now with all the appetite of youth regaling himself. “Waiter!”

“Yes, sir!”

“Bring me a sandwich — and — and, waiter, see that I have plenty of — plenty of —”

“What, sir?”

“Plenty of mustard, waiter.”

“Mustard” (and here Mr. Brown addressed himself to Clarence) “is a very wonderful assistance to the digestion. By the by, sir, if you want any curiously fine mustard, I can procure you some pots quite capital, — a great favour, though, — they were smuggled from France, especially for the use of the late Lady Waddilove.”

“Thank you,” said Linden, dryly; “I shall be very happy to accept anything you may wish to offer me.”

Mr. Brown took a pocket-book from his pouch. “Six pots of mustard, sir, — shall I say six?”

“As many as you please,” replied Clarence; and Mr. Brown wrote down “Six pots of French mustard.”

“You are a very young gentleman, sir,” said Mr. Brown, “probably intended for some profession: I don’t mean to be impertinent, but if I can be of any assistance —”

“You can, sir,” replied Linden, “and immediately — have the kindness to ring the bell.”

Mr. Brown, with a grave smile, did as he was desired; the waiter re-entered, and, receiving a whispered order from Clarence, again disappeared.

“What profession did you say, sir?” renewed Mr. Brown, artfully.

“None!” replied Linden.

“Oh, very well, — very well indeed. Then as an idle, independent gentleman, you will of course be a bit of a beau; want some shirts, possibly; fine cravats, too; gentlemen wear a particular pattern now; gloves, gold, or shall I say *gilt* chain, watch and seals, a ring or two, and a snuff-box?”

“Sir, you are vastly obliging,” said Clarence, in undisguised surprise.

“Not at all, I would do anything for a relation of Mrs. Minden.”

The waiter re-entered; “Sir,” said he to Linden, “your room is quite ready.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said Clarence, rising. “Mr. Brown, I have the honour of wishing you a good evening.”

“Stay, sir — stay; you have not looked into these things belonging to the late Lady Waddilove.”

“Another time,” said Clarence, hastily.

“To-morrow, at ten o’clock,” muttered Mr. Brown.

“I am exceedingly glad I have got rid of that fellow,” said Linden to himself, as he stretched his limbs in his easy-chair, and drank off the last glass of his pint of port. “If I have not already seen, I have already guessed, enough of the world, to know that you are to look to your pockets when a man offers you a present; they who ‘give,’ also ‘take away.’ So here I am in London, with an order for £ 1000 in my purse, the wisdom of Dr. Latinas in my head, and the health of eighteen in my veins; will it not be my own fault if I do not both *enjoy* and *make* myself —”

And then, yielding to meditations of future success, partaking strongly of the inexperienced and sanguine temperament of the soliloquist, Clarence passed the hours till his pillow summoned him to dreams no less ardent and perhaps no less unreal.

CHAPTER VIII.

“OH, how I long to be employed!” — *Every Man in his Humour.*

CLARENCE was sitting the next morning over the very unsatisfactory breakfast which tea made out of broomsticks, and cream out of chalk (adulteration thrived even in 17—) afforded, when the waiter threw open the door and announced Mr. Brown.

“Just in time, sir, you perceive,” said Mr. Brown; “I am punctuality itself: exactly a quarter of a minute to ten. I have brought you the pots of French mustard, and I have some very valuable articles which you *must* want, besides.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Linden, not well knowing what to say; and Mr. Brown, untying a silk handkerchief, produced three shirts, two pots of pomatum, a tobacco canister with a

German pipe, four pair of silk stockings, two gold seals, three rings, and a stuffed parrot!

"Beautiful articles these, sir," said Mr. Brown, with a snuffle "of inward sweetness long drawn out," and expressive of great admiration of his offered treasures; "beautiful articles, sir, ar' n't they?"

"Very, the parrot in particular," said Clarence.

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Brown, "the parrot is indeed quite a jewel; it belonged to the late Lady Waddilove; I offer it to you with considerable regret, for —"

"Oh!" interrupted Clarence, "pray do not rob yourself of such a jewel; it really is of no use to me."

"I know that, sir, — I know that," replied Mr. Brown; "but it will be of use to your friends; it will be inestimable to any old aunt, sir, any maiden lady living at Hackney, any curious elderly gentleman fond of a knick-knack. I knew you would know some one to send it to as a present, even though you should not want it yourself."

"Bless me!" thought Linden, "was there ever such generosity? Not content with providing for my wants, he extends his liberality even to any possible relations I may possess!"

Mr. Brown now re-tied "the beautiful articles" in his handkerchief. "Shall I leave them, sir?" said he.

"Why, really," said Clarence, "I thought yesterday that you were in jest; but you must be aware that I cannot accept presents from any gentleman so much, — so much a stranger to me as you are."

"No, sir, I *am* aware of that," replied Mr. Brown; "and in order to remove the unpleasantness of such a feeling, sir, on your part, — merely in order to do that, I assure you with no other view, sir, in the world, — I have just noted down the articles on this piece of paper; but as you will perceive, at a price so low as still to make them actually presents in everything but the name. Oh, sir, I perfectly understand your delicacy, and would not for the world violate it."

So saying, Mr. Brown put a paper into Linden's hands, the substance of which a very little more experience of the world would have enabled Clarence to foresee; it ran thus: —

CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., DR.

TO MR. MORRIS BROWN.

To Six Pots of French Mustard	£ 1 4 0
To Three Superfine Holland Shirts, with Cambric Bosoms, complete	4 1 0
To Two Pots of Superior French Pomatum	0 10 0
To a Tobacco Canister of enamelled Tin, with a finely executed Head of the Pretender; slight flaw in the same	0 12 6
To a German Pipe, second hand, as good as new, belonging to the late Lady Waddilove	1 18 0
To Four Pair of Black Silk Hose, ditto, belonging to her Ladyship's Husband	2 8 0
To Two Superfine Embossed Gold Watch Seals, with a Classical Motto and Device to each, namely, Mouse Trap, and "Prenez Garde," to one, and "Who the devil can this be from?" ¹ to the other	1 1 0
To a remarkably fine Antique Ring, having the head of a Monkey	0 16 6
A ditto, with blue stones	0 12 6
A ditto, with green ditto	0 12 6
A Stuffed Green Parrot, a remarkable favourite of the late Lady W.	2 2 0
Sum Total	15 18 0
Deduction for Ready Money	0 13 6
	<hr/>
Mr. Brown's Profits for Brokerage	15 4 6
	1 10 0
Sum Total	£ 16 14 6

Received of Clarence Linden, Esq., this day of 17—.

It would have been no unamusing study to watch the expression of Clarence's face as it lengthened over each article until he had reached the final conclusion. He then carefully folded up the paper, restored it to Mr. Brown, with a low bow, and said, "Excuse me, sir, I will not take advantage of your generosity; keep your parrot and other treasures for some more worthy person. I cannot accept of what you are pleased to term your very valuable *presents!*"

¹ One would not have thought these ingenious devices had been of so ancient a date as the year 17—.

“Oh, very well, very well,” said Mr. Brown, pocketing the paper, and seeming perfectly unconcerned at the termination of his proposals; “perhaps I can serve you in some other way?”

“In none, I thank you,” replied Linden.

“Just consider, sir!—you will want lodgings; I can find them for you cheaper than you can yourself; or perhaps you would prefer going into a nice, quiet, genteel family where you can have both board and lodging, and be treated in every way as the pet child of the master?”

A thought crossed Linden’s mind. He was going to stay in town some time; he was ignorant of its ways; he had neither friends nor relations, at least none whom he could visit and consult; moreover, hotels, he knew, were expensive; lodgings, though cheaper, might, if tolerably comfortable, greatly exceed the sum prudence would allow him to expend: would not this plan proposed by Mr. Brown, of going into a “nice quiet genteel family,” be the most advisable one he could adopt? The generous benefactor of the late and ever-to-be-remembered Lady Waddilove perceived his advantage, and making the most of Clarence’s hesitation, continued,—

“I know of a charming little abode, sir, situated in the suburbs of London, quite *rus in urbe*, as the scholars say; you can have a delightful little back parlour, looking out upon the garden, and all to yourself, I dare say.”

“And pray, Mr. Brown,” interrupted Linden, “what price do you think would be demanded for such enviable accommodation? If you offer me them as ‘*a present*,’ I shall have nothing to say to them.”

“Oh, sir,” answered Mr. Brown, “the price will be a trifle, — a mere trifle; but I will inquire, and let you know the exact sum in the course of the day: all they want is a respectable gentlemanlike lodger; and I am sure so near a relation of Mrs. Minden will upon my recommendation be received with avidity. Then you won’t have any of these valuable articles, sir? You’ll repent it, sir; take my word for it — hem!”

“Since,” replied Clarence, dryly, “your word appears of so

much more value than your articles, pardon me, if I prefer taking the former instead of the latter."

Mr. Brown forced a smile, — "Well, sir, very well, very well indeed. You will not go out before two o'clock? and at that time I shall call upon you respecting the commission you have favoured me with."

"I will await you," said Clarence; and he bowed Mr. Brown out of the room.

"Now, really," said Linden to himself, as he paced the narrow limits of his apartment, "I do not see what better plan I can pursue; but let me well consider what is my ultimate object. A high step in the world's ladder! how is this to be obtained? First, by the regular method of professions; but what profession should I adopt? The Church is incompatible with my object, the army and navy with my means. Next come the irregular methods of adventure and enterprise, such as marriage with a fortune," — here he paused and looked at the glass, — "the speculation of a political pamphlet, or an ode to the minister; attendance on some dying miser of my own name, without a relation in the world; or, in short, any other mode of making money that may decently offer itself. Now, situated as I am, without a friend in this great city, I might as well purchase my experience at as cheap a rate and in as brief a time as possible, nor do I see any plan of doing so more promising than that proposed by Mr. Brown."

These and such like reflections, joined to the inspiriting pages of the "Newgate Calendar" and "The Covent Garden Magazine," two works which Clarence dragged from their concealment under a black tea-tray, afforded him ample occupation till the hour of two, punctual to which time Mr. Morris Brown returned.

"Well, sir," said Clarence, "what is your report?"

The friend of the late Lady W. wiped his brow and gave three long sighs before he replied: "A long walk, sir — a very long walk I have had; but I have succeeded. No thanks, sir, — no thanks, — the lady, a most charming, delightful, amiable woman, will receive you with pleasure; you

will have the use of a back parlour (as I said) all the morning, and a beautiful little bedroom entirely to yourself; think of that, sir. You will have an egg for breakfast, and you will dine with the family at three o'clock: quite fashionable hours you see, sir."

"And the terms?" said Linden, impatiently.

"Why, sir," replied Mr. Brown, "the lady was too genteel to talk to me about them; you had better walk with me to her house and see if you cannot yourself agree with her."

"I will," said Clarence. "Will you wait here till I have dressed?"

Mr. Brown bowed his assent.

"I might as well," thought Clarence, as he ascended to his bedroom, "inquire into the character of this gentleman to whose good offices I am so rashly intrusting myself." He rang his bell; the chambermaid appeared, and was dismissed for the waiter. The character was soon asked, and soon given. For our reader's sake we will somewhat enlarge upon it.

Mr. Morris Brown originally came into the world with the simple appellation of Moses, a name which his father — honest man — had, as the Minorities can still testify, honourably borne before him. Scarcely, however, had the little Moses attained the age of five, when his father, for causes best known to himself, became a Christian. Somehow or other there is a most potent connection between the purse and the conscience, and accordingly the blessings of Heaven descended in golden showers upon the proselyte. "I shall die worth a plum," said Moses the elder (who had taken unto himself the Christian cognomen of Brown); "I shall die worth a plum," repeated he, as he went one fine morning to speculate at the Exchange. A change of news, sharp and unexpected as a change of wind, lowered the stocks and blighted the plum. Mr. Brown was in the "Gazette" that week, and his wife in weeds for him the next. He left behind him, besides the said wife, several debts and his son Moses. Beggared by the former, our widow took a small shop in Wardour Street to support the latter. Patient, but enterprising — cautious of

risking pounds, indefatigable in raising pence — the little Moses inherited the propensities of his Hebrew ancestors and though not so capable as his immediate progenitor in making a fortune, he was at least far less likely to lose one. In spite, however, of all the industry both of mother and son, the gains of the shop were but scanty; to increase them capital was required, and all Mr. Moses Brown's capital lay in his brain. "It is a bad foundation," said the mother, with a sigh. "Not at all!" said the son, and leaving the shop, he turned broker. Now a broker is a man who makes an income out of other people's funds, — a gleaner of stray extravagances; and by doing the public the honour of living upon them may fairly be termed a little sort of state minister in his way. What with haunting sales, hawking china, selling the curiosities of one old lady and purchasing the same for another, Mr. Brown managed to enjoy a very comfortable existence. Great pains and small gains will at last invert their antithesis, and make little trouble and great profit; so that by the time Mr. Brown had attained his fortieth year, the petty shop had become a large warehouse; and, if the worthy Moses, now christianized into Morris, was not so sanguine as his father in the gathering of plums, he had been at least as fortunate in the collecting of windfalls. To say truth, the abigail of the defunct Lady Waddilove had been no unprofitable helpmate to our broker. As ingenious as benevolent, she was the owner of certain rooms of great resort in the neighborhood of St. James's, — rooms where caps and appointments were made better than anywhere else, and where credit was given and character lost upon terms equally advantageous to the accommodating Mrs. Brown.

Meanwhile her husband, continuing through liking what he had begun through necessity, slackened not his industry in augmenting his fortune; on the contrary, small profits were but a keener incentive to large ones, — as the glutton only sharpened by luncheon his appetite for dinner. Still was Mr. Brown the very Alcibiades of brokers, the universal genius, suiting every man to his humour. Business of whatever description, from the purchase of a borough to that of a brooch,

was alike the object of Mr. Brown's most zealous pursuit: taverns, where country cousins put up; rustic habitations, where ancient maidens resided; auction or barter; city or hamlet, — all were the same to that enterprising spirit, which made out of every acquaintance — a commission! Sagacious and acute, Mr. Brown perceived the value of eccentricity in covering design, and found by experience that whatever can be laughed at as odd will be gravely considered as harmless. Several of the broker's peculiarities were, therefore, more artificial than natural; and many were the sly bargains which he smuggled into effect under the comfortable cloak of singularity. No wonder, then, that the crafty Morris grew gradually in repute as a person of infinite utility and excellent qualifications; or that the penetrating friends of his deceased sire bowed to the thriving itinerant, with a respect which they denied to many in loftier professions and more general esteem.

CHAPTER IX.

TRUST me you have an exceeding fine lodging here, — very neat and private. — BEN JONSON.

IT was a tolerably long walk to the abode of which the worthy broker spoke in such high terms of commendation. At length, at the suburbs towards Paddington, Mr. Brown stopped at a very small house; it stood rather retired from its surrounding neighbours, which were of a loftier and more pretending aspect than itself, and, in its awkward shape and pitiful bashfulness, looked exceedingly like a school-boy finding himself for the first time in a *grown up* party, and shrinking with all possible expedition into the obscurest corner he can discover. Passing through a sort of garden, in which a spot of grass lay in the embraces of a stripe of gravel, Mr. Brown knocked upon a very bright knocker at a very new door. The latter was opened, and a footboy appeared.

"Is Mrs. Copperas within?" asked the broker.

"Yees, sir," said the boy.

"Show this gentleman and myself up stairs," resumed Brown.

"Yees," reiterated the lackey.

Up a singularly narrow staircase, into a singularly diminutive drawing-room, Clarence and his guide were ushered. There, seated on a little chair by a little work-table, with one foot on a little stool and one hand on a little book, was a little — very little lady.

"This is the young gentleman," said Mr. Brown; and Clarence bowed low, in token of the introduction.

The lady returned the salutation with an affected bend, and said, in a mincing and grotesquely subdued tone, "You are desirous, sir, of entering into the bosom of my family. We possess accommodations of a most elegant description; accustomed to the genteelest circles, enjoying the pure breezes of the Highgate hills, and presenting to any guest we may receive the attractions of a home rather than of a lodging, you will find our retreat no less eligible than unique. You are, I presume, sir, in some profession, some city avocation — or — or trade?"

"I have the misfortune," said he, smiling, "to belong to no profession."

The lady looked hard at the speaker, and then at the broker. With certain people to belong to no profession is to be of no respectability.

"The most unexceptionable references will be given — and *required*," resumed Mrs. Copperas.

"Certainly" said Mr. Brown, "certainly, the gentleman is a relation of Mrs. Minden, a *very* old customer of mine."

"In that case," said Mrs. Copperas, "the affair is settled;" and, rising, she rang the bell, and ordered the footboy, whom she addressed by the grandiloquent name of "De Warens" to show the gentleman the apartments. While Clarence was occupied in surveying the luxuries of a box at the top of the house, called a bed-chamber, which seemed just large and just hot enough for a chrysalis, and a corresponding box below,

termed the back parlour, which would certainly *not* have been large enough for the said chrysalis when turned into a butterfly; Mr. Morris Brown, after duly expatiating on the merits of Clarence, proceeded to speak of the terms; these were soon settled, for Clarence was yielding and the lady not above three times as extortionate as she ought to have been.

Before Linden left the house, the bargain was concluded. That night his trunks were removed to his new abode, and having with incredible difficulty been squeezed into the bedroom, Clarence surveyed them with the same astonishment with which the virtuoso beheld the flies in amber, —

“Not that the things were either rich or rare,
He wondered how the devil they got there!”



CHAPTER X.

SUCH scenes had tempered with a pensive grace
The maiden lustre of that faultless face;
Had hung a sad and dreamlike spell upon
The gliding music of her silver tone,
And shaded the soft soul which loved to lie
In the deep pathos of that volumed eye. — *O'Neill; or, The Rebel.*

The love thus kindled between them was of no common or calculating nature: it was vigorous and delicious, and at times so suddenly intense as to appear to their young hearts for a moment or so with almost an awful character. — *Inesilla.*

THE reader will figure to himself a small chamber, in a remote wing of a large and noble mansion. The walls were covered with sketches whose extreme delicacy of outline and colouring betrayed the sex of the artist; a few shelves filled with books supported vases of flowers. A harp stood neglected at the farther end of the room, and just above hung the slender prison of one of those golden wanderers from the Canary Isles which bear to our colder land some of the gentlest music of their skies and zephyrs. The window, reaching to the ground, was open,

and looked, through the clusters of jessamine and honeysuckle which surrounded the low veranda, beyond upon thick and frequent copses of blossoming shrubs, redolent of spring and sparkling in the sunny tears of a May shower which had only just wept itself away. Embosomed in these little groves lay plots of flowers, girdled with turf as green as ever wooed the nightly dances of the fairies ; and afar off, through one artful opening, the eye caught the glittering wanderings of water, on whose light and smiles the universal happiness of the young year seemed reflected.

But in that chamber, heedless of all around, and cold to the joy with which everything else, equally youthful, beautiful, and innocent, seemed breathing and inspired, sat a very young and lovely female. Her cheek leaned upon her hand, and large tears flowed fast and burningly over the small and delicate fingers. The comb that had confined her tresses lay at her feet, and the high dress which concealed her swelling breast had been loosened, to give vent to the suffocating and indignant throbbings which had rebelled against its cincture ; all appeared to announce that bitterness of grief when the mind, as it were, wreaks its scorn upon the body in its contempt for external seemings, and to proclaim that the present more subdued and softened sorrow had only succeeded to a burst far less quiet and uncontrolled. Woe to those who eat the bread of dependence : their tears are wrung from the inmost sources of the heart.

Isabel St. Leger was the only child of a captain in the army who died in her infancy ; her mother had survived him but a few months ; and to the reluctant care and cold affections of a distant and wealthy relation of the same name the warm-hearted and penniless orphan was consigned. Major-General Cornelius St. Leger, whose riches had been purchased in India at the price of his constitution, was of a temper as hot as his curries, and he wreaked it the more unsparingly on his ward, because the superior ill-temper of his maiden sister had prevented his giving vent to it upon her. That sister, Miss Diana St. Leger, was a meagre gentlewoman of about six feet high, with a loud voice and commanding aspect. Long in awe of her brother, she rejoiced at heart to find some one whom she had

such right and reason to make in awe of herself; and from the age of four to that of seventeen Isabel suffered every insult and every degradation which could be inflicted upon her by the tyranny of her two protectors. Her spirit, however, was far from being broken by the rude shocks it received; on the contrary, her mind, gentleness itself to the kind, rose indignantly against the unjust. It was true that the sense of wrong did not break forth audibly; for, though susceptible, Isabel was meek, and her pride was concealed by the outward softness and feminacy of her temper: but she stole away from those who had wounded her heart or trampled upon its feelings, and nourished with secret but passionate tears the memory of the harshness or injustice she had endured. Yet she was not vindictive: her resentment was a noble not a debasing feeling; once, when she was yet a child, Miss Diana was attacked with a fever of the most malignant and infectious kind; her brother loved himself far too well to risk his safety by attending her; the servants were too happy to wreak their hatred under the pretence of obeying their fears; they consequently followed the example of their master; and Miss Diana St. Leger might have gone down to her ancestors "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," if Isabel had not volunteered and enforced her attendance. Hour after hour her fairy form flitted around the sick-chamber, or sat mute and breathless by the feverish bed; she had neither fear for contagion nor bitterness for past oppression; everything vanished beneath the one hope of serving, the one gratification of feeling herself, in the wide waste of creation, not utterly without use, as she had been hitherto without friends.

Miss St. Leger recovered. "For your recovery, in the first place," said the doctor, "you will thank Heaven; in the second, you will thank your young relation;" and for several days the convalescent did overwhelm the happy Isabel with her praises and caresses. But this change did not last long: the chaste Diana had been too spoiled by the prosperity of many years for the sickness of a single month to effect much good in her disposition. Her old habits were soon resumed; and though it is probable that her *heart* was in reality soft-

ened towards the poor Isabel, that softening by no means extended to her temper. In truth, the brother and sister were not without affection for one so beautiful and good, but they had been torturing slaves all their lives, and their affection was, and could be, but that of a taskmaster or a planter.

But Isabel was the only relation who ever appeared within their walls; and among the guests with whom the luxurious mansion was crowded, she passed no less for the heiress than the dependant; to her, therefore, was offered the homage of many lips and hearts, and if her pride was perpetually galled and her feelings insulted in private, her vanity (had that equalled her pride and her feelings in its susceptibility) would in no slight measure have recompensed her in public. Unhappily, however, her vanity was the least prominent quality she possessed; and the compliments of mercenary adulation were not more rejected by her heart than despised by her understanding.

Yet did she bear within her a deep fund of buried tenderness, and a mine of girlish and enthusiastic romance, — dangerous gifts to one so situated, which, while they gave to her secret moments of solitude a powerful but vague attraction, probably only prepared for her future years the snare which might betray them into error or the delusion which would colour them with regret.

Among those whom the ostentatious hospitality of General St. Leger attracted to his house was one of very different character and pretensions to the rest. Formed to be unpopular with the generality of men, the very qualities that made him so were those which principally fascinate the higher description of women of ancient birth, which rendered still more displeasing the pride and coldness of his mien; of talents peculiarly framed to attract interest as well as esteem; of a deep and somewhat morbid melancholy, which, while it turned from ordinary ties, inclined yearningly towards passionate affections; of a temper where romance was only concealed from the many to become more seductive to the few; unsocial, but benevolent; disliked, but respected; of the austere demeanour, but of passions the most fervid, though the most

carefully concealed, — this man united within himself all that repels the common mass of his species, and all that irresistibly wins and fascinates the rare and romantic few. To these qualities were added a carriage and bearing of that high and commanding order which men mistake for arrogance and pretension, and women overrate in proportion to its contrast to their own. Something of mystery there was in the commencement of the deep and eventful love which took place between this person and Isabel, which I have never been able to learn: whatever it was, it seemed to expedite and heighten the ordinary progress of love; and when in the dim twilight, beneath the first melancholy smile of the earliest star, their hearts opened audibly to each other, that confession had been made silently long since and registered in the inmost recesses of the soul.

But their passion, which began in prosperity, was soon darkened. Whether he took offence at the haughtiness of Isabel's lover, or whether he desired to retain about him an object which he could torment and tyrannize over, no sooner did the General discover the attachment of his young relation than he peremptorily forbade its indulgence, and assumed so insolent and overbearing an air towards the lover that the latter felt he could no longer repeat his visits to or even continue his acquaintance with the nabob.

To add to these adverse circumstances, a relation of the lover, from whom his expectations had been large, was so enraged, not only at the insult his cousin had received, but at the very idea of his forming an alliance with one in so dependent a situation and connected with such new blood as Isabel St. Leger, that, with that arrogance which relations, however distant, think themselves authorized to assume, he enjoined his cousin, upon pain of forfeiture of favour and fortune, to renounce all idea of so disparaging an alliance. The one thus addressed was not of a temper patiently to submit to such threats: he answered them with disdain; and the breach, so dangerous to his pecuniary interest, was already begun.

. So far had the history of our lover proceeded at the time in

which we have introduced Isabel to the reader, and described to him the chamber to which, in all her troubles and humiliations, she was accustomed to fly, as to a sad but still unviolated sanctuary of retreat.

The quiet of this asylum was first broken by a slight rustling among the leaves; but Isabel's back was turned towards the window, and in the engrossment of her feelings she heard it not. The thick copse that darkened the left side of the veranda was pierced, and a man passed within the covered space, and stood still and silent before the window, intently gazing upon the figure, which (though the face was turned from him) betrayed in its proportions that beauty which in his eyes had neither an equal nor a fault.

The figure of the stranger, though not very tall, was above the ordinary height, and gracefully rather than robustly formed. He was dressed in the darkest colours and the simplest fashion, which rendered yet more striking the nobleness of his mien, as well as the clear and almost delicate paleness of his complexion; his features were finely and accurately formed; and had not ill health, long travel, or severe thought deepened too much the lines of the countenance, and sharpened its contour, the classic perfection of those features would have rendered him undeniably and even eminently handsome. As it was, the paleness and the somewhat worn character of his face, joined to an expression at first glance rather haughty and repellent, made him lose in physical what he certainly gained in intellectual beauty. His eyes were large, deep, and melancholy, and had the hat which now hung over his brow been removed, it would have displayed a forehead of remarkable boldness and power.

Altogether, the face was cast in a rare and intellectual mould, and, if wanting in those more luxuriant attractions common to the age of the stranger, who could scarcely have attained his twenty-sixth year, it betokened, at least, that predominance of mind over body which in some eyes is the most requisite characteristic of masculine beauty.

With a soft and noiseless step, the stranger moved from his station without the window, and, entering the room, stole

towards the spot on which Isabel was sitting. He leaned over her chair, and his eye rested upon his own picture, and a letter in his own writing, over which the tears of the young orphan flowed fast.

A moment more of agitated happiness for one, of unconscious and continued sadness for the other, —

“T is past, her lover’s at her feet.”

And what indeed “was to them the world beside, with all its changes of time and tide”? Joy, hope, all blissful and bright sensations, lay mingled, like meeting waters, in one sunny stream of heartfelt and unfathomable enjoyment; but this passed away, and the remembrance of bitterness and evil succeeded.

“Oh, Algernon!” said Isabel, in a low voice, “is this your promise?”

“Believe me,” said Mordaunt, for it was indeed he, “I have struggled long with my feelings, but in vain; and for both our sakes, I rejoice at the conquest they obtained. I listened only to a deceitful delusion when I imagined I was obeying the dictates of reason. Ah, dearest, why should we part for the sake of dubious and distant evils, when the misery of absence is the most certain, the most unceasing evil we can endure?”

“For your sake, and therefore for mine!” interrupted Isabel, struggling with her tears. “I am a beggar and an outcast. You must not link your fate with mine. I could bear, Heaven knows how willingly, poverty and all its evils *for* you and *with* you; but I cannot *bring* them upon you.”

“Nor will you,” said Mordaunt, passionately, as he covered the hand he held with his burning kisses. “Have I not enough for both of us? It is my love, not poverty, that I beseech you to share.”

“No! Algernon, you cannot deceive me; your own estate will be torn from you by the law: if you marry me, your cousin will not assist you; I, you know too well, can command nothing; and I shall see you, for whom in my fond and bright dreams I have presaged everything great and exalted,

buried in an obscurity from which your talents can never rise, and suffering the pangs of poverty and dependence and humiliation like my own; and — and — I — should be the wretch who caused you all. Never, Algernon, never! — I love you too — too well!”

But the effort which wrung forth the determination of the tone in which these words were uttered was too violent to endure; and, as the full desolation of her despair crowded fast and dark upon the orphan's mind, she sank back upon her chair in very sickness of soul, nor heeded, in her unconscious misery, that her hand was yet clasped by her lover and that her head drooped upon his bosom.

“Isabel,” he said, in a low, sweet tone, which to her ear seemed the concentration of all earthly music, — “Isabel, look up, — my own, my beloved, — look up and hear me. Perhaps you say truly when you tell me that the possessions of my house shall melt away from me, and that my relation will not offer to me the precarious bounty which, even if he did offer, I would reject; but, dearest, are there not a thousand paths open to me, — the law, the state, the army? — you are silent, Isabel, — speak!”

Isabel did not reply, but the soft eyes which rested upon his told, in their despondency, how little her reason was satisfied by the arguments he urged.

“Besides,” he continued, “we know not yet whether the law may not decide in my favour: at all events years may pass before the judgment is given; those years make the prime and verdure of our lives; let us not waste them in mourning over blighted hopes and severed hearts; let us snatch what happiness is yet in our power, nor anticipate, while the heavens are still bright above us, the burden of the thunder or the cloud.”

Isabel was one of the least selfish and most devoted of human beings, yet she must be forgiven if at that moment her resolution faltered, and the overpowering thought of being in reality *his* forever flashed upon her mind. It passed from her the moment it was formed; and, rising from a situation in which the touch of that dear hand and the breath of

those wooing lips endangered the virtue and weakened the strength of her resolves, she withdrew herself from his grasp, and while she averted her eyes, which dared not encounter his, she said in a low but firm voice, —

“It is in vain, Algernon; it is in vain. I can be to you nothing but a blight or burden, nothing but a source of privation and anguish. Think you that I *will* be this? — no, I will not darken your fair hopes and impede your reasonable ambition. Go [and here her voice faltered for a moment, but soon recovered its tone], go, Algernon, *dear* Algernon; and if my foolish heart will not ask you to think of me no more, I can at least implore you to think of me only as one who would die rather than cost you a moment of that poverty and debasement, the bitterness of which she has felt herself, and who for that very reason tears herself away from you forever.”

“Stay, Isabel, stay!” cried Mordaunt, as he caught hold of her robe, “give me but one word more, and you shall leave me. Say that if I can create for myself a new source of independence; if I can carve out a road where the ambition you erroneously impute to me can be gratified, as well as the more moderate wishes our station has made natural to us to form, — say, that if I do this, I may permit myself to hope, — say, that *when* I have done it, I may claim you as my own!”

Isabel paused, and turned once more her face towards his own. Her lips moved, and though the words died within her heart, yet Mordaunt read well their import in the blushing cheek and the heaving bosom, and the lips which one ray of hope and comfort was sufficient to kindle into smiles. He gazed, and all obstacles, all difficulties, disappeared; the gulf of time seemed passed, and he felt as if already he had earned and won his reward.

He approached her yet nearer; one kiss on those lips, one pressure of that thrilling hand, one long, last embrace of that shrinking and trembling form, — and then, as the door closed upon his view, he felt that the sunshine of Nature had passed away, and that in the midst of the laughing and peopled earth *he* stood in darkness and alone.

CHAPTER XI.

He who would know mankind must be at home with all men.

STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

WE left Clarence safely deposited in his little lodgings. Whether from the heat of his apartment or the restlessness a migration of beds produces in certain constitutions, his slumbers on the first night of his arrival were disturbed and brief. He rose early and descended to the parlour; Mr. de Warens, the nobly appellatived foot-boy, was laying the breakfast-cloth. From three painted shelves which constituted the library of "Copperas Bower," as its owners gracefully called their habitation, Clarence took down a book very prettily bound; it was "Poems by a Nobleman." No sooner had he read two pages than he did exactly what the reader would have done, and restored the volume respectfully to its place. He then drew his chair towards the window, and wistfully eyed sundry ancient nurserymaids, who were leading their infant charges to the "fresh fields and pastures new" of what is now the Regent's Park.

In about an hour Mrs. Copperas descended, and mutual compliments were exchanged; to her succeeded Mr. Copperas, who was well scolded for his laziness: and to them, Master Adolphus Copperas, who was also chidingly termed a naughty darling for the same offence. Now then Mrs. Copperas prepared the tea, which she did in the approved method adopted by all ladies to whom economy is dearer than renown, namely, the least possible quantity of the *soi-disant* Chinese plant was first sprinkled by the least possible quantity of hot water; after this mixture had become as black and as bitter as it could possibly be without any adjunct from the apothecary's skill, it was suddenly drenched with a copious diffusion, and as suddenly poured forth — weak, washy, and abominable, —

into four cups, severally appertaining unto the four partakers of the matutinal nectar.

Then the conversation began to flow. Mrs. Copperas was a fine lady, and a sentimentalist, — very observant of the little niceties of phrase and manner. Mr. Copperas was a stock-jobber and a wit, — loved a good hit in each capacity; was very round, very short, and very much like a John Dory; and saw in the features and mind of the little Copperas the exact representative of himself.

“Adolphus, my love,” said Mrs. Copperas, “mind what I told you, and sit upright. Mr. Linden, will you allow me to cut you a *leetle* piece of this roll?”

“Thank you,” said Clarence, “I will trouble you rather for the whole of it.”

Conceive Mrs. Copperas’s dismay! From that moment she saw herself eaten out of house and home; besides, as she afterwards observed to her friend Miss Barbara York, the “vulgarity of such an amazing appetite!”

“Any commands in the city, Mr. Linden?” asked the husband; “a coach will pass by our door in a few minutes, — must be on ’Change in half an hour. Come, my love, another cup of tea; make haste; I have scarcely a moment to take *my fare* for the inside, before coachee takes *his* for the outside. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Linden.”

“Lord, Mr. Copperas,” said his helpmate, “how can you be so silly? setting such an example to your son, too; never mind him, Adolphus, my love; fie, child! a’n’t you ashamed of yourself? never put the spoon in your cup till you have done tea: I must really send you to school to learn manners. We have a very pretty little collection of books here, Mr. Linden, if you would like to read an hour or two after breakfast, — child, take your hands out of your pockets, — all the best English classics I believe, — ‘Telemachus,’ and Young’s ‘Night Thoughts,’ and ‘Joseph Andrews,’ and the ‘Spectator,’ and Pope’s Iliad, and Creech’s Lucretius; but you will look over them yourself! This is Liberty Hall, as well as Copperas Bower, Mr. Linden!”

“Well, my love,” said the stock-jobber, “I believe I must

be off. Here Tom, Tom (Mr. de Warens had just entered the room with some more hot water, to weaken still further "the poor remains of what was once" — the tea!), Tom, just run out and stop the coach; it will be by in five minutes."

"Have not I prayed and besought you, many and many a time, Mr. Copperas," said the lady, rebukingly, "not to call De Warens by his Christian name? Don't you know that all people in genteel life, who only keep one servant, invariably call him by his surname, as if he were the butler, you know?"

"Now, that is too good, my love," said Copperas. "I will call poor Tom by any surname you please, but I really can't pass him off for a butler! Ha — ha — ha — you must excuse me there, my love!"

"And pray, why not, Mr. Copperas? I have known many a butler bungle more at a cork than he does; and pray tell me who did you ever see wait better at dinner?"

"He wait at dinner, my love! it is not he who waits."

"Who then, Mr. Copperas?"

"Why *we*, my love; it's we who wait for dinner; but that's the cook's fault, not his."

"Pshaw! Mr. Copperas; Adolphus, my love, sit upright, darling."

Here De Warens cried from the bottom of the stairs, —

"Measter, the coach be coming up."

"There won't be room for it to turn then," said the facetious Mr. Copperas, looking round the apartment as if he took the words literally.

"What coach is it, boy?"

Now that was not the age in which coaches scoured the city every half hour, and Mr. Copperas knew the name of the coach as well as he knew his own.

"It be the Swallow coach, sir."

"Oh, very well: then since I have swallowed in the roll, I will now roll in the Swallow — ha — ha — ha! Good-by, Mr. Linden."

No sooner had the witty stock-jobber left the room than Mrs. Copperas seemed to expand into a new existence. "My

husband, sir," said she, apologetically, "is *so* odd, but he's an excellent sterling character; and that, you know, Mr. Linden, tells more in the bosom of a family than all the shining qualities which captivate the imagination. I am sure, Mr. Linden, that the moralist is right in admonishing us to prefer the gold to the tinsel. I have now been married some years, and every year seems happier than the last; but then, Mr. Linden, it is such a pleasure to contemplate the growing graces of the sweet pledge of our mutual love. — Adolphus, my dear, keep your feet still, and take your hands out of your pockets!"

A short pause ensued.

"We see a great deal of company," said Mrs. Copperas, pompously, "and of the very best description. Sometimes we are favoured by the society of the great Mr. Talbot, a gentleman of immense fortune and quite the courtier: he is, it is true, a little eccentric in his dress: but then he was a celebrated beau in his young days. He is our next neighbour; you can see his house out of the window, just across the garden — there! We have also, sometimes, our humble board graced by a very elegant friend of mine, Miss Barbara York, a lady of very high connections, her first cousin was a lord mayor. — Adolphus, my dear, what are you about? Well, Mr. Linden, you will find your retreat quite undisturbed; I must go about the household affairs; not that I do anything more than superintend, you know, sir; but I think no lady should be above consulting her husband's interests; that's what I call true old English conjugal affection. Come, Adolphus, my dear."

And Clarence was now alone. "I fear," thought he, "that I shall get on very indifferently with these people. But it will not do for me to be misanthropical, and (as Dr. Latinus was wont to say) the great merit of philosophy, when we cannot *command* circumstances, is to *reconcile* us to them."

CHAPTER XII.

A RETIRED beau is one of the most instructive spectacles in the world.

STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

It was quite true that Mrs. Copperas saw a great deal of company, for at a certain charge, upon certain days, any individual might have the honour of sharing her family repast; and many, of various callings, though chiefly in commercial life, met at her miscellaneous board. Clarence must, indeed, have been difficult to please, or obtuse of observation, if, in the variety of her guests, he had not found something either to interest or amuse him. Heavens! what a motley group were accustomed, twice in the week, to assemble there! the little dining-parlour seemed a human oven; and it must be owned that Clarence was no slight magnet of attraction to the female part of the guests. Mrs. Copperas's bosom friend in especial, the accomplished Miss Barbara York, darted the most tender glances on the handsome young stranger; but whether or not a nose remarkably prominent and long prevented the glances from taking full effect, it is certain that Clarence seldom repaid them with that affectionate ardour which Miss Barbara York had ventured to anticipate. The only persons indeed for whom he felt any sympathetic attraction were of the same sex as himself. The one was Mr. Talbot, the old gentleman whom Mrs. Copperas had described as the perfect courtier; the other, a young artist of the name of Warner. Talbot, to Clarence's great astonishment (for Mrs. Copperas's eulogy had prepared him for something eminently displeasing) was a man of birth, fortune, and manners peculiarly graceful and attractive. It is true, however, that, despite of his vicinity, and Mrs. Copperas's urgent solicitations, he very seldom honoured her with his company, and he always cautiously sent over his servant in the morning to inquire the names and number of her expected guests; nor was he ever known to share the plenteous board of

the stock-jobber's lady whenever any other partaker of its dainties save Clarence and the young artist were present. The latter, the old gentleman really liked; and as for one truly well born and well bred there is no vulgarity except in the mind, the slender means, obscure birth, and struggling profession of Warner were circumstances which, as they increased the merit of a gentle manner and a fine mind, spoke rather in his favour than the reverse. Mr. Talbot was greatly struck by Clarence Linden's conversation and appearance; and indeed there was in Talbot's tastes so strong a bias to aristocratic externals that Clarence's air alone would have been sufficient to win the good graces of a man who had, perhaps, more than most courtiers of his time, cultivated the arts of manner and the secrets of address.

"You will call upon me soon?" said he to Clarence, when, after dining one day with the Copperases and their inmate, he rose to return home. And Clarence, delighted with the urbanity and liveliness of his new acquaintance, readily promised that he would.

Accordingly the next day Clarence called upon Mr. Talbot. The house, as Mrs. Copperas had before said, adjoined her own, and was only separated from it by a garden. It was a dull mansion of brick, which had disdained the frippery of paint and whitewashing, and had indeed been built many years previously to the erection of the modern habitations which surrounded it. It was, therefore, as a consequence of this priority of birth, more sombre than the rest, and had a peculiarly forlorn and solitary look. As Clarence approached the door, he was struck with the size of the house; it was of very considerable extent, and in the more favourable situations of London, would have passed for a very desirable and spacious tenement. An old man, whose accurate precision of dress bespoke the tastes of the master, opened the door, and after ushering Clarence through two long, and, to his surprise, almost splendidly furnished rooms, led him into a third, where, seated at a small writing-table, he found Mr. Talbot. That person, one whom Clarence then little thought would hereafter exercise no small influence over his fate, was of a figure and countenance well worthy the notice of a description.

His own hair, quite white, was carefully and artificially curled, and gave a Grecian cast to features whose original delicacy, and exact though small proportions, not even age could destroy. His eyes were large, black, and sparkled with almost youthful vivacity; and his mouth, which was the best feature he possessed, developed teeth white and even as rows of ivory. Though small and somewhat too slender in the proportions of his figure, nothing could exceed the ease and the grace of his motions and air; and his dress, though singularly rich in its materials, eccentric in its fashion, and from its evident study, unseemly to his years, served nevertheless to render rather venerable than ridiculous a mien which could almost have carried off any absurdity, and which the fashion of the garb peculiarly became. The *tout ensemble* was certainly that of a man who was still vain of his exterior, and conscious of its effect; and it was as certainly impossible to converse with Mr. Talbot for five minutes without merging every less respectful impression in the magical fascination of his manner.

"I thank you, Mr. Linden," said Talbot, rising, "for your accepting so readily an old man's invitation. If I have felt pleasure in discovering that we were to be neighbours, you may judge what that pleasure is to-day at finding you my visitor."

Clarence, who, to do him justice, was always ready at returning a fine speech, replied in a similar strain, and the conversation flowed on agreeably enough. There was more than a moderate collection of books in the room, and this circumstance led Clarence to allude to literary subjects; these Mr. Talbot took up with avidity, and touched with a light but graceful criticism upon many of the then modern and some of the older writers. He seemed delighted to find himself understood and appreciated by Clarence, and every moment of Linden's visit served to ripen their acquaintance into intimacy. At length they talked upon Copperas Bower and its inmates.

"You will find your host and hostess," said the gentleman, "certainly of a different order from the persons with whom it is easy to see you have associated; but, at your happy age, a

year or two may be very well thrown away upon observing the manners and customs of those whom, in later life, you may often be called upon to conciliate or perhaps to control. That man will never be a perfect gentleman who lives only with gentlemen. To be a man of the world, we must view that world in every grade and in every perspective. In short, the most practical art of wisdom is that which extracts from things the very quality they least appear to possess; and the actor in the world, like the actor on the stage, should find 'a basket-hilted sword very convenient to carry milk in.'¹ As for me, I have survived my relations and friends. I cannot keep late hours, nor adhere to the unhealthy customs of good society; nor do I think that, to a man of my age and habits, any remuneration would adequately repay the sacrifice of health or comfort. I am, therefore, well content to sink into a hermitage in an obscure corner of this great town, and only occasionally to revive my 'past remembrances of higher state,' by admitting a few old acquaintances to drink my bachelor's tea and talk over the news of the day. Hence, you see, Mr. Linden, I pick up two or three novel anecdotes of state and scandal, and maintain my importance at Copperas Bower by retailing them second-hand. Now that you are one of the inmates of that abode, I shall be more frequently its guest. By the by, I will let you into a secret: know that I am somewhat a lover of the marvellous, and like to indulge a little embellishing exaggeration in any place where there is no chance of finding me out. Mind, therefore, my dear Mr. Linden, that you take no ungenerous advantage of this confession; but suffer me, now and then, to tell my stories my own way, even when you think truth would require me to tell them in another."

"Certainly," said Clarence, laughing; "let us make an agreement: you shall tell your stories as you please, if you will grant me the same liberty in paying my compliments; and if I laugh aloud at the stories, you shall promise me not to laugh aloud at the compliments."

"It is a bond," said Talbot; "and a very fit exchange of

¹ See the witty inventory of a player's goods in the "Tatler."

service it is. It will be a problem in human nature to see who has the best of it: you shall pay your court by flattering the people present, and I mine by abusing those absent. Now, in spite of your youth and curling locks, I will wager that I succeed the best; for in vanity there is so great a mixture of envy that no compliment is like a judicious abuse: to enchant your acquaintance, ridicule his friends."

"Ah, sir," said Clarence, "this opinion of yours is, I trust, a little in the French school, where brilliancy is more studied than truth, and where an ill opinion of our species always has the merit of passing for profound."

Talbot smiled, and shook his head. "My dear young friend," said he, "it is quite right that you, who are coming into the world, should think well of it; and it is also quite right that I, who am going out of it, should console myself by trying to despise it. However, let me tell you, my young friend, that he whose opinion of mankind is not too elevated will always be the most benevolent, because the most indulgent, to those errors incidental to human imperfection: to place our nature in too flattering a view is only to court disappointment, and end in misanthropy. The man who sets out with expecting to find all his fellow-creatures heroes of virtue will conclude by condemning them as monsters of vice; and, on the contrary, the least exacting judge of actions will be the most lenient. If God, in His own perfection, did not see so many frailties in us, think you He would be so gracious to our virtues?"

"And yet," said Clarence, "we remark every day examples of the highest excellence."

"Yes," replied Talbot, "of the *highest* but not of the most *constant* excellence. He knows very little of the human heart who imagines we cannot do a good action; but, alas! he knows still less of it who supposes we can be always doing good actions. In exactly the same ratio we see every day the greatest crimes are committed; but we find no wretch so depraved as to be always committing crimes. Man cannot be perfect even in guilt."

In this manner Talbot and his young visitor conversed,

till Clarence, after a stay of unwarrantable length, rose to depart.

“Well,” said Talbot, “if we now rightly understand each other, we shall be the best friends in the world. As we shall expect great things from each other sometimes, we will have no scruple in exacting a heroic sacrifice every now and then; for [instance, I will ask you to punish yourself by an occasional *tête-à-tête* with an ancient gentleman; and, as we can also by the same reasoning pardon great faults in each other, if they are not often committed, so I will forgive you, with all my heart, whenever you refuse my invitations, if you do not refuse them often. And now farewell till we meet again.”

It seemed singular and almost unnatural to Linden that a man like Talbot, of birth, fortune, and great fastidiousness of taste and temper, should have formed any sort of acquaintance, however slight and distant, with the facetious stock-jobber and his wife; but the fact is easily explained by a reference to the vanity which we shall see hereafter made the ruling passion of Talbot's nature. This vanity, which branching forth into a thousand eccentricities, displayed itself in the singularity of his dress, the studied yet graceful warmth of his manner, his attention to the minutiae of life, his desire, craving and insatiate, to receive from every one, however insignificant, his *obolus* of admiration, — this vanity, once flattered by the obsequious homage it obtained from the wonder and reverence of the Copperases, reconciled his taste to the disgust it so frequently and necessarily conceived; and, having in great measure resigned his former acquaintance and wholly outlived his friends, he was contented to purchase the applause which had become to him a necessary of life at the humble market more immediately at his command.

There is no dilemma in which Vanity cannot find an expedient to develop its form, no stream of circumstances in which its buoyant and light nature will not rise to float upon the surface. And its ingenuity is as fertile as that of the player who (his wardrobe allowing him no other method of playing the fop) could still exhibit the prevalent passion for distinction by wearing stockings of different colours.

CHAPTER XIII.

Who dares

Interpret then my life for me as 't were
One of the undistinguishable many ?COLERIDGE : *Wallenstein.*

THE first time Clarence had observed the young artist, he had taken a deep interest in his appearance. Pale, thin, undersized, and slightly deformed, the sanctifying mind still shed over the humble frame a spell more powerful than beauty. Absent in manner, melancholy in air, and never conversing except upon subjects on which his imagination was excited, there was yet a gentleness about him which could not fail to conciliate and prepossess ; nor did Clarence omit any opportunity to soften his reserve, and wind himself into his more intimate acquaintance. Warner, the only support of an aged and infirm grandmother (who had survived her immediate children), was distantly related to Mrs. Copperas ; and that lady extended to him, with ostentatious benevolence, her favour and support. It is true that she did not impoverish the young Adolphus to enrich her kinsman, but she allowed him a seat at her hospitable board, whenever it was not otherwise filled ; and all that she demanded in return was a picture of herself, another of Mr. Copperas, a third of Master Adolphus, a fourth of the black cat, and from time to time sundry other lesser productions of his genius, of which, through the agency of Mr. Brown, she secretly disposed at a price that sufficiently remunerated her for whatever havoc the slender appetite of the young painter was able to effect.

By this arrangement, Clarence had many opportunities of gaining that intimacy with Warner which had become to him an object ; and though the painter, constitutionally diffident and shy, was at first averse to, and even awed by, the ease, boldness, fluent speech, and confident address of a man much younger than himself, yet at last he could not resist the being decoyed

into familiarity ; and the youthful pair gradually advanced from companionship into friendship. There was a striking contrast between the two : Clarence was bold and frank, Warner close and timid. Both had superior abilities ; but the abilities of Clarence were for action, those of Warner for art : both were ambitious ; but the ambition of Clarence was that of circumstances rather than character. Compelled to carve his own fortunes without sympathy or aid, he braced his mind to the effort, though naturally too gay for the austerity, and too genial for the selfishness of ambition. But the very essence of Warner's nature was the feverish desire of fame : it poured through his veins like lava ; it preyed as a worm upon his cheek ; it corroded his natural sleep ; it blackened the colour of his thoughts ; it shut out, as with an impenetrable wall, the wholesome energies and enjoyments and objects of living men ; and, taking from him all the vividness of the present, all the tenderness of the past, constrained his heart to dwell forever and forever amidst the dim and shadowy chimeras of a future he was fated never to enjoy.

But these differences of character, so far from disturbing, rather cemented their friendship ; and while Warner (notwithstanding his advantage of age) paid involuntary deference to the stronger character of Clarence, he, in his turn, derived that species of pleasure by which he was most gratified, from the affectionate and unenvious interest Clarence took in his speculations of future distinction, and the unwearied admiration with which he would sit by his side, and watch the colours start from the canvas, beneath the real though uncultured genius of the youthful painter.

Hitherto, Warner had bounded his attempts to some of the lesser efforts of the art ; he had now yielded to the urgent enthusiasm of his nature, and conceived the plan of an historical picture. Oh ! what sleepless nights, what struggles of the teeming fancy with the dense brain, what labours of the untiring thought wearing and intense as disease itself, did it cost the ambitious artist to work out in the stillness of his soul, and from its confused and conflicting images, the design of this long meditated and idolized performance ! But when it *was* designed ;

when shape upon shape grew and swelled, and glowed from the darkness of previous thought upon the painter's mind ; when, shutting his eyes in the very credulity of delight, the whole work arose before him, glossy with its fresh hues, bright, completed, faultless, arrayed as it were, and decked out for immortality, — oh ! then what a full and gushing moment of rapture broke like a released stream upon his soul ! What a recompense for wasted years, health, and hope ! What a coronal to the visions and transports of Genius : brief, it is true, but how steeped in the very halo of a light that might well be deemed the glory of heaven !

But the vision fades, the gorgeous shapes sweep on into darkness, and, waking from his reverie, the artist sees before him only the dull walls of his narrow chamber ; the canvas stretched a blank upon its frame ; the works, maimed, crude, unfinished, of an inexperienced hand, lying idly around ; and feels himself — *himself*, but one moment before the creator of a world of wonders, the master spirit of shapes glorious and majestic beyond the shapes of men — dashed down from his momentary height, and despoiled both of his sorcery and his throne.

It was just in such a moment that Warner, starting up, saw Linden (who had silently entered his room) standing motionless before him.

“Oh, Linden !” said the artist, “I have had so superb a dream, — a dream which, though I have before snatched some such vision by fits and glimpses, I never beheld so realized, so perfect as now ; and — but you shall see, you shall judge for yourself ; I will sketch out the design for you ;” and, with a piece of chalk and a rapid hand, Warner conveyed to Linden the outline of his conception. His young friend was eager in his praise and his predictions of renown, and Warner listened to him with a fondness which spread over his pale cheek a richer flush than lover ever caught from the whispers of his beloved.

“Yes,” said he, as he rose, and his sunken and small eye flashed out with a feverish brightness, “yes, if my hand does not fail my thought, it shall rival even —” Here the young

painter stopped short, abashed at that indiscretion of enthusiasm about to utter to another the hoarded vanities hitherto locked in his heart of hearts as a sealed secret, almost from himself.

"But come," said Clarence, affectionately, "your hand is feverish and dry, and of late you have seemed more languid than you were wont, — come, Warner, you want exercise: it is a beautiful evening, and you shall explain your picture still further to me as we walk."

Accustomed to yield to Clarence, Warner mechanically and abstractedly obeyed; they walked out into the open streets.

"Look around us," said Warner, pausing, "look among this toiling and busy and sordid mass of beings who claim with us the fellowship of clay. The poor labour; the rich feast: the only distinction between them is that of the insect and the brute; like them they fulfil the same end and share the same oblivion; they die, a new race springs up, and the very grass upon their graves fades not so soon as their memory. Who that is conscious of a higher nature would not pine and fret himself away to be confounded with these? Who would not burn and sicken and parch with a delirious longing to divorce himself from so vile a herd? What have their petty pleasures and their mean aims to atone for the abasement of grinding down our spirits to their level? Is not the distinction from their blended and common name a sufficient recompense for all that ambition suffers or foregoes? Oh, for one brief hour (I ask no more) of living honour, one feeling of conscious, unfeared certainty that Fame has conquered Death! and then for this humble and impotent clay, this drag on the spirit which it does not assist but fetter, this wretched machine of pains and aches, and feverish throbbings, and vexed inquietudes, why, let the worms consume it, and the grave hide — for Fame there is *no* grave."

At that moment one of those unfortunate women who earn their polluted sustenance by becoming the hypocrites of passions abruptly accosted them.

"Miserable wretch!" said Warner, loathingly, as he pushed her aside; but Clarence, with a kindlier feeling, noticed that her haggard cheek was wet with tears, and that her frame, weak and

trembling, could scarcely support itself; he, therefore, with that promptitude of charity which gives ere it discriminates put some pecuniary assistance in her hand and joined his comrade.

"You would not have spoken so tauntingly to the poor girl had you remarked her distress," said Clarence.

"And why," said Warner, mournfully, "why be so cruel as to prolong, even for a few hours, an existence which mercy would only seek to bring nearer to the tomb? That unfortunate is but one of the herd, one of the victims to pleasures which debase by their progress and ruin by their end. Yet perhaps she is not worse than the usual followers of love, — of love, that passion the most worshipped, yet the least divine, — selfish and exacting, — drawing its aliment from destruction, and its very nature from tears."

"Nay," said Clarence, "you confound the two loves, the Eros and the Anteros; gods whom my good tutor was wont so sedulously to distinguish: you surely do not inveigh thus against *all* love?"

"I cry you mercy," said Warner, with something of sarcasm in his pensiveness of tone. "We must not dispute; so I will hold my peace: but make love all you will; what are the false smiles of a lip which a few years can blight as an autumn leaf? what the homage of a heart as feeble and mortal as your own? Why, I, with a few strokes of a little hair and an idle mixture of worthless colours, will create a beauty in whose mouth there shall be no hollowness, in whose lip there shall be no fading; there, in your admiration, you shall have no need of flattery and no fear of falsehood; you shall not be stung with jealousy nor maddened with treachery; nor watch with a breaking heart over the waning bloom, and departing health, till the grave open, and your perishable paradise is *not*. No: the mimic work is mightier than the original, for it outlasts it; your love cannot wither it, or your desertion destroy; your very death, as the being who called it into life, only stamps it with a holier value."

"And so then," said Clarence, "you would seriously relinquish, for the mute copy of the mere features, those affections which no painting can express?"

“Ay,” said the painter, with an energy unusual to his quiet manner, and slightly wandering in his answer from Clarence’s remark, “ay, one serves not two mistresses : mine is the glory of my art. Oh ! what are the cold shapes of this tame earth, where the footsteps of the gods have vanished, and left no trace, the blemished forms, the debased brows, and the jarring features, to the glorious and gorgeous images which I can conjure up at my will ? Away with human beauties, to him whose nights are haunted with the forms of angels and wanderers from the stars, the spirits of all things lovely and exalted in the universe : the universe as it *was* ; when to fountain, and stream, and hill, and to every tree which the summer clothed, was allotted the vigil of a Nymph ! when through glade, and by waterfall, at glossy noontide, or under the silver stars, the forms of Godhead and Spirit were seen to walk ; when the sculptor modelled his mighty work from the beauty and strength of Heaven, and the poet lay in the shade to dream of the Naiad and the Faun, and the Olympian dwellers whom he walked in rapture to behold ; and the painter, not as now, shaping from shadow and in solitude the dim glories of his heart, caught at once his inspiration from the glow of earth and its living wanderers, and, lo, the canvas breathed ! Oh ! what are the dull realities and the abortive offspring of this altered and humbled world — the world of meaner and dwarfish men — to him whose realms are peopled with visions like these ?”

And the artist, whose ardour, long excited and pent within, had at last thus audibly, and to Clarence’s astonishment, burst forth, paused, as if to recall himself from his wandering enthusiasm. Such moments of excitement were indeed rare with him, except when utterly alone, and even then, were almost invariably followed by that depression of spirit by which all over-wrought susceptibility is succeeded. A change came over his face, like that of a cloud when the sunbeam which gilded leaves it ; and, with a slight sigh and a subdued tone, he resumed, —

“So, my friend, you see what our art can do even for the humblest professor, when I, a poor, friendless, patronless art-

ist, can thus indulge myself by forgetting the present. But I have not yet explained to you the attitude of my principal figure ;” and Warner proceeded once more to detail the particulars of his intended picture. It must be confessed that he had chosen a fine though an arduous subject : it was the Trial of Charles the First ; and as the painter, with the enthusiasm of his profession and the eloquence peculiar to himself, dwelt upon the various expressions of the various forms which that extraordinary judgment-court afforded, no wonder that Clarence forgot, with the artist himself, the disadvantages Warner had to encounter in the inexperience of an unregulated taste and an imperfect professional education.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALL manners take a tincture from our own,
Or come discoloured through our passions shown. — POPE.

What ! give up liberty, property, and, as the *Gazeteer* says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes ? — *Vicar of Wakefield*.

THERE was something in the melancholy and reflective character of Warner resembling that of Mordaunt ; had they lived in these days perhaps both the artist and the philosopher had been poets. But (with regard to the latter) at that time poetry was not the customary vent for deep thought or passionate feeling. Gray, it is true, though unjustly condemned as artificial and meretricious in his style, had infused into the scanty works which he has bequeathed to immortality a pathos and a richness foreign to the literature of the age ; and, subsequently, Goldsmith, in the affecting yet somewhat enervate simplicity of his verse, had obtained for Poetry a brief respite from a school at once declamatory and powerless, and led her forth for a “Sunshine Holiday” into the village green and under the hawthorn shade. But, though the softer and meeker feelings had struggled into a partial and occasional vent, those

which partook more of passion and of thought, the deep, the wild, the fervid, were still without "the music of a voice." For the after century it was reserved to restore what we may be permitted to call the spirit of our national literature; to forsake the *clinquant* of the French mimickers of classic gold; to exchange a thrice-adulterated Hippocrene for the pure well of Shakspeare and of Nature; to clothe philosophy in the gorgeous and solemn majesty of appropriate music; and to invest passion with a language as burning as its thought and rapid as its impulse. At that time reflection found its natural channel in metaphysical inquiry or political speculation; both valuable, perhaps, but neither profound. It was a bold, and a free, and an inquisitive age, but not one in which thought ran over its set and stationary banks, and watered even the common flowers of verse: not one in which Lucretius could have embodied the dreams of Epicurus; Shakspeare lavished the mines of a superhuman wisdom upon his fairy palaces and enchanted isles; or the Beautifier¹ of this common earth have called forth

"The motion of the spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought;"

or Disappointment and Satiety have hallowed their human griefs by a pathos wrought from whatever is magnificent and grand and lovely in the unknown universe; or the speculations of a great but visionary² mind have raised, upon subtlety and doubt, a vast and irregular pile of verse, full of dim-lighted cells, and winding galleries, in which what treasures lie concealed! That was an age in which poetry took one path and contemplation another; those who were addicted to the latter pursued it in its orthodox roads; and many, whom Nature perhaps intended for poets, the wizard Custom converted into speculators or critics.

It was this which gave to Algernon's studies their peculiar hue; while, on the other hand, the taste for the fine arts which then universally prevailed, directed to the creations of painting, rather than those of poetry, more really congenial to his

¹ Wordsworth.

² Shelley.

powers, the intense imagination and passion for glory which marked and pervaded the character of the artist.

But as we have seen that that passion for glory made the great characteristic difference between Clarence and Warner, so also did that passion terminate any resemblance which Warner bore to Algernon Mordaunt. With the former a rank and unwholesome plant, it grew up to the exclusion of all else; with the latter, subdued and regulated, it *sheltered*, not *withered*, the virtues by which it was surrounded. With Warner, ambition was a passionate desire to separate himself by fame from the herd of other men; with Mordaunt, to bind himself by charity yet closer to his kind: with the one, it produced a disgust to his species; with the other, a pity and a love: with the one, power was the badge of distinction; with the other, the means to bless! But our story lingers.

It was now the custom of Warner to spend the whole day at his work, and wander out with Clarence, when the evening darkened, to snatch a brief respite of exercise and air. Often, along the lighted and populous streets, would the two young and unfriended competitors for this world's high places roam with the various crowd, moralizing as they went or holding dim conjecture upon their destinies to be. And often would they linger beneath the portico of some house where, "haunted with great resort," Pleasure and Pomp held their nightly revels, to listen to the music that, through the open windows, stole over the rare exotics with which wealth mimics the southern scents, and floated, mellowing by distance, along the unworthy streets; and while they stood together, silent and each feeding upon separate thoughts, the artist's pale lip would curl with scorn, as he heard the laugh and the sounds of a frivolous and hollow mirth ring from the crowd within, and startle the air from the silver spell which music had laid upon it. "These," would he say to Clarence, "these are the dupes of the same fever as ourselves: like us, they strive and toil and vex their little lives for a distinction from their race. Ambition comes to them, as to all: but they throw for a different prize than we do; theirs is the honour of a day, ours is immortality; yet they take the same labour and are consumed by the same care. And, fools that

they are, with their gilded names and their gaudy trappings, they would shrink in disdain from that comparison with us which we, with a juster fastidiousness, blush at this moment to acknowledge."

From these scenes they would rove on, and, both delighting in contrast, enter some squalid and obscure quarter of the city. There, one night, quiet observers of their kind, they paused beside a group congregated together by some common cause of obscene merriment or unholy fellowship—a group on which low vice had set her sordid and hideous stamp—to gaze and draw strange humours or a motley moral from that depth and ferment of human nature into whose sink the thousand streams of civilization had poured their dregs and offal.

"You survey these," said the painter, marking each with the curious eye of his profession: "they are a base horde, it is true; but they have their thirst of fame, their aspirations even in the abyss of crime or the loathsomeness of famished want. Down in yon cellar, where a farthing rushlight glimmers upon haggard cheeks, distorted with the idiotcy of drink; there, in that foul attic, from whose casement you see the beggar's rags hang to dry, or rather to crumble in the reeking and filthy air; farther on, within those walls which, black and heavy as the hearts they hide, close our miserable prospect, — there, even there, in the mildewed dungeon, in the felon's cell, on the very scaffold's self, Ambition hugs her own hope or scowls upon her own despair. Yes! the inmates of those walls had their perilous game of honour, their 'hazard of the die,' in which vice was triumph and infamy success. We do but share their passion, though we direct it to a better object."

Pausing for a moment, as his thoughts flowed into a somewhat different channel of his character, Warner continued, "We have now caught a glimpse of the two great divisions of mankind; they who riot in palaces, and they who make mirth hideous in rags and hovels: own that it is but a poor survey in either. Can we be contemptible with these or loathsome with those? Or rather have we not a nobler spark within us, which we have but to fan into a flame that shall burn forever, when

these miserable meteors sink into the corruption from which they rise?"

"But," observed Clarence, "these are the two extremes; the pinnacle of civilization, too worn and bare for any more noble and vigorous fruit, and the base upon which the cloud descends in rain and storm. Look to the central portion of society; there the soil is more genial, and its produce more rich."

"Is it so, in truth?" answered Warner; "pardon me, I believe not: the middling classes are as human as the rest. There is the region, the heart, of Avarice, — systematized, spreading, rotting, the very fungus and leprosy of social states; suspicion, craft, hypocrisy, servility to the great, oppression to the low, the waxlike mimicry of courtly vices, the hardness of flint to humble woes; thought, feeling, the faculties and impulses of man, all ulcered into one great canker, Gain, — these make the general character of the middling class, the unleavened mass of that mediocrity which it has been the wisdom of the shallow to applaud. Pah! *we* too are of this class, this potter's earth, this paltry mixture of mud and stone; but *we*, my friend, we will knead gold into our clay."

"But look," said Clarence, pointing to the group before them, "look, yon wretched mother, whose voice an instant ago uttered the coarsest accents of maudlin and intoxicated prostitution, is now fostering her infant, with a fondness stamped upon her worn cheek and hollow eye, which might shame the nice maternity of nobles; and there, too, yon wretch whom, in the reckless effrontery of hardened abandonment, we ourselves heard a few minutes since boast of his dexterity in theft, and openly exhibit its token, — look, he is now, with a Samaritan's own charity, giving the very goods for which his miserable life was risked to that attenuated and starving stripling! No, Warner, no! even this mass is *not* unleavened. The vilest infamy is not too deep for the Seraph Virtue to descend and illumine its abyss!"

"Out on the weak fools!" said the artist, bitterly: "it would be something, if they could be consistent even in crime!" and, placing his arm in Linden's, he drew him away.

As the picture grew beneath the painter's hand, Clarence was

much struck with the outline and expression of countenance given to the regicide Bradshaw.

"They are but an imperfect copy of the living original from whom I have borrowed them," said Warner, in answer to Clarence's remark upon the sternness of the features. "But that original — a relation of mine, is coming here to-day: you shall see him."

While Warner was yet speaking, the person in question entered. His were, indeed, the form and face worthy to be seized by the painter. The peculiarity of his character made him affect a plainness of dress unusual to the day, and approaching to the simplicity, but not the neatness, of Quakerism. His hair — then, with all the better ranks, a principal object of cultivation — was wild, dishevelled, and, in wiry flakes of the sablest hue, rose abruptly from a forehead on which either thought or passion had written its annals with an iron pen; the lower part of the brow, which overhung the eye, was singularly sharp and prominent; while the lines, or rather furrows, traced under the eyes and nostrils, spoke somewhat of exhaustion and internal fatigue. But this expression was contrasted and contradicted by the firmly compressed lip; the lighted, steady, stern eye; the resolute and even stubborn front, joined to proportions strikingly athletic and a stature of uncommon height.

"Well, Wolfe," said the young painter to the person we have described, "it is indeed a kindness to give me a second sitting."

"Tush, boy!" answered Wolfe, "all men have their vain points, and I own that I am not ill pleased that these rugged features should be assigned, even in fancy, to one of the noblest of those men who judged the mightiest cause in which a country was ever plaintiff, a tyrant criminal, and a world witness!"

While Wolfe was yet speaking his countenance, so naturally harsh, took a yet sterner aspect, and the artist, by a happy touch, succeeded in transferring it to the canvas.

"But, after all," continued Wolfe, "it shames me to lend aid to an art frivolous in itself, and almost culpable in times when Freedom wants the head to design, and perhaps the hand to execute, far other and nobler works than the blazoning of her past deeds upon perishable canvas."

A momentary anger at the slight put upon his art crossed the pale brow of the artist; but he remembered the character of the man and continued his work in silence. "You consider then, sir, that these are times in which liberty is attacked?" said Clarence.

"Attacked!" repeated Wolfe, — "attacked!" and then suddenly sinking his voice into a sort of sneer, "why, since the event which this painting is designed to commemorate, I know not if we have ever had one solitary gleam of liberty break along the great chaos of jarring prejudice and barbarous law which we term forsooth a glorious constitution. Liberty attacked! no, boy; but it is a time when liberty may be gained."

Perfectly unacquainted with the excited politics of the day, or the growing and mighty spirit which then stirred through the minds of men, Clarence remained silent; but his evident attention flattered the fierce republican, and he proceeded.

"Ay," he said slowly, and as if drinking in a deep and stern joy from his conviction in the truth of the words he uttered, — "ay, I have wandered over the face of the earth, and I have warmed my soul at the fires which lay hidden under its quiet surface; I have been in the city and the desert, — the herded and banded crimes of the Old World, and the scattered but bold hearts which are found among the savannahs of the New; and in either I have beheld that seed sown which, from a mustard grain, too scanty for a bird's beak, shall grow up to be a shelter and a home for the whole family of man. I have looked upon the thrones of kings, and lo, the anointed ones were in purple and festive pomp; and I looked *beneath* the thrones, and I saw Want and Hunger, and despairing Wrath gnawing the foundations away. I have stood in the streets of that great city where Mirth seems to hold an eternal jubilee, and beheld the noble riot while the peasant starved; and the priest built altars to Mammon, piled from the earnings of groaning Labour and cemented with blood and tears. But I looked farther, and saw, in the rear, chains sharpened into swords, misery ripening into justice, and famine darkening

into revenge ; and I laughed as I beheld, for I knew that the day of the oppressed was at hand."

Somewhat awed by the prophetic tone, though revolted by what seemed to him the novelty and the fierceness of the sentiments of the republican, Clarence, after a brief pause, said, —

"And what of our own country?"

Wolfe's brow darkened. "The oppression here," said he, "has not been so weighty, therefore the reaction will be less strong ; the parties are more blended, therefore their separation will be more arduous ; the extortion is less strained, therefore the endurance will be more meek ; but, soon or late, the struggle must come : bloody will it be, if the strife be even ; gentle and lasting, if the people predominate."

"And if the rulers be the strongest?" said Clarence.

"The struggle will be renewed," replied Wolfe, doggedly.

"You still attend those oratorical meetings, cousin, I think?" said Warner.

"I do," said Wolfe ; "and if you are not so utterly absorbed in your vain and idle art as to be indifferent to all things nobler, you will learn yourself to take interest in what concerns — I will not say your country, but mankind. For you, young man" (and the republican turned to Clarence). "I would fain hope that life has not already been diverted from the greatest of human objects ; if so, come to-morrow night to our assembly, and learn from worthier lips than mine the precepts and the hopes for which good men live or die."

"I will come at all events to listen, if not to learn," said Clarence, eagerly, for his curiosity was excited. And the republican, having now fulfilled the end of his visit, rose and departed.

CHAPTER XV.

BOUND to suffer persecution
And martyrdom with resolution,
T' oppose *himself* against the hate
And vengeance of the incensed state. — *Hudibras*.

BORN of respectable though not wealthy parents, John Wolfe was one of those fiery and daring spirits which, previous to some mighty revolution, Fate seems to scatter over various parts of the earth, even those removed from the predestined explosion, — heralds of the events in which they are fitted though not fated to be actors. The period at which he is presented to the reader was one considerably prior to that French Revolution so much debated and so little understood. But some such event, though not foreseen by the common, had been already foreboded by the more enlightened, eye; and Wolfe, from a protracted residence in France among the most discontented of its freer spirits, had brought hope to that burning enthusiasm which had long made the pervading passion of his existence.

Bold to ferocity, generous in devotion to folly in self-sacrifice, unflinching in his tenets to a degree which rendered their ardour ineffectual to all times, because utterly inapplicable to the present, Wolfe was one of those zealots whose very virtues have the semblance of vice, and whose very capacities for danger become harmless from the rashness of their excess.

It was not among the philosophers and reasoners of France that Wolfe had drawn strength to his opinions: whatever such companions might have done to his tenets, they would at least have moderated his actions. The philosopher may aid or expedite a change; but never does the philosopher in any age or of any sect countenance a crime. But of philosophers Wolfe knew little, and probably despised them for their tem-

perance: it was among fanatics — ignorant, but imaginative — that he had strengthened the love without comprehending the nature of republicanism. Like Lucian's painter, whose flattery portrayed the one-eyed prince in profile, he viewed only that side of the question in which there was no defect, and gave beauty to the whole by concealing the half. Thus, though on his return to England herding with the common class of his reforming brethren, Wolfe possessed many peculiarities and distinctions of character which, in rendering him strikingly adapted to the purpose of the novelist, must serve as a caution to the reader not to judge of the class by the individual.

With a *class* of Republicans in England there was a strong tendency to support their cause by reasoning. With Wolfe, whose mind was little wedded to logic, all was the offspring of turbulent feelings, which, in rejecting argument, substituted declamation for syllogism. This effected a powerful and irreconcilable distinction between Wolfe and the better part of his comrades; for the habits of cool reasoning, whether true or false, are little likely to bias the mind towards those crimes to which Wolfe's unregulated emotions might possibly urge him, and give to the characters to which they are a sort of common denominator something of method and much of similarity. But the feelings — those orators which allow no calculation and baffle the tameness of comparison — rendered Wolfe alone, unique, eccentric in opinion or action, whether of vice or virtue.

Private ties frequently moderate the ardour of our public enthusiasm. Wolfe had none. His nearest relation was Warner, and it may readily be supposed that with the pensive and contemplative artist he had very little in common. He had never married, nor had ever seemed to wander from his stern and sterile path, in the most transient pursuit of the pleasures of sense. Inflexibly honest, rigidly austere, — in his moral character his bitterest enemies could detect no flaw, — poor, even to indigence, he had invariably refused all overtures of the government; thrice imprisoned and heavily fined for his doctrines, no fear of a future, no remembrance of the past, punishment could ever silence his bitter eloquence or

moderate the passion of his distempered zeal ; kindly, though rude, his scanty means were ever shared by the less honest and disinterested followers of his faith ; and he had been known for days to deprive himself of food, and for nights of shelter, for the purpose of yielding food and shelter to another.

Such was the man doomed to forsake, through a long and wasted life, every substantial blessing, in pursuit of a shadowy good ; with the warmest benevolence in his heart, to relinquish private affections, and to brood even to madness over public offences ; to sacrifice everything in a generous though erring devotion for that freedom whose cause, instead of promoting, he was calculated to retard ; and, while he believed himself the martyr of a high and uncompromising virtue, to close his career with the greatest of human crimes.

CHAPTER XVI.

FAITH, methinks his humour is good, and his purse will buy good company. — *The Parson's Wedding.*

WHEN Clarence returned home, after the conversation recorded in our last chapter, he found a note from Talbot, inviting him to meet some friends of the latter at supper that evening. It was the first time Clarence had been asked, and he looked forward with some curiosity and impatience to the hour appointed in the note.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the jealous rancour felt by Mr. and Mrs. Copperas on hearing of this distinction, — a distinction which “the perfect courtier” had never once bestowed upon themselves.

Mrs. Copperas tossed her head, too indignant for words ; and the stock-jobber, in the bitterness of his soul, affirmed, with a meaning air, “that he dared say, after all, that the old gentleman was not so rich as he gave out.”

On entering Talbot's drawing-room, Clarence found about seven or eight people assembled; their names, in proclaiming the nature of the party, indicated that the aim of the host was to combine aristocracy and talent. The literary acquirements and worldly tact of Talbot, joined to the adventitious circumstances of birth and fortune, enabled him to effect this object, so desirable in polished society, far better than we generally find it effected now. The conversation of these guests was light and various. The last *bon mot* of Chesterfield, the last sarcasm of Horace Walpole, Goldsmith's "Traveller," Shenstone's "Pastorals," and the attempt of Mrs. Montagu to bring Shakspeare into fashion, — in all these subjects the graceful wit and exquisite taste of Talbot shone pre-eminent; and he had almost succeeded in convincing a profound critic that Gray was a poet more likely to live than Mason, when the servant announced supper.

That was the age of suppers! Happy age! Meal of ease and mirth; when Wine and Night lit the lamp of Wit! Oh, what precious things were said and looked at those banquets of the soul! There epicurism was in the lip as well as the palate, and one had humour for a *hors d'œuvre* and repartee for an *entremet*. At dinner there is something too pompous, too formal, for the true ease of Table Talk. One's intellectual appetite, like the physical, is coarse but dull. At dinner one is fit only for eating; *after* dinner only for politics. But supper was a glorious relic of the ancients. The bustle of the day had thoroughly wound up the spirit, and every stroke upon the dial-plate of wit was true to the genius of the hour. The wallet of diurnal anecdote was full, and craved unloading. The great meal — that vulgar first love of the appetite — was over, and one now only flattered it into coquetting with another. The mind, disengaged and free, was no longer absorbed in a cutlet or burdened with a joint. The *gourmand* carried the nicety of his physical perception to his moral, and applauded a *bon mot* instead of a *bonne bouche*.

Then, too, one had no necessity to keep a reserve of thought for the after evening; supper was the final consummation, the glorious funeral pyre of day. One could be merry till bedtime

without an interregnum. Nay, if in the ardour of convivialism one did, — I merely hint at the possibility of such an event, — if one *did* exceed the narrow limits of strict ebriety, and open the heart with a ruby key, one had nothing to dread from the cold, or, what is worse, the warm looks of ladies in the drawing-room; no fear that an imprudent word, in the amatory fondness of the fermented blood, might expose one to matrimony and settlements. There was no tame, trite medium of propriety and suppressed confidence, no bridge from board to bed, over which a false step (and your wine-cup is a marvellous corrupter of ambulatory rectitude) might precipitate into an irrecoverable abyss of perilous communication or unwholesome truth. One's pillow became at once the legitimate and natural bourne to "the overheated brain;" and the generous rashness of the cœnatorial reveller was not damped by untimeous caution or ignoble calculation.

But "we have changed all that now." Sobriety has become the successor of suppers; the great ocean of moral encroachment has not left us one little island of refuge. Miserable supper-lovers that we are, like the native Indians of America, a scattered and daily disappearing race, we wander among strange customs, and behold the innovating and invading Dinner spread gradually over the very space of time in which the majesty of Supper once reigned undisputed and supreme!

O, ye heavens, be kind,
And feel, thou earth, for this afflicted race. — WORDSWORTH.

As he was sitting down to the table, Clarence's notice was arrested by a somewhat suspicious and displeasing occurrence. The supper room was on the ground floor, and, owing to the heat of the weather, one of the windows, facing the small garden, was left open. Through this window Clarence distinctly saw the face of a man look into the room for one instant, with a prying and curious gaze, and then as instantly disappear. As no one else seemed to remark this incident, and the general attention was somewhat noisily engrossed by the subject of conversation, Clarence thought it not worth while to mention a circumstance for which the impertinence of any neighbouring

servant or drunken passer-by might easily account. An apprehension, however, of a more unpleasant nature shot across him, as his eye fell upon the costly plate which Talbot rather ostentatiously displayed, and then glanced to the single and aged servant, who was, besides his master, the only male inmate of the house. Nor could he help saying to Talbot, in the course of the evening, that he wondered he was not afraid of hoarding so many articles of value in a house at once so lonely and ill guarded.

“Ill guarded!” said Talbot, rather affronted, “why, I and my servant always sleep here!”

To this Clarence thought it neither prudent nor well-bred to offer further remark.

CHAPTER XVII.

MEETINGS or public calls he never missed,
To dictate often, always to assist.

To his experience and his native sense,
He joined a bold, imperious eloquence;
The grave, stern look of men informed and wise,
A full command of feature, heart and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size. — CRABBE.

THE next evening Clarence, mindful of Wolfe's invitation, inquired from Warner (who repaid the contempt of the republican for the painter's calling by a similar feeling for the zealot's) the direction of the oratorical meeting, and repaired there alone. It was the most celebrated club (of that description) of the day, and well worth attending, as a gratification to the curiosity, if not an improvement to the mind.

On entering, he found himself in a long room, tolerably well lighted, and still better filled. The sleepy countenances of the audience, the whispered conversation carried on at scattered intervals, the listless attitudes of some, the frequent yawns of others, the eagerness with which attention was attracted to the

opening door, when it admitted some new object of interest, the desperate resolution with which some of the more energetic turned themselves towards the orator, and then, with a faint shake of the head, turned themselves again hopelessly away, — were all signs that denoted that no very eloquent declaimer was in possession of the “house.” It was, indeed, a singularly dull, monotonous voice which, arising from the upper end of the room, dragged itself on towards the middle, and expired with a sighing sound before it reached the end. The face of the speaker suited his vocal powers; it was small, mean, and of a round stupidity, without anything even in fault that could possibly command attention or even the excitement of disapprobation: the very garments of the orator seemed dull and heavy, and, like the Melancholy of Milton, had a “leaden look.” Now and then some words, more emphatic than others, — stones breaking, as it were with a momentary splash, the stagnation of the heavy stream, — produced from three very quiet, unhappy-looking persons seated next to the speaker, his immediate friends, three single isolated “hears !”

“The force of friendship could no further go.”

At last, the orator having *spoken through*, suddenly stopped; the whole meeting seemed as if a weight had been taken from it; there was a general buzz of awakened energy, each stretched his limbs, and resettled himself in his place, —

“And turning to his neighbour said,
‘Rejoice!’”

A pause ensued, the chairman looked round, the eyes of the meeting followed those of the president, with a universal and palpable impatience, towards an obscure corner of the room: the pause deepened for one moment, and then was broken; a voice cried “Wolfe!” and at that signal the whole room shook with the name. The place which Clarence had taken did not allow him to see the object of these cries, till he rose from his situation, and, passing two rows of benches, stood forth in the middle space of the room; then, from one to one went round the general roar of applause; feet stamped, hands clapped, umbrellas set their sharp points to the ground, and

walking-sticks thumped themselves out of shape in the universal clamour. Tall, gaunt, and erect, the speaker possessed, even in the mere proportions of his frame, that physical power which never fails, in a popular assembly, to gain attention to mediocrity and to throw dignity over faults. He looked very slowly round the room, remaining perfectly still and motionless, till the clamour of applause had entirely subsided, and every ear, Clarence's no less eagerly than the rest, was strained, and thirsting to catch the first syllables of his voice.

It was then with a low, very deep, and somewhat hoarse tone, that he began; and it was not till he had spoken for several minutes that the iron expression of his face altered, that the drooping hand was raised, and that the suppressed, yet powerful, voice began to expand and vary in its volume. He had then entered upon a new department of his subject. The question was connected with the English constitution, and Wolfe was now preparing to put forth, in long and blackened array, the alleged evils of an aristocratical form of government. *Then* it was as if the bile and bitterness of years were poured forth in a terrible and stormy wrath, — then his action became vehement, and his eye flashed forth unutterable fire: his voice, solemn, swelling, and increasing with each tone in its height and depth, filled, as with something palpable and perceptible, the shaking walls. The listeners, — a various and unconnected group, bound by no tie of faith or of party, many attracted by curiosity, many by the hope of ridicule, some abhorring the tenets expressed, and nearly all disapproving their principles or doubting their wisdom, — the listeners, certainly not a group previously formed or moulded into enthusiasm, became rapt and earnest; their very breath forsook them.

Linden had never before that night heard a public speaker; but he was of a thoughtful and rather calculating mind, and his early habits of decision, and the premature cultivation of his intellect, rendered him little susceptible, in general, to the impressions of the vulgar: nevertheless, in spite of himself, he was hurried away by the stream, and found that the force and rapidity of the speaker did not allow him even time for

the dissent and disapprobation which his republican maxims and fiery denunciations perpetually excited in a mind aristocratic both by creed and education. At length after a peroration of impetuous and magnificent invective, the orator ceased.

In the midst of the applause that followed, Clarence left the assembly ; he could not endure the thought that any duller or more commonplace speaker should fritter away the spell which yet bound and engrossed his spirit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At the bottom of the staircase was a small door, which gave way before Nigel, as he precipitated himself upon the scene of action, a cocked pistol in one hand, etc. — *Fortunes of Nigel*.

THE night, though not utterly dark, was rendered capricious and dim by alternate wind and rain ; and Clarence was delayed in his return homeward by seeking occasional shelter from the rapid and heavy showers which hurried by. It was during one of the temporary cessations of the rain that he reached Copperas Bower ; and, while he was searching in his pockets for the key which was to admit him, he observed two men loitering about his neighbour's house. The light was not sufficient to give him more than a scattered and imperfect view of their motions. Somewhat alarmed, he stood for several moments at the door, watching them as well as he was able ; nor did he enter the house till the loiterers had left their suspicious position, and, walking onwards, were hid entirely from him by the distance and darkness.

“It really is a dangerous thing for Talbot,” thought Clarence, as he ascended to his apartment, “to keep so many valuables, and only one servant, and that one as old as himself too. However, as I am by no means sleepy, and my room is by no means cool, I may as well open my window, and see if those idle fellows make their re-appearance.” Suiting the action to

the thought, Clarence opened his little casement, and leaned wistfully out.

He had no light in his room, for none was ever left for him. This circumstance, however, of course enabled him the better to penetrate the dimness and haze of the night; and, by the help of the fluttering lamps, he was enabled to take a general though not minute survey of the scene below.

I think I have before said that there was a garden between Talbot's house and Copperas Bower; this was bounded by a wall, which confined Talbot's peculiar territory of garden, and this wall, describing a parallelogram, faced also the road. It contained two entrances, — one the principal adytus, in the shape of a comely iron gate, the other a wooden door, which, being a private pass, fronted the intermediate garden before mentioned and was exactly opposite to Clarence's window.

Linden had been more than ten minutes at his post, and had just begun to think his suspicions without foundation and his vigil in vain, when he observed the same figures he had seen before advance slowly from the distance and pause by the front gate of Talbot's mansion.

Alarmed and anxious, he redoubled his attention; he stretched himself, as far as his safety would permit, out of the window; the lamps, agitated by the wind, which swept by in occasional gusts, refused to grant to his straining sight more than an inaccurate and unsatisfying survey. Presently, a blast, more violent than ordinary, suspended as it were the falling columns of rain and left Clarence in almost total darkness; it rolled away, and the momentary calm which ensued enabled him to see that one of the men was stooping by the gate, and the other standing apparently on the watch at a little distance. Another gust shook the lamps and again obscured his view; and when it had passed onward in its rapid course, the men had left the gate, and were in the garden beneath his window. They crept cautiously, but swiftly, along the opposite wall, till they came to the small door we have before mentioned; here they halted, and one of them appeared to occupy himself in opening the door. Now, then, fear was changed into certainty, and it seemed without doubt that the

men, having found some difficulty or danger in forcing the stronger or more public entrance, had changed their quarter of attack. No more time was to be lost; Clarence shouted aloud, but the high wind probably prevented the sound reaching the ears of the burglars, or at least rendered it dubious and confused. The next moment, and before Clarence could repeat his alarm, they had opened the door, and were within the neighbouring garden, beyond his view. Very young men, unless their experience has outstripped their youth, seldom have much presence of mind; that quality, which is the opposite to *surprise*, comes to us in those years when nothing seems to us strange or unexpected. But a much older man than Clarence might have well been at a loss to know what conduct to adopt in the situation in which our hero was placed. The visits of the watchman to that (then) obscure and ill-inhabited neighbourhood were more regulated by his indolence than his duty; and Clarence knew that it would be in vain to listen for his cry or tarry for his assistance. He himself was utterly unarmed, but the stock-jobber had a pair of horse-pistols, and as this recollection flashed upon him, the pause of deliberation ceased.

With a swift step he descended the first flight of stairs, and pausing at the chamber door of the faithful couple, knocked upon its panels with a loud and hasty summons. The second repetition of the noise produced the sentence, uttered in a very trembling voice, of "Who's there?"

"It is I, Clarence Linden," replied our hero; "lose no time in opening the door."

This answer seemed to reassure the valorous stock-jobber. He slowly undid the bolt, and turned the key.

"In Heaven's name, what do you want, Mr. Linden?" said he.

"Ay," cried a sharp voice from the more internal recesses of the chamber, "what do you want, sir, disturbing us in the bosom of our family and at the dead of night?"

With a rapid voice, Clarence repeated what he had seen, and requested the broker to accompany him to Talbot's house, or at least to lend him his pistols.

"He shall do no such thing," cried Mrs. Copperas. "Come here, Mr. C., and shut the door directly."

"Stop, my love," said the stock-jobber, "stop a moment."

"For God's sake," cried Clarence, "make no delay; the poor old man may be murdered by this time."

"It's no business of mine," said the stock-jobber. "If Adolphus had not broken the rattle I would not have minded the trouble of springing it; but you are very much mistaken if you think I am going to leave my warm bed in order to have my throat cut."

"Then give me your pistols," cried Clarence; "I will go alone."

"I shall commit no such folly," said the stock-jobber; "if you are murdered, I may have to answer it to your friends and pay for your burial. Besides, you owe us for your lodgings: go to your bed, young man, as I shall to mine." And, so saying, Mr. Copperas proceeded to close the door.

But enraged at the brutality of the man and excited by the urgency of the case, Clarence did not allow him so peaceable a retreat. With a strong and fierce grasp, he seized the astonished Copperas by the throat, and shaking him violently, forced his own entrance into the sacred nuptial chamber.

"By Heaven," cried Linden, in a savage and stern tone, for his blood was up. "I will twist your coward's throat, and save the murderer his labour, if you do not instantly give me up your pistols."

The stock-jobber was panic-stricken. "Take them," he cried, in the extremest terror; "there they are on the chimney-piece close by."

"Are they primed and loaded?" said Linden, not relaxing his gripe.

"Yes, yes!" said the stock-jobber, "loose my throat, or you will choke me!" and at that instant, Clarence felt himself clasped by the invading hands of Mrs. Copperas.

"Call off your wife," said he, "or I *will* choke you!" and he tightened his hold, "and tell her to give me the pistols."

The next moment Mrs. Copperas extended the debated weapons towards Clarence. He seized them, flung the poor

stock-jobber against the bedpost, hurried down stairs, opened the back door, which led into the garden, flew across the intervening space, arrived at the door, and entering Talbot's garden, paused to consider what was the next step to be taken.

A person equally brave as Clarence, but more cautious, would not have left the house without alarming Mr. de Warens, even in spite of the failure with his master; but Linden only thought of the pressure of time and the necessity of expedition, and he would have been a very unworthy hero of romance had he felt fear for two antagonists, with a brace of pistols at his command and a high and good action in view.

After a brief but decisive halt, he proceeded rapidly round the house, in order to ascertain at which part the ruffians had admitted themselves, should they (as indeed there was little doubt) have already effected their entrance.

He found the shutters of one of the principal rooms on the ground-floor had been opened, and through the aperture he caught the glimpse of a moving light, which was suddenly obscured. As he was about to enter, the light again flashed out: he drew back just in time, carefully screened himself behind the shutter, and, through one of the chinks, observed what passed within. Opposite to the window was a door which conducted to the hall and principal staircase; this door was open, and in the hall at the foot of the stairs Clarence saw two men; one carried a dark lantern, from which the light proceeded, and some tools, of the nature of which Clarence was naturally ignorant: this was a middle-sized muscular man, dressed in the rudest garb of an ordinary labourer; the other was much taller and younger, and his dress was of a rather less ignoble fashion.

"Hist! hist!" said the taller one, in a low tone, "did you not hear a noise, Ben?"

"Not a pin fall; but stow your whids, man!"

This was all that Clarence heard in a connected form; but as the wretches paused, in evident doubt how to proceed, he caught two or three detached words, which his ingenuity read-

ily formed into sentences. "No, no! sleeps to the left — old man above — plate chest; we must have the blunt too. Come, track up the dancers, and douse the glim." And at the last words the light was extinguished, and Clarence's quick and thirsting ear just caught their first steps on the stairs; they died away, and all was hushed.

It had several times occurred to Clarence to rush from his hiding-place, and fire at the ruffians, and perhaps that measure would have been the wisest he could have taken; but Clarence had never discharged a pistol in his life, and he felt, therefore, that his aim must be uncertain enough to render a favourable position and a short distance essential requisites. Both these were, at present, denied to him; and although he saw no weapons about the persons of the villains, yet he imagined they would not have ventured on so dangerous an expedition without firearms; and if he failed, as would have been most probable, in his two shots, he concluded that, though the alarm would be given, his own fate would be inevitable.

If this was reasoning upon false premises, for housebreakers seldom or never carry loaded firearms, and never stay for revenge, when their safety demands escape, Clarence may be forgiven for not knowing the customs of housebreakers, and for not making the very best of an extremely novel and dangerous situation.

No sooner did he find himself in total darkness than he bitterly reproached himself for his late backwardness, and, inwardly resolving not again to miss any opportunity which presented itself, he entered the window, groped along the room into the hall, and found his way very slowly and after much circumlocution to the staircase.

He had just gained the summit, when a loud cry broke upon the stillness: it came from a distance, and was instantly hushed; but he caught, at brief intervals, the sound of angry and threatening voices. Clarence bent down anxiously, in the hope that some solitary ray would escape through the crevice of the door within which the robbers were engaged. But though the sounds came from the same floor as that on

which he now trod, they seemed far and remote, and not a gleam of light broke the darkness.

He continued, however, to feel his way in the direction from which the sounds proceeded, and soon found himself in a narrow gallery; the voices seemed more loud and near, as he advanced; at last he distinctly heard the words —

“Will you not confess where it is placed?”

“Indeed, indeed,” replied an eager and earnest voice, which Clarence recognized as Talbot’s, “this is all the money I have in the house, — the plate is above, — my servant has the key, — take it, — take all, — but save his life and mine.”

“None of your gammon,” said another and rougher voice than that of the first speaker: “we know you have more blunt than this, — a paltry sum of fifty pounds, indeed!”

“Hold!” cried the other ruffian, “here is a picture set with diamonds, that will do, Ben. Let go the old man.”

Clarence was now just at hand, and probably from a sudden change in the position of the dark lantern within, a light abruptly broke from beneath the door and streamed along the passage.

“No, no, no!” cried the old man, in a loud yet tremulous voice, — “no, not that, anything else, but I will defend *that* with my life.”

“Ben, my lad,” said the ruffian, “twist the old fool’s neck: we have no more time to lose.”

At that very moment the door was flung violently open, and Clarence Linden stood within three paces of the reprobates and their prey. The taller villain had a miniature in his hand, and the old man clung to his legs with a convulsive but impotent clasp; the other fellow had already his gripe upon Talbot’s neck, and his right hand grasped a long case-knife.

With a fierce and flashing eye, and a cheek deadly pale with internal and resolute excitement, Clarence confronted the robbers.

“Thank Heaven,” cried he, “I am not too late!” And advancing yet another step towards the shorter ruffian, who struck mute with the suddenness of the apparition, still retained his grasp of the old man, he fired his pistol, with a

steady and close aim ; the ball penetrated the wretch's brain, and without sound or sigh, he fell down dead, at the very feet of his just destroyer. The remaining robber had already meditated, and a second more sufficed to accomplish, his escape. He sprang towards the door : the ball whizzed beside him, but touched him not. With a safe and swift step, long inured to darkness, he fled along the passage ; and Linden, satisfied with the vengeance he had taken upon his comrade, did not harass him with an unavailing pursuit.

Clarence turned to assist Talbot. The old man was stretched upon the floor insensible, but his hand grasped the miniature which the plunderer had dropped in his flight and terror, and his white and ashen lip was pressed convulsively upon the recovered treasure.

Linden raised and placed him on his bed, and while employed in attempting to revive him, the ancient domestic, alarmed by the report of the pistol, came, poker in hand, to his assistance.

By little and little they recovered the object of their attention.

His eyes rolled wildly round the room, and he muttered, —

“Off, off ! ye shall not rob me of my only relic of her, — where is it? — have you got it? — the picture, the picture !”

“It is here, sir, it is here,” said the old servant ; “it is in your own hand.”

Talbot's eye fell upon it ; he gazed at it for some moments, pressed it to his lips, and then, sitting erect and looking wildly round, he seemed to awaken to the sense of his late danger and his present deliverance.

CHAPTER XIX.

AH, fleetier far than fleetest storm or steed,
 Or the death they bear,
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
 With the wings of care!
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
 Shall mine cling to thee!
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
 It may bring to thee!—SHELLEY.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON MORDAUNT TO ISABEL ST. LEGER.

YOU told me not to write to you. You know how long, but not how uselessly I have obeyed you. Did you think, Isabel, that my love was of that worldly and common order which requires a perpetual aliment to support it? Did you think that, if you forbade the stream to flow visibly, its sources would be exhausted, and its channel dried up? This may be the passion of others; it is not mine. Months have passed since we parted, and since then you have not seen me; this letter is the first token you have received from a remembrance which cannot die. But do you think that I have not watched and tended upon you, and gladdened my eyes with gazing on your beauty when you have not dreamed that I was by? Ah, Isabel, your heart should have told you of it; *mine* would, had *you* been so near me!

You receive no letters from me, it is true: think you that my hand and heart are therefore idle? No. I write to you a thousand burning lines: I pour out my soul to you; I tell you of all I suffer; my thoughts, my actions, my very dreams, are all traced upon the paper. I send them not to you, but I read them over and over, and when I come to your name, I pause and shut my eyes, and then "Fancy has her power," and lo! "you are by my side!"

Isabel, our love has not been a holiday and joyous sentiment; but I feel a solemn and unalterable conviction that our union is ordained.

Others have many objects to distract and occupy the thoughts which are once forbidden a single direction, but we have *none*. At least, to me you are everything. Pleasure, splendour, ambition, all are merged into one great and eternal thought, and that is *you*!

Others have told me, and I believed them, that I was hard and cold and stern: so perhaps I was before I knew you, but now I am weaker

and softer than a child. There is a stone which is of all the hardest and the chilliest, but when once set on fire it is unquenchable. You smile at my image, perhaps, and I should smile if I saw it in the writing of another; for all that I have ridiculed in romance as exaggerated seems now to me too cool and too commonplace for reality.

But this is not what I meant to write to you; you are ill, dearest and noblest Isabel, you are ill! I am the cause, and you conceal it from me; and you would rather pine away and die than suffer *me* to lose one of those worldly advantages which are in *my* eyes but as dust in the balance, — it is in vain to deny it. I heard from others of your impaired health; I have witnessed it myself. Do you remember last night, when you were in the room with your relations, and they made you sing, — a song too which you used to sing to me, and when you came to the second stanza your voice failed you, and you burst into tears, and *they*, instead of soothing, reproached and chid you, and you answered not, but wept on? Isabel, do you remember that a sound was heard at the window and a groan? Even they were startled, but they thought it was the wind, for the night was dark and stormy, and they saw not that it was *I*: yes, my devoted, my generous love, it was I who gazed upon you, and from whose heart that voice of anguish was wrung; and I saw your cheek was pale and thin, and that the canker at the core had preyed upon the blossom.

Think you, after this, that I could keep silence or obey your request? No, dearest, no! Is not my happiness your object? I have the vanity to believe so; and am *I* not the best judge how that happiness is to be secured? I tell you, I say it calmly, coldly, dispassionately, — not from the imagination, not even from the heart, but solely from the *reason*, — that I can bear everything rather than the loss of *you*; and that if the evil of my love scathe and destroy you, I shall consider and curse myself as your murderer! Save me from this extreme of misery, my — yes, *my* Isabel! I shall be at the copse where we have so often met before, to-morrow, at noon. You will meet me; and if I cannot *convince* you, I will not ask you to be *persuaded*.

A. M.

And Isabel read this letter, and placed it at her heart, and felt less miserable than she had done for months; for, though she wept, there was sweetness in the tears which the assurance of *his* love and the tenderness of his remonstrance had called forth. She met him: how could she refuse? and the struggle was past. Though not “convinced” she *was* “persuaded;” for her heart, which refused his reasonings, melted at his reproaches and his grief. But she would not consent to unite her fate with

him at once, for the evils of that step to his interests were immediate and near; she was only persuaded to permit their correspondence and occasional meetings, in which, however imprudent they might be for herself, the disadvantages to her lover were distant and remote. It was of him only that she thought; for him she trembled; for him she was the coward and the woman; for herself she had no fears, and no forethought.

And Algernon was worthy of this devoted love, and returned it as it was given. Man's love, in general, is a selfish and exacting sentiment: it demands every sacrifice and refuses all. But the nature of Mordaunt was essentially high and disinterested, and his honour, like his love, was not that of the world: it was the ethereal and spotless honour of a lofty and generous mind, the honour which custom can neither give nor take away; and, however impatiently he bore the deferring of a union, in which he deemed that *he* was the only sufferer, he would not have uttered a sigh or urged a prayer for that union, could it, in the minutest or remotest degree, have injured or degraded *her*.

These are the hearts and natures which make life beautiful; these are the shrines which sanctify love; these are the diviner spirits for whom there is kindred and commune with everything exalted and holy in heaven and earth. For them Nature unfolds her hoarded poetry and her hidden spells; for their steps are the lonely mountains, and the still woods have a murmur for their ears; for them there is strange music in the wave, and in the whispers of the light leaves, and rapture in the voices of the birds: their souls drink, and are saturated with the mysteries of the Universal Spirit, which the philosophy of old times believed to be God Himself. They look upon the sky with a gifted vision, and its dove-like quiet descends and overshadows their hearts; the Moon and the Night are to them wells of Castalian inspiration and golden dreams; and it was one of *them* who, gazing upon the Evening Star, felt in the inmost sanctuary of his soul its mysterious harmonies with his most worshipped hope, his most passionate desire, and dedicated it to — LOVE.

CHAPTER XX.

Maria. Here's the brave old man's love,

Bianca. That loves the young man.

The Woman's Prize; or, The Tamer Tamed.

"No, my dear Clarence, you have placed confidence in me, and it is now my duty to return it; you have told me your history and origin, and I will inform you of mine, but not yet. At present we will talk of you. You have conferred upon me what our universal love of life makes us regard as the greatest of human obligations; and though I can bear a large burden of gratitude, yet I must throw off an atom or two in using my little power in *your* behalf. Nor is this all: your history has also given you another tie upon my heart, and, in granting you a *legitimate* title to my good offices, removes any scruple you might otherwise have had in accepting them.

"I have just received this letter from Lord —, the minister for foreign affairs: you will see that he has appointed you to the office of *attaché* at —. You will also oblige me by looking over this other letter at your earliest convenience; the trifling sum which it contains will be repeated every quarter; it will do very well for an *attaché*: when you are an ambassador, why, we must equip you by a mortgage on Scarsdale; and now, my dear Clarence, tell me all about the Copperases."

I need not say who was the speaker of the above sentences: sentences apparently of a very agreeable nature; nevertheless, Clarence seemed to think otherwise, for the tears gushed into his eyes, and he was unable for several moments to reply.

"Come, my young friend," said Talbot, kindly; "I have no near relations among whom I can choose a son I like better than you, nor you any at present from whom you might select a more desirable father: consequently, you must let me look upon you as my own flesh and blood; and, as I intend to be

a very strict and peremptory father, I expect the most silent and scrupulous obedience to my commands. My first parental order to you is to put up those papers, and to say nothing more about them ; for I have a great deal to talk to you about upon other subjects."

And by these and similar kind-hearted and delicate remonstrances, the old man gained his point. From that moment Clarence looked upon him with the grateful and venerating love of a son ; and I question very much, if Talbot had really been the father of our hero, whether he would have liked so handsome a successor half so well.

The day after this arrangement, Clarence paid his debt to the Copperases and removed to Talbot's house. With this event commenced a new era in his existence : he was no longer an outcast and a wanderer ; out of alien ties he had wrought the link of a close and even paternal friendship ; life, brilliant in its prospects and elevated in its ascent, opened flatteringly before him ; and the fortune and courage which had so well provided for the present were the best omens and auguries for the future.

One evening, when the opening autumn had made its approaches felt, and Linden and his new parent were seated alone by a blazing fire, and had come to a full pause in their conversation, Talbot, shading his face with the friendly pages of the "Whitehall Evening Paper," as if to protect it from the heat, said, —

"I told you, the other day, that I would give you, at some early opportunity, a brief sketch of my life. This confidence is due to you in return for yours ; and since you will soon leave me, and I am an old man, whose life no prudent calculation can fix, I may as well choose the present time to favour you with my confessions."

Clarence expressed and looked his interest, and the old man thus commenced, —

THE HISTORY OF A VAIN MAN.

I was the favourite of my parents, for I was quick at my lessons, and my father said I inherited my genius from him ; and comely in my

person, and my mother said that my good looks came from her. So the honest pair saw in their eldest son the union of their own attractions, and thought they were making much of themselves when they lavished their caresses upon me. They had another son, poor Arthur, — I think I see him now! He was a shy, quiet, subdued boy, of a very plain personal appearance. My father and mother were vain, showy, ambitious people of the world, and they were as ashamed of my brother as they were proud of myself. However, he afterwards entered the army and distinguished himself highly. He died in battle, leaving an only daughter, who married, *as you know*, a nobleman of high rank. Her subsequent fate it is now needless to relate.

Petted and pampered from my childhood, I grew up with a profound belief in my own excellences, and a feverish and irritating desire to impress every one who came in my way with the same idea. There is a sentence in Sir William Temple, which I have often thought of with a painful conviction of its truth: "A restlessness in men's minds to be something they are not, and to have something they have not, is the root of all immorality."¹ At school, I was confessedly the cleverest boy in my remove; and, what I valued equally as much, I was the best cricketer of the best eleven. Here, then, you will say my vanity was satisfied, — no such thing! There was a boy who shared my room, and was next me in the school; we were, therefore, always thrown together. He was a great stupid, lubberly cub, equally ridiculed by the masters and disliked by the boys. Will you believe that this individual was the express and almost sole object of my envy? He was more than my rival, he was my superior; and I hated him with all the unleavened bitterness of my soul.

I have said he was my superior: it was in one thing. He could balance a stick, nay, a cricket-bat, a poker, upon his chin, and I could not; you laugh, and so can I now, but it was no subject of laughter to me then. This circumstance, trifling as it may appear to you, poisoned my enjoyment. The boy saw my envy, for I could not conceal it; and as all fools are malicious, and most fools ostentatious, he took a particular pride and pleasure in displaying his dexterity and "showing off" my discontent. You can form no idea of the extent to which this petty insolence vexed and disquieted me. Even in my sleep, the clumsy and grinning features of this tormenting imp haunted me like a spectre: my visions were nothing but chins and cricket-bats; walking-sticks, sustaining themselves upon human excrescences, and pokers dancing a hornpipe upon the tip of a nose. I assure you that I have spent hours in secret seclusion, practising to rival my hated comrade, and my face

¹ And of all good. — AUTHOR.

— see how one vanity quarrels with another — was little better than a mass of bruises and discolorations.

I actually became so uncomfortable as to write home, and request to leave the school. I was then about sixteen, and my indulgent father, in granting my desire, told me that I was too old and too advanced in my learning to go to any other academic establishment than the University. The day before I left the school, I gave, as was usually the custom, a breakfast to all my friends; the circumstance of my tormentor's sharing my room obliged me to invite him among the rest. However, I was in high spirits, and being a universal favourite with my schoolfellows, I succeeded in what was always to me an object of social ambition, and set the table in a roar; yet, when our festival was nearly expired, and I began to allude more particularly to my approaching departure, my vanity was far more gratified, for my feelings were far more touched, by observing the regret and receiving the good wishes of all my companions. I still recall that hour as one of the proudest and happiest of my life; but it had its immediate reverse. My evil demon put it into my tormentor's head to give me one last parting pang of jealousy. A large umbrella happened accidentally to be in my room; Crompton — such was my schoolfellow's name — saw and seized it. "Look here, Talbot," said he, with his taunting and hideous sneer, "you can't do this;" and placing the point of the umbrella upon his forehead, just above the eyebrow, he performed various antics round the room.

At that moment I was standing by the fireplace, and conversing with two boys upon whom, above all others, I wished to leave a favourable impression. My foolish soreness on this one subject had been often remarked; and, as I turned in abrupt and awkward discomposure from the exhibition, I observed my two schoolfellows smile and exchange looks. I am not naturally passionate, and even at that age I had in ordinary cases great self-command; but this observation, and the cause which led to it, threw me off my guard. Whenever we are utterly under the command of one feeling, we cannot be said to have our reason: at that instant I literally believe I was beside myself. What! in the very flush of the last triumph that that scene would ever afford me; amidst the last regrets of my early friends, to whom I fondly hoped to bequeath a long and brilliant remembrance, to be thus bearded by a contemptible rival, and triumphed over by a pitiful yet insulting superiority; to close my condolences with laughter; to have the final solemnity of my career thus terminating in mockery; and ridicule substituted as an ultimate reminiscence in the place of an admiring regret; all this, too, to be effected by one so long hated, one whom I was the only being forbidden the comparative happiness of despising? I could not brook it; the insult, the insulter, were too revolting. As the un-

happy buffoon approached me, thrusting his distorted face towards mine, I seized and pushed him aside, with a brief curse and a violent hand. The sharp point of the umbrella slipped; my action gave it impetus and weight; it penetrated his eye, and—spare me, spare me the rest.¹

The old man bent down, and paused for a few moments before he resumed.

Crompton lost his eye, but my punishment was as severe as his. People who are very vain are usually equally susceptible, and they who feel one thing acutely will so feel another. For years, ay, for many years afterwards, the recollection of my folly goaded me with the bitterest and most unceasing remorse. Had I committed murder, my conscience could scarce have afflicted me more severely. I did not regain my self-esteem till I had somewhat repaired the injury I had done. Long after that time Crompton was in prison, in great and overwhelming distress. I impoverished myself to release him; I sustained him and his family till fortune rendered my assistance no longer necessary; and no triumphs were ever more sweet to me than the sacrifice I was forced to submit to, in order to restore him to prosperity.

It is natural to hope that this accident had at least the effect of curing me of my fault; but it requires philosophy in yourself, or your advisers, to render remorse of future avail. How could I amend my fault, when I was not even aware of it? Smarting under the effects, I investigated not the cause, and I attributed to irascibility and vindictiveness what had a deeper and more dangerous origin.

At college, in spite of all my advantages of birth, fortune, health, and intellectual acquirements, I had many things besides the one enemy of remorse to corrode my tranquillity of mind. I was sure to find some one to excel me in something, and this was enough to embitter my peace. Our living Goldsmith is my favourite poet, and I perhaps insensibly venerate the genius the more because I find something congenial in the infirmities of the man. *I* can fully credit the anecdotes recorded of him. *I*, too, could once have been jealous of a puppet handling a spouton; *I*, too, could once have been miserable if two ladies at the theatre were more the objects of attention than myself! You, Clarence, will not despise me for this confession; those who knew me less would. Fools! there is no man so great as not to have some littleness more predominant than all his greatness. Our virtues are the dupes, and often only the playthings, of our follies!

¹ This instance of vanity, and indeed the whole of Talbot's history, is literally from facts.

I entered the world, — with what advantages and what avidity! I smile, but it is mournfully, in looking back to that day. Though rich, high-born, and good-looking, I possessed not one of these three qualities in that eminence which could alone satisfy my love of superiority and desire of effect. I knew this somewhat humiliating truth, for, though vain, I was not conceited. Vanity, indeed, is the very antidote to conceit; for while the former makes us all *nerve* to the opinion of others, the latter is perfectly satisfied with its opinion of itself.

I knew this truth, and as Pope, if he could not be the greatest of poets, resolved to be the most correct, so I strove, since I could not be the handsomest, the wealthiest, and the noblest of my contemporaries, to excel them, at least, in the grace and consummateness of manner; and in this after incredible pains, after diligent apprenticeship in the world and intense study in the closet, I at last flattered myself that I had succeeded. Of all success, while we are yet in the flush of youth and its capacities of enjoyment, I can imagine none more intoxicating or gratifying than the success of society, and I had certainly some years of its triumph and *éclat*. I was courted, followed, flattered, and sought by the most envied and fastidious circles in England and even in Paris; for society, so indifferent to those who disdain it, overwhelms with its gratitude — profuse though brief — those who devote themselves to its amusement. The victim to sameness and *ennui*, it offers, like the pallid and luxurious Roman, a reward for a new pleasure; and as long as our industry or talent can afford the pleasure, the reward is ours. At that time, then, I reaped the full harvest of my exertions: the disappointment and vexation were of later date.

I now come to the great era of my life, — Love. Among my acquaintance was Lady Mary Walden, a widow of high birth, and noble though not powerful connections. She lived about twenty miles from London in a beautiful retreat; and, though not rich, her jointure, rendered ample by economy, enabled her to indulge her love of society. Her house was always as full as its size would permit, and I was among the most welcome of its visitors. She had an only daughter: even now, through the dim mists of years, that beautiful and fairy form rises still and shining before me, undimmed by sorrow, unfaded by time. Caroline Walden was the object of general admiration, and her mother, who attributed the avidity with which her invitations were accepted by all the wits and fine gentlemen of the day to the charms of her own conversation, little suspected the face and wit of her daughter to be the magnet of attraction. I had no idea at that time of marriage, still less could I have entertained such a notion, unless the step had greatly exalted my rank and prospects.

The poor and powerless Caroline Walden was therefore the last person for whom I had what the jargon of mothers term "serious intentions." However, I was struck with her exceeding loveliness and amused by the vivacity of her manners; moreover, my vanity was excited by the hope of distancing all my competitors for the smiles of the young beauty. Accordingly I laid myself out to please, and neglected none of those subtle and almost secret attentions which, of all flatteries, are the most delicate and successful; and I succeeded. Caroline loved me with all the earnestness and devotion which characterize the love of woman. It never occurred to her that I was only trifling with those affections which it seemed so ardently my intention to win. She knew that my fortune was large enough to dispense with the necessity of fortune with my wife, and in birth she would have equalled men of greater pretensions to myself; added to this, long adulation had made her sensible though not vain of her attractions, and she listened with a credulous ear to the insinuated flatteries I was so well accustomed to instil.

Never shall I forget — no, though I double my present years — the shock, the wildness of despair with which she first detected the selfishness of my homage; with which she saw that I had only mocked her trusting simplicity; and that while she had been lavishing the richest treasures of her heart before the burning altars of Love, my idol had been Vanity and my offerings deceit. She tore herself from the profanation of my grasp; she shrouded herself from my presence. All interviews with me were rejected; all my letters returned to me unopened; and though, in the repentance of my heart, I entreated, I urged her to accept vows that were no longer insincere, her pride became her punishment, as well as my own. In a moment of bitter and desperate feeling, she accepted the offers of another, and made the marriage bond a fatal and irrevocable barrier to our reconciliation and union.

Oh, how I now cursed my infatuation! how passionately I recalled the past! how coldly I turned from the hollow and false world, to whose service I had sacrificed my happiness, to muse and madden over the prospects I had destroyed and the loving and noble heart I had rejected! Alas! after all, what is so ungrateful as that world for which we renounce so much? Its votaries resemble the Gymnosophists of old, and while they profess to make their chief end pleasure, we can only learn that they expose themselves to every torture and every pain!

Lord Merton, the man whom Caroline now called husband, was among the wealthiest and most dissipated of his order; and two years after our separation I met once more with the victim of my unworthiness, blazing in "the full front" of courtly splendour, the leader of its

gayeties and the cynosure of her followers. Intimate with the same society, we were perpetually cast together, and Caroline was proud of displaying the indifference towards me, which, if she felt not, she had at least learnt artfully to assume. This indifference was her ruin. The depths of my evil passion were again sounded and aroused, and I resolved yet to humble the pride and conquer the coldness which galled to the very quick the morbid acuteness of my self-love. I again attached myself to her train; I bowed myself to the very dust before her. What to me were her chilling reply and disdainful civilities?—only still stronger excitements to persevere.

I spare you and myself the gradual progress of my schemes. A woman may recover her first passion, it is true; but then she must replace it with another. That other was denied to Caroline: she had not even children to engross her thoughts and to occupy her affections; and the gay world, which to many becomes an object, was to her only an escape.

Clarence, my triumph came! Lady Walden (who had never known our secret) invited me to her house: Caroline was there. In the same spot where we had so often stood before, and in which her earliest affections were insensibly breathed away, in that same spot I drew from her colourless and trembling lips the confession of her weakness, the restored and pervading power of my remembrance.

But Caroline was a proud and virtuous woman: even while her heart betrayed her, her mind resisted; and in the very avowal of her unconquered attachment, she renounced and discarded me forever. I was not an ungenerous though a vain man; but my generosity was wayward, tainted, and imperfect. I could have borne the separation; I could have severed myself from her; I could have flown to the uttermost parts of the earth; I could have hoarded there my secret yet unextinguished love, and never disturbed her quiet by a murmur: but then the fiat of separation must have come from *me*! My vanity could not bear that *her* lips should reject me; that *my* part was not to be the nobility of sacrifice, but the submission of resignation. However, my better feelings were aroused, and though I could not stifle I concealed my selfish repinings. We parted: she returned to town; I buried myself in the country; and, amidst the literary studies to which, though by fits and starts, I was passionately devoted, I endeavoured to forget my ominous and guilty love.

But I was then too closely bound to the world not to be perpetually reminded of its events. My retreat was thronged with occasional migrators from London; my books were mingled with the news and scandal of the day. All spoke to me of Lady Merton; not as I loved

to picture her to myself, pale and sorrowful, and brooding over my image; but gay, dissipated, the dispenser of smiles, the prototype of joy. I contrasted this account of her with the melancholy and gloom of my own feelings, and I resented her seeming happiness as an insult to myself.

In this angry and fretful mood I returned to London. My empire was soon resumed; and now, Linden, comes the most sickening part of my confessions. Vanity is a growing and insatiable disease; what seems to its desires as wealth to-day, to-morrow it rejects as poverty. I was at first contented to know that I was beloved; by degrees, slow, yet sure, I desired that others should know it also. I longed to display my power over the celebrated and courted Lady Merton; and to put the last crown to my reputation and importance. The envy of others is the food of our own self-love. Oh, you know not, you dream not, of the galling mortifications to which a proud woman, whose love commands her pride, is subjected! I imposed upon Caroline the most humiliating, the most painful trials; I would allow her to see none but those I pleased; to go to no place where I withheld my consent; and I hesitated not to exert and testify my power over her affections, in proportion to the publicity of the opportunity.

Yet, with all this littleness, would you believe that I loved Caroline with the most ardent and engrossing passion? I have paused behind her, in order to kiss the ground she trod on; I have stayed whole nights beneath her window, to catch one glimpse of her passing form, even though I had spent hours of the daytime in her society; and, though my love burned and consumed me like a fire, I would not breathe a single wish against her innocence, or take advantage of my power to accomplish what I knew from her virtue and pride no atonement could possibly repay. Such are the inconsistencies of the heart, and such, while they prevent our perfection, redeem us from the utterness of vice! Never, even in my wildest days, was I blind to the glory of virtue, yet never, till my latest years, have I enjoyed the faculty to avail myself of my perception. I resembled the mole, which by Boyle is supposed to possess the idea of light, but to be unable to comprehend the objects on which it shines.

Among the varieties of my prevailing sin, was a weakness common enough to worldly men. While I ostentatiously played off the love I had *excited* I could not bear to show the love I *felt*. In our country, and perhaps, though in a less degree, in all other highly artificial states, enthusiasm or even feeling of any kind is ridiculous; and I could not endure the thought that my treasured and secret affections should be dragged from their retreat to be cavilled and carped at by —

“Every beardless, vain comparative.”

This weakness brought on the catastrophe of my love ; for, mark me, Clarence, it is through our weaknesses that our vices are punished ! One night I went to a masquerade ; and, while I was sitting in a remote corner, three of my acquaintances, whom I recognized, though they knew it not, approached and rallied me upon my *romantic* attachment to Lady Merton. One of them was a woman of a malicious and sarcastic wit ; the other two were men whom I disliked, because their pretensions interfered with mine ; they were diners-out and anecdote-mongers. Stung to the quick by their sarcasms and laughter, I replied in a train of mingled arrogance and jest ; at last I spoke slightly of the person in question ; and these profane and false lips dared not only to disown the faintest love to that being who was more to me than all on earth, but even to speak of herself with ridicule and her affection with disdain.

In the midst of this, I turned and beheld, within hearing, a figure which I knew upon the moment. O Heaven ! the burning shame and agony of that glance ! It raised its mask — I saw that blanched cheek, and that trembling lip ! I knew that the iron had indeed entered into her soul.

Clarence, I never beheld her again alive. Within a week from that time she was a corpse. She had borne much, suffered much, and murmured not ; but this shock pressed too hard, came too home, and from the hand of him for whom she would have sacrificed all ! I stood by her in death ; I beheld my work ; and I turned away, a wanderer and a pilgrim upon the face of the earth. Verily, I have had my reward.

The old man paused, in great emotion ; and Clarence, who could offer him no consolation, did not break the silence. In a few minutes Talbot continued —

From that time the smile of woman was nothing to me : I seemed to grow old in a single day. Life lost to me all its objects. A dreary and desert blank stretched itself before me : the sounds of creation had only in my ears one voice ; the past, the future, one image. I left my country for twenty years, and lived an idle and hopeless man in the various courts of the Continent.

At the age of fifty I returned to England ; the wounds of the past had not disappeared, but they were scarred over ; and I longed, like the rest of my species, to have an object in view. At that age, if we have seen much of mankind and possess the talents to profit by our knowledge, we must be one of two sects, — a politician or a philosopher. My time was not yet arrived for the latter, so I resolved to become the former ; but this was denied me, for my vanity had assumed a different

shape. It is true that I cared no longer for the reputation women can bestow; but I was eager for the applause of men, and I did not like the long labour necessary to attain it. I wished to make a short road to my object, and I eagerly followed every turn but the right one, in the hopes of its leading me sooner to my goal.

The great characteristic of a vain man in contradistinction to an ambitious man, his eternal obstacle to a high and honourable fame, is this: he requires for any expenditure of trouble too speedy a reward; he cannot wait for years, and climb, step by step, to a lofty object; whatever he attempts, he must seize at a single grasp. Added to this, he is incapable of an exclusive attention to one end; the universality of his cravings is not contented, unless it devours all; and thus he is perpetually doomed to fritter away his energies by grasping at the trifling baubles within his reach, and in gathering the worthless fruit which a single sun can mature.

This, then, was my fault, and the cause of my failure. I could not give myself up to finance, nor puzzle through the intricacies of commerce: even the common parliamentary drudgeries of constant attendance and late hours were insupportable to me; and so after two or three "splendid orations," as my friends termed them, I was satisfied with the puffs of the pamphleteers and closed my political career. I was now, then, the wit and the conversationalist. With my fluency of speech and variety of information, these were easy distinctions; and the popularity of a dinner-table or the approbation of a literary *coterie* consoled me for the more public and more durable applause I had resigned.

But even this gratification did not last long. I fell ill; and the friends who gathered round the wit fled from the valetudinarian. This disgusted me, and when I was sufficiently recovered I again returned to the Continent. But I had a fit of misanthropy and solitude upon me, and so it was not to courts and cities, the scenes of former gayeties, that I repaired; on the contrary, I hired a house by one of the most sequestered of the Swiss lakes, and, avoiding the living, I surrendered myself without interruption or control to commune with the dead. I surrounded myself with books and pored with a curious and searching eye into those works which treat particularly upon "man." My passions were over, my love of pleasure and society was dried up, and I had now no longer the obstacles which forbid us to be wise: I unlearned the precepts my manhood had acquired, and in my old age I commenced philosopher; Religion lent me her aid, and by her holy lamp my studies were coned and my hermitage illumined.

There are certain characters which in the world are evil, and in seclusion are good: Rousseau, whom I knew well, is one of them.

These persons are of a morbid sensitiveness, which is perpetually galled by collision with others. In short, they are under the dominion of VANITY; and that vanity, never satisfied and always restless in the various competitions of society, produces "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness!" but, in solitude, the good and benevolent dispositions with which our self-love no longer interferes have room to expand and ripen without being cramped by opposing interests: this will account for many seeming discrepancies in character. There are also some men in whom old age supplies the place of solitude, and Rousseau's antagonist and mental antipodes, Voltaire, is of this order. The pert, the malignant, the arrogant, the lampooning author in his youth and manhood, has become in his old age the mild, the benevolent, and the venerable philosopher. Nothing is more absurd than to receive the characters of great men so implicitly upon the word of a biographer; and nothing can be less surprising than our eternal disputes upon individuals: for no man throughout life is the same being, and each season of our existence contradicts the characteristics of the last.

And now in my solitude and my old age, a new spirit entered within me: the game in which I had engaged so vehemently was over for me; and I joined to my experience as a player my coolness as a spectator; I no longer struggled with my species, and I began insensibly to love them. I established schools and founded charities; and, in secret but active services to mankind, I employed my exertions and lavished my desires.

From this amendment I date the peace of mind and elasticity which I now enjoy; and in my later years the happiness which I pursued in my youth and maturity so hotly, yet so ineffectually, has flown unsolicited to my breast.

About five years ago I came again to England, with the intention of breathing my last in the country which gave me birth. I retired to my family home; I endeavoured to divert myself in agricultural improvements, and my rental was consumed in speculation. This did not please me long: I sought society, — society in Yorkshire! You may imagine the result: I was out of my element; the mere distance from the metropolis, from all genial companionship, sickened me with a vague feeling of desertion and solitude; for the first time in my life I felt my age and my celibacy. Once more I returned to town, a complaint attacked my lungs, the physicians recommended the air of this neighbourhood, and I chose the residence I now inhabit. Without being exactly in London, I can command its advantages, and obtain society as a recreation without buying it by restraint. I am not fond of new faces nor any longer covetous of show; my old servant therefore con

tented me : for the future, I shall, however, to satisfy your fears, remove to a safer habitation, and obtain a more numerous guard. It is, at all events, a happiness to me that Fate, in casting me here and exposing me to something of danger, has raised up in you a friend for my old age, and selected from this great universe of strangers one being to convince my heart that it has not outlived affection. My tale is done : may you profit by its moral !

When Talbot said that our characters were undergoing a perpetual change he should have made this reservation, — the one ruling passion remains to the last ; it may be modified, but it never departs ; and it is these modifications which do, for the most part, shape out the channels of our change ; or as Helvetius has beautifully expressed it, “ we resemble those vessels which the waves still carry towards the south, when the north wind has ceased to blow ; ” but in our old age, this passion, having little to feed on, becomes sometimes dormant and inert, and then our good qualities rise, as it were from an incubus, and have their sway.

Yet these cases are not common, and Talbot was a remarkable instance, for he was a remarkable man. His mind had not slept while the age advanced, and thus it had swelled as it were from the bondage of its earlier passions and prejudices. But little did he think, in the blindness of self-delusion, — though it was so obvious to Clarence, that he could have smiled if he had not rather inclined to weep at the frailties of human nature, — little did he think that the vanity which had cost him so much remained “ a monarch still,” undeposed alike by his philosophy, his religion, or his remorse ; and that, debarred by circumstances from all wider and more dangerous fields, it still lavished itself upon trifles unworthy of his powers and puerilities dishonouring his age. Folly is a courtesan whom we ourselves seek, whose favours we solicit at an enormous price, and who, like Lais, finds philosophers at her door scarcely less frequently than the rest of mankind !

CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Trinket. What d'ye buy, what d'ye lack, gentlemen?
Gloves, ribbons, and essences, — ribbons, gloves, and essences.

ETHEREGE.

“AND so, my love,” said Mr. Copperas, one morning at breakfast, to his wife, his right leg being turned over his left, and his dexter hand conveying to his mouth a huge morsel of buttered cake, — “and, so my love, they say that the old fool is going to leave the jackanapes all his fortune?”

“They do say so, Mr. C.; for my part I am quite out of patience with the art of the young man; I dare say he is no better than he should be; he always had a sharp look, and for aught I know there may be more in that robbery than you or I dreamed of, Mr. Copperas. It was a pity,” continued Mrs. Copperas, upbraiding her lord with true matrimonial tenderness and justice, for the consequences of his having acted from *her* advice, — “it was a pity, Mr. C., that you should have refused to lend him the pistols to go to the old fellow’s assistance, for then who knows but —”

“I might have converted them into *pocket* pistols,” interrupted Mr. C., “and not have overshot the mark, my dear — ha, ha, ha!”

“Lord, Mr. Copperas, you are always making a joke of everything.”

“No, my dear, for once I am making a joke of nothing.”

“Well, I declare it’s shameful,” cried Mrs. Copperas, still following up her own indignant meditations, “and after taking such notice of Adolphus, too, and all!”

“Notice, my dear! mere words,” returned Mr. Copperas, “mere words, like ventilators, which make a great deal of air, but *never raise the wind*; but don’t put yourself in a *stew*, my love, for the doctors say that *copperas in a stew* is poison!”

At this moment Mr. de Warens, throwing open the door, announced Mr. Brown; that gentleman entered, with a sedate

but cheerful air. "Well, Mrs. Copperas, your servant; any table-linen wanted? Mr. Copperas, how do you do? I can give you a hint about the stocks. Master Copperas, you are looking bravely; don't you think he wants some new pinbefores, ma'am? But Mr. Clarence Linden, where is he? Not up yet, I dare say. Ah, the present generation is a generation of sluggards, as his worthy *aunt*, Mrs. Minden, used to say."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Copperas, with a disdainful toss of the head, "I know nothing about the young man. He has left us; a very mysterious piece of business indeed, Mr. Brown; and now I think of it, I can't help saying that we were by no means pleased with your introduction: and, by the by, the chairs you bought for us at the sale were a mere take-in, so slight that Mr. Walruss broke two of them by only sitting down."

"Indeed, ma'am?" said Mr. Brown, with expostulating gravity; "but then Mr. Walruss is so very corpulent. But the young gentleman, what of him?" continued the broker, artfully turning from the point in dispute.

"Lord, Mr. Brown, don't ask me: it was the unluckiest step we ever made to admit him into the bosom of our family; quite a viper, I assure you; absolutely robbed poor Adolphus."

"Lord help us!" said Mr. Brown, with a look which "cast a browner horror" o'er the room, "who would have thought it? and such a pretty young man!"

"Well," said Mr. Copperas, who, occupied in finishing the buttered cake, had hitherto kept silence, "I must be off. Tom — I mean de Warens — have you stopped the coach?"

"Yees, sir."

"And what coach is it?"

"It be the Swallow, sir."

"Oh, very well. And now, Mr. Brown, having swallowed *in the roll*, I will e'en *roll in the Swallow* — Ha, ha, ha! — At any rate," thought Mr. Copperas, as he descended the stairs, "*he* has not heard that before."

"Ha, ha!" gravely chuckled Mr. Brown, "what a very facetious, lively gentleman Mr. Copperas is. But touching this ungrateful young man, Mr. Linden, ma'am?"

"Oh, don't tease me, Mr. Brown, I must see after my

domestics: ask Mr. Talbot, the old miser in the next house, the *havarr*, as the French say."

"Well, now," said Mr. Brown, following the good lady down stairs, "how distressing for me! and to say that he was Mrs. Minden's nephew, too!"

But Mr. Brown's curiosity was not so easily satisfied, and finding Mr. de Warens leaning over the "front" gate, and "pursuing with wistful eyes" the departing "Swallow," he stopped, and, accosting him, soon possessed himself of the facts that "old Talbot had been robbed and murdered, but that Mr. Linden had brought him to life again; and that old Talbot had given him a hundred thousand pounds, and adopted him as his son; and that how Mr. Linden was going to be sent to foreign parts, as an ambassador, or governor, or great person; and that how meester and meeses were quite 'cut up' about it."

All these particulars having been duly deposited in the mind of Mr. Brown, they produced an immediate desire to call upon the young gentleman, who, to say nothing of his being so very nearly related to his old customer, Mrs. Minden, was always so very great a favourite with him, Mr. Brown.

Accordingly, as Clarence was musing over his approaching departure, which was now very shortly to take place, he was somewhat startled by the apparition of Mr. Brown — "Charming day, sir, — charming day," said the friend of Mrs. Minden, — "just called in to congratulate you. I have a few articles, sir, to present you with, — quite rarities, I assure you, — quite presents, I may say. I picked them up at a sale of the late Lady Waddilove's most valuable effects. They are just the things, sir, for a gentleman going on a foreign mission. A most curious ivory chest, with an Indian padlock, to hold confidential letters, — belonged formerly, sir, to the Great Mogul; and a beautiful diamond snuff-box, sir, with a picture of Louis XIV. on it, prodigiously fine, and will look so loyal too: and, sir, if you have any old aunts in the country, to send a farewell present to, I have some charming fine cambric, a superb Dresden tea set, and a lovely little 'ape,' stuffed by the late Lady W. herself."

"My good sir," began Clarence.

“Oh, no thanks, sir, — none at all, — too happy to serve a relation of Mrs. Minden, — always proud to keep up family connections. You will be at home to-morrow, sir, at eleven; I will look in; your most humble servant, Mr. Linden.” And almost upsetting Talbot, who had just entered, Mr. Brown bowed himself out.

CHAPTER XXII.

HE talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young
And Matthew seventy-two.— WORDSWORTH.

MEANWHILE the young artist proceeded rapidly with his picture. Devoured by his enthusiasm, and utterly engrossed by the sanguine anticipation of a fame which appeared to him already won, he allowed himself no momentary interval of relaxation; his food was eaten by starts, and without stirring from his easel; his sleep was brief and broken by feverish dreams; he no longer roved with Clarence, when the evening threw her shade over his labours; all air and exercise he utterly relinquished; shut up in his narrow chamber, he passed the hours in a fervid and passionate self-commune, which, even in suspense from his work, riveted his thoughts the closer to its object. All companionship, all intrusion, he bore with irritability and impatience. Even Clarence found himself excluded from the presence of his friend; even his nearest relation, who doted on the very ground which he hallowed with his footstep, was banished from the haunted sanctuary of the painter; from the most placid of human beings, Warner seemed to have grown the most morose.

Want of rest, abstinence from food, the impatience of the strained spirit and jaded nerves, all contributed to waste the health while they excited the genius of the artist. A crimson spot, never before seen there, burned in the centre of his pale

cheek ; his eye glowed with a brilliant but unnatural fire ; his features grew sharp and attenuated ; his bones worked from his whitening and transparent skin ; and the soul and frame, turned from their proper and kindly union, seemed contesting, with fierce struggles, which should obtain the mastery and the triumph.

But neither his new prospects nor the coldness of his friend diverted the warm heart of Clarence from meditating how he could most effectually serve the artist before he departed from the country. It was a peculiar object of desire to Warner that the most celebrated painter of the day, who was on terms of intimacy with Talbot, and who with the benevolence of real superiority was known to take a keen interest in the success of more youthful and inexperienced genius, — it was a peculiar object of desire to Warner, that Sir Joshua Reynolds should see his picture before it was completed ; and Clarence, aware of this wish, easily obtained from Talbot a promise that it should be effected. That was the least service of his zeal : touched by the earnestness of Linden's friendship, anxious to oblige in any way his preserver, and well pleased himself to be the patron of merit, Talbot readily engaged to obtain for Warner whatever the attention and favour of high rank or literary distinction could bestow. "As for his picture," said Talbot (when, the evening before Clarence's departure, the latter was renewing the subject), "I shall myself become the purchaser, and at a price which will enable our friend to afford leisure and study for the completion of his next attempt ; but even at the risk of offending your friendship, and disappointing your expectations, I will frankly tell you that I think Warner overrates, perhaps not his talents, but his powers ; not his ability for doing something great hereafter, but his capacity of doing it at present. In the pride of his heart, he has shown me many of his designs, and I am somewhat of a judge : they want experience, cultivation, taste, and, above all, a deeper study of the Italian masters. They all have the defects of a feverish colouring, an ambitious desire of effect, a wavering and imperfect outline, an ostentatious and unnatural strength of light and shadow : they show, it is true,

a genius of no ordinary stamp, but one ill regulated, inexperienced, and utterly left to its own suggestions for a model. However, I am glad he wishes for the opinion of one necessarily the best judge: let him bring the picture here by Thursday; on that day my friend has promised to visit me; and now let us talk of you and your departure."

The intercourse of men of different ages is essentially unequal: it must always partake more or less of advice on one side and deference on the other; and although the easy and unpedantic turn of Talbot's conversation made his remarks rather entertaining than obviously admonitory, yet they were necessarily tinged by his experience, and regulated by his interest in the fortunes of his young friend.

"My dearest Clarence," said he, affectionately, "we are about to bid each other a long farewell. I will not damp your hopes and anticipations by insisting on the little chance there is that you should ever see me again. You are about to enter upon the great world, and have within you the desire and power of success; let me flatter myself that you can profit by my experience. Among the 'Colloquia' of Erasmus, there is a very entertaining dialogue between Apicius and a man who, desirous of giving a feast to a very large and miscellaneous party, comes to consult the epicure what will be the best means to give satisfaction to all. Now you shall be this Spudæus (so I think he is called), and I will be Apicius; for the world, after all, is nothing more than a great feast of different strangers, with different tastes and of different ages, and we must learn to adapt ourselves to their minds, and our temptations to their passions, if we wish to fascinate or even to content them. Let me then call your attention to the hints and maxims which I have in this paper amused myself with drawing up for your instruction. Write to me from time to time, and I will, in replying to your letters, give you the best advice in my power. For the rest, my dear boy, I have only to request that you will be frank, and I, in my turn, will promise that when I cannot assist, I will never reprove. And now, Clarence, as the hour is late and you leave us early tomorrow, I will no longer detain you. God bless you and keep

you. You are going to enjoy life, — I to anticipate death ; so that you can find in me little congenial to yourself ; but as the good Pope said to our Protestant countryman, ‘ Whatever the difference between us, I know well that an old man’s blessing is never without its value.’ ”

As Clarence clasped his benefactor’s hand, the tears gushed from his eyes. Is there one being, stubborn as the rock to misfortune, whom kindness does not affect ? For my part, kindness seems to me to come with a double grace and tenderness from the old ; it seems in them the hoarded and long purified benevolence of years ; as if it had survived and conquered the baseness and selfishness of the ordeal it had passed ; as if the winds, which had broken the form, had swept in vain across the heart, and the frosts which had chilled the blood and whitened the thin locks had possessed no power over the warm tide of the affections. It is the triumph of nature over art ; it is the voice of the angel which is yet within us. Nor is this all : the tenderness of age is twice blessed, — blessed in its trophies over the obduracy of encrusting and withering years, blessed because it is tinged with the sanctity of the grave ; because it tells us that the heart will blossom even upon the precincts of the tomb, and flatters us with the inviolacy and immortality of love.



CHAPTER XXIII.

CANNOT I create,
 Cannot I form, cannot I fashion forth
 Another world, another universe ? — KEATS.

THE next morning Clarence, in his way out of town, directed his carriage (the last and not the least acceptable present from Talbot) to stop at Warner’s door. Although it was scarcely sunrise, the aged grandmother of the artist was stirring, and opened the door to the early visitor. Clarence passed her

with a brief salutation, hurried up the narrow stairs, and found himself in the artist's chamber. The windows were closed, and the air of the room was confined and hot. A few books, chiefly of history and poetry, stood in confused disorder upon some shelves opposite the window. Upon a table beneath them lay a flute, once the cherished recreation of the young painter, but now long neglected and disused; and, placed exactly opposite to Warner, so that his eyes might open upon his work, was the high-prized and already more than half-finished picture.

Clarence bent over the bed; the cheek of the artist rested upon his arm in an attitude unconsciously picturesque; the other arm was tossed over the coverlet, and Clarence was shocked to see how emaciated it had become. But ever and anon the lips of the sleeper moved restlessly, and words, low and inarticulate, broke out. Sometimes he started abruptly, and a bright but evanescent flush darted over his faded and hollow cheek; and once the fingers of the thin hand which lay upon the bed expanded and suddenly closed in a firm and almost painful grasp; it was then that for the first time the words of the artist became distinct.

"Ay, ay," he said, "I have thee, I have thee at last. Long, very long thou hast burnt up my heart like fuel, and mocked me, and laughed at my idle efforts; but now, now, I have thee. Fame, Honour, Immortality, whatever thou art called, I have thee, and thou canst not escape; but it is almost too late!" And, as if wrung by some sudden pain, the sleeper turned heavily round, groaned audibly, and awoke.

"My friend," said Clarence, soothingly, and taking his hand, "I have come to bid you farewell. I am just setting off for the Continent, but I could not leave England without once more seeing you. I have good news, too, for you." And Clarence proceeded to repeat Talbot's wish that Warner should bring the picture to his house on the following Thursday, that Sir Joshua might inspect it. He added also, in terms the flattery of which his friendship could not resist exaggerating, Talbot's desire to become the purchaser of the picture.

“Yes,” said the artist, as his eye glanced delightedly over his labour; “yes, I believe when it is once seen there will be many candidates!”

“No doubt,” answered Clarence; “and for that reason you cannot blame Talbot for wishing to forestall all other competitors for the prize;” and then, continuing the encouraging nature of the conversation, Clarence enlarged upon the new hopes of his friend, besought him to take time, to spare his health, and not to injure both himself and his performance by over-anxiety and hurry. Clarence concluded by retailing Talbot’s assurance that in all cases and circumstances he (Talbot) considered himself pledged to be Warner’s supporter and friend.

With something of impatience, mingled with pleasure, the painter listened to all these details; nor was it to Linden’s zeal nor to Talbot’s generosity, but rather to the excess of his own merit, that he secretly attributed the brightening prospect offered him.

The indifference which Warner, though of a disposition naturally kind, evinced at parting with a friend who had always taken so strong an interest in his behalf, and whose tears at that moment contrasted forcibly enough with the apathetic coldness of his own farewell, was a remarkable instance how acute vividness on a single point will deaden feeling on all others. Occupied solely and burningly with one intense thought, which was to him love, friendship, health, peace, wealth, Warner could not excite feelings, languid and exhausted with many and fiery conflicts, to objects of minor interest, and perhaps he inwardly rejoiced that his musings and his study would henceforth be sacred even from friendship.

Deeply affected, for his nature was exceedingly unselfish, generous, and susceptible, Clarence tore himself away, placed in the grandmother’s hand a considerable portion of the sum he had received from Talbot, hurried into his carriage, and found himself on the high road to fortune, pleasure, distinction, and the Continent.

But while Clarence, despite of every advantage before him, hastened to a court of dissipation and pleasure, with feelings

in which regretful affection for those he had left darkened his worldly hopes and mingled with the sanguine anticipations of youth, Warner, poor, low-born, wasted with sickness, destitute of friends, shut out by his temperament from the pleasures of his age, burned with hopes far less alloyed than those of Clarence, and found in them, for the sacrifice of all else, not only a recompense, but a triumph.

Thursday came. Warner had made one request to Talbot, which had with difficulty been granted: it was that he himself might unseen be the auditor of the great painter's criticisms, and that Sir Joshua should be perfectly unaware of his presence. It had been granted with difficulty, because Talbot wished to spare Warner the pain of hearing remarks which he felt would be likely to fall far short of the sanguine self-elation of the young artist; and it *had* been granted because Talbot imagined that, even should this be the case, the pain would be more than counterbalanced by the salutary effect it might produce. Alas! vanity calculates but poorly upon the vanity of others! What a virtue we should distil from frailty; what a world of pain we should save our brethren, if we would suffer our own weakness to be the measure of theirs!

Thursday came: the painting was placed by the artist's own hand in the most favourable light; a curtain, hung behind it, served as a screen for Warner, who, retiring to his hiding-place, surrendered his heart to delicious forebodings of the critic's wonder and golden anticipations of the future destiny of his darling work. Not a fear dashed the full and smooth cup of his self-enjoyment. He had lain awake the whole of the night in restless and joyous impatience for the morrow. At daybreak he had started from his bed, he had unclosed his shutters, he had hung over his picture with a fondness greater, if possible, than he had ever known before! like a mother, he felt as if his own partiality was but a part of a universal tribute; and, as his aged relative, turning her dim eyes to the painting, and, in her innocent idolatry, rather of the artist than his work, praised and expatiated and foretold, his heart whispered, "If it wring this worship from ignorance, what will be the homage of science?"

He who first laid down the now hackneyed maxim that diffidence is the companion of genius knew very little of the workings of the human heart. True, there may have been a few such instances, and it is probable that in this maxim, as in most, the exception made the rule. But what could ever reconcile genius to its sufferings, its sacrifices, its fevered inquietudes, the intense labour which can alone produce what the shallow world deems the giant offspring of a momentary inspiration : what could ever reconcile it to these but the haughty and unquenchable consciousness of internal power; the hope which has the fulness of certainty that in proportion to the toil is the reward; the sanguine and impetuous anticipation of glory, which bursts the boundaries of time and space, and ranges immortality with a prophet's rapture? Rob Genius of its confidence, of its lofty self-esteem, and you clip the wings of the eagle : you domesticate, it is true, the wanderer you could not hitherto comprehend, in the narrow bounds of your household affections; you abase and tame it more to the level of your ordinary judgments, but you take from it the power to soar; the hardihood which was content to brave the thunder-cloud and build its eyrie on the rock, for the proud triumph of rising above its kind, and contemplating with a nearer eye the majesty of heaven.

But if something of presumption is a part of the very essence of genius, in Warner it was doubly natural, for he was still in the heat and flush of a design, the defects of which he had not yet had the leisure to examine; and his talents, self-taught and self-modelled, had never received either the excitement of emulation or the chill of discouragement from the study of the masterpieces of his art.

The painter had not been long alone in his concealment before he heard steps; his heart beat violently, the door opened, and he saw, through a small hole which he had purposely made in the curtain, a man with a benevolent and prepossessing countenance, whom he instantly recognized as Sir Joshua Reynolds, enter the room, accompanied by Talbot. They walked up to the picture, the painter examined it closely, and in perfect silence. "Silence," thought Warner, "is the best

homage of admiration ;” but he trembled with impatience to hear the admiration confirmed by words, — those words came too soon.

“ It is the work of a clever man, certainly,” said Sir Joshua ; “ *but* ” (terrible monosyllable) “ of one utterly unskilled in the grand principles of his art : look here, and here, and here, for instance ;” and the critic, perfectly unconscious of the torture he inflicted, proceeded to point out the errors of the work. Oh ! the agony, the withering agony of that moment to the ambitious artist ! In vain he endeavoured to bear up against the judgment, — in vain he endeavoured to persuade himself that it was the voice of envy which in those cold, measured, *defining* accents, fell like drops of poison upon his heart. He felt at once, and as if by a magical inspiration, the truth of the verdict ; the scales of self-delusion fell from his eyes ; by a hideous mockery, a kind of terrible pantomime, his goddess seemed at a word, a breath, transformed into a monster : life, which had been so lately concentrated into a single hope, seemed now, at once and forever, cramped, curdled, blistered into a single disappointment.

“ But,” said Talbot, who had in vain attempted to arrest the criticisms of the painter (who, very deaf at all times, was, at that time in particular, engrossed by the self-satisfaction always enjoyed by one expatiating on his favourite topic), — “ *but*,” said Talbot, in a louder voice, “ you own there is great genius in the design ? ”

“ Certainly, there is genius,” replied Sir Joshua, in a tone of calm and complacent good-nature ; “ but what is genius without culture ? You say the artist is young, very young ; let him take time : I do not say let him attempt a humbler walk ; let him persevere in the lofty one he has chosen, but let him first retrace every step he has taken ; let him devote days, months, years, to the most diligent study of the immortal masters of the divine art, before he attempts (to exhibit, at least) another historical picture. He has mistaken altogether the nature of invention : a fine invention is nothing more than a fine deviation from, or enlargement on, a fine model : imitation, if noble and general, insures the best hope of originality. Above all, let **your young friend**, if he can afford it, visit Italy.”

“He shall afford it,” said Talbot, kindly, “for he shall have whatever advantages I can procure him; but you see the picture is only half-completed: he could alter it!”

“He had better burn it!” replied the painter, with a gentle smile.

And Talbot, in benevolent despair, hurried his visitor out of the room. He soon returned to seek and console the artist, but the artist was gone; the despised, the fatal picture, the blessing and curse of so many anxious and wasted hours, had vanished also with its creator.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT is this soul, then? Whence
 Came it? — It does not seem my own, and I
 Have no self-passion or identity!
 Some fearful end must be —

There never lived a mortal man, who bent
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
 But starved and died. — KEATS: *Endymion*.

On entering his home, Warner pushed aside, for the first time in his life with disrespect, his aged and kindly relation, who, as if in mockery of the unfortunate artist stood prepared to welcome and congratulate his return. Bearing his picture in his arms, he rushed upstairs, hurried into his room, and locked the door. Hastily he tore aside the cloth which had been drawn over the picture; hastily and tremblingly he placed it upon the frame accustomed to support it, and then, with a long, long, eager, searching, scrutinizing glance, he surveyed the once beloved mistress of his worship. Presumption, vanity, exaggerated self-esteem, are, in their punishment, supposed to excite ludicrous not sympathetic emotion; but there is an *excess* of feeling, produced by whatever cause it may be, into which, in spite of ourselves, we are forced to enter. Even

fear, the most contemptible of the passions, becomes tragic the moment it becomes an agony.

“Well, well!” said Warner, at last, speaking very slowly, “it is over, — it was a pleasant dream, — but it is over, — I ought to be thankful for the lesson.” Then suddenly changing his mood and tone, he repeated, “Thankful! for what? that I am a wretch, — a wretch more utterly hopeless and miserable and abandoned than a man who freights with all his wealth, his children, his wife, the hoarded treasures and blessings of an existence, one ship, one frail, worthless ship, and, standing himself on the shore, sees it suddenly go down! Oh, was I not a fool, — a right noble fool, — a vain fool, — an arrogant fool, — a very essence and concentration of all things that make a fool, to believe such delicious marvels of myself! What, man!” (here his eye saw in the opposite glass his features, livid and haggard with disease, and the exhausting feelings which preyed within him) — “what, man! would nothing serve thee but to be a genius, — *thee*, whom Nature stamped with her curse! Dwarf-like and distorted, mean in stature and in lineament, thou wert, indeed, a glorious being to perpetuate grace and beauty, the majesties and dreams of art! Fame for thee, indeed — ha — ha! Glory — ha — ha! a place with Titian, Correggio, Raphael — ha — ha — ha! O, thrice-modest, thrice-reasonable fool! But this vile daub; this disfigurement of canvas; this loathed and wretched monument of disgrace; this notable candidate for — ha — ha — immortality! this I have, at least, in my power.” And seizing the picture, he dashed it to the ground, and trampled it with his feet upon the dusty boards, till the moist colours presented nothing but one confused and dingy stain.

This sight seemed to recall him for a moment. He paused, lifted up the picture once more, and placed it on the table. “But,” he muttered, “might not this critic be envious? am I sure that he judged rightly — fairly? The greatest masters have looked askant and jealous at their pupils’ works. And then, how slow, how cold, how damned cold, how indifferently he spoke; why, the very art should have warmed him more. Could he have — No, no, no: it *was* true, it was! I felt the

conviction thrill through me like a searing iron. Burn it — did he say — ay — burn it : it shall be done this instant.”

And, hastening to the door, he undid the bolt. He staggered back as he beheld his old and nearest surviving relative, the mother of his father, seated upon the ground beside the door, terrified by the exclamations she did not dare to interrupt. She rose slowly, and with difficulty as she saw him ; and, throwing around him the withered arms which had nursed his infancy, exclaimed, “ My child ! — my poor — poor child ! what has come to you of late ? you, who were so gentle, so mild, so quiet, — you are no longer the same, — and oh, my son, how ill you look : your father looked so just before he died ! ”

“ Ill ! ” said he, with a sort of fearful gayety, “ ill — no : I never was so well ; I have been in a dream till now ; but I have woken at last. Why, it is true that I have been silent and shy, but I will be so no more. I will laugh, and talk, and walk, and make love, and drink wine, and be all that other men are. Oh, we will be so merry ! But stay here, while I fetch a light.”

“ A light, my child, for what ? ”

“ For a funeral ! ” shouted Warner, and, rushing past her, he descended the stairs, and returned almost in an instant with a light.

Alarmed and terrified, the poor old woman had remained motionless and weeping violently. Her tears Warner did not seem to notice ; he pushed her gently into the room, and began deliberately, and without uttering a syllable, to cut the picture into shreds.

“ What are you about, my child ? ” cried the old woman : “ you are mad ; it is your beautiful picture that you are destroying ! ”

Warner did not reply, but going to the hearth, piled together, with nice and scrupulous care, several pieces of paper, and stick, and matches, into a sort of pyre ; then, placing the shreds of the picture upon it, he applied the light, and the whole was instantly in a blaze.

“ Look, look ! ” cried he, in a hysterical tone, “ how it

burns and crackles and blazes! What master ever equalled it now? — no fault now in those colours, — no false tints in that light and shade! See how that flame darts up and soars! — that flame is my spirit! Look — is it not restless? — does it not aspire bravely? — why, all its brother flames are grovelers to it! — and now, — why don't you look! — it falters — fades — droops — and — ha — ha — ha! poor idler, the fuel is consumed — and — it is darkness.”

As Warner uttered these words his eyes reeled; the room swam before him; the excitement of his feeble frame had reached its highest pitch; the disease of many weeks had attained its crisis; and, tottering back a few paces, he fell upon the floor, the victim of a delirious and raging fever.

But it was not thus that the young artist was to die. He was reserved for a death that, like his real nature, had in it more of gentleness and poetry. He recovered by slow degrees, and his mind, almost in spite of himself, returned to that profession from which it was impossible to divert the thoughts and musings of many years. Not that he resumed the pencil and the easel: on the contrary, he could not endure them in his sight; they appeared, to a mind festered and sore, like a memorial and monument of shame. But he nursed within him a strong and ardent desire to become a pilgrim to that beautiful land of which he had so often dreamed, and which the innocent destroyer of his peace had pointed out as the theatre of inspiration and the nursery of future fame.

The physicians who, at Talbot's instigation, attended him, looked at his hectic cheek and consumptive frame, and readily flattered his desire; and Talbot, no less interested in Warner's behalf on his own account than bound by his promise to Clarence, generously extended to the artist that bounty which is the most precious prerogative of the rich. Notwithstanding her extreme age, his grandmother insisted upon attending him: there is in the heart of woman so deep a well of love that no age can freeze it. They made the voyage: they reached the shore of the myrtle and the vine, and entered the Imperial City. The air of Rome seemed at first to operate favourably upon the health of the English artist. His

strength appeared to increase, his spirit to expand; and though he had relapsed into more than his original silence and reserve, he resumed, with apparent energy, the labours of the easel: so that they who looked no deeper than the surface might have imagined the scar healed, and the real foundation of future excellence begun.

But while Warner most humbled himself before the gods of the pictured world; while the true principles of the mighty art opened in their fullest glory on his soul; precisely at this very moment shame and despondency were most bitter at his heart: and while the enthusiasm of the painter kindled, the ambition of the man despaired. But still he went on, transfusing into his canvas the grandeur and simplicity of the Italian school; still, though he felt palpably within him the creeping advance of the deadliest and surest enemy to fame, he pursued, with an unwearied ardour, the mechanical completion of his task; still, the morning found him bending before the easel, and the night brought to his solitary couch meditation rather than sleep. The fire, the irritability which he had evinced before his illness had vanished, and the original sweetness of his temper had returned; he uttered no complaint, he dwelt upon no anticipation of success; hope and regret seemed equally dead within him; and it was only when he caught the fond, glad eyes of his aged attendant that his own filled with tears, or that the serenity of his brow darkened into sadness.

This went on for some months; till one evening they found the painter by his window, seated opposite to an unfinished picture. The pencil was still in his hand; the quiet of settled thought was still upon his countenance; the soft breeze of a southern twilight waved the hair livingly from his forehead; the earliest star of a southern sky lent to his cheek something of that subdued lustre which, when touched by enthusiasm, it had been accustomed to wear; but these were only the mockeries of life: life itself was no more! He had died, reconciled, perhaps, to the loss of fame, in discovering that Art is to be loved for itself, and not for the rewards it may bestow upon the artist.

There are two tombs close to each other in the strangers' burial-place at Rome: they cover those for whom life, unequally long, terminated in the same month. The one is of a woman, bowed with the burden of many years: the other darkens over the dust of the young artist.

CHAPTER XXV.

THINK upon my grief,
And on the justice of my flying hence,
To keep me from a most unholy match. — SHAKESPEARE.

“**BUT** are you quite sure,” said General St. Leger, “are you quite sure that this girl still permits Mordaunt’s addresses?”

“Sure!” cried Miss Diana St. Leger, “sure, General! I saw it with my own eyes. They were standing together in the copse, when I, who had long had my suspicions, crept up, and saw them; and Mr. Mordaunt held her hand, and kissed it every moment. Shocking and indecorous!”

“I hate that man! as proud as Lucifer,” growled the General. “Shall we lock her up, or starve her?”

“No, General, something better than that.”

“What, my love? flog her?”

“She’s too old for that, brother; we’ll marry her.”

“Marry her!”

“Yes, to Mr. Glumford; you know that he has asked her several times.”

“But she cannot bear him.”

“We’ll make her bear him, General St. Leger.”

“But if she marries, I shall have nobody to nurse me when I have the gout.”

“Yes, brother: I know of a nice little girl, Martha Richardson, your second cousin’s youngest daughter; you know he has fourteen children, and you may have them all, one after another, if you like.”

“Very true, Diana; let the jade marry Mr. Glumford.”

“She shall,” said the sister; “and I’ll go about it this very moment: meantime I’ll take care that she does not see her lover any more.”

About three weeks after this conversation, Mordaunt, who had in vain endeavoured to see Isabel, who had not even heard from her, whose letters had been returned to him unopened, and who, consequently, was in despair, received the following note:—

This is the first time I have been able to write to you, at least to get my letter conveyed: it is a strange messenger that I have employed, but I happened formerly to make his acquaintance; and accidentally seeing him to-day, the extremity of the case induced me to give him a commission which I could trust to no one else. Algernon, are not the above sentences written with admirable calmness? are they not very explanatory, very consistent, very cool? and yet do you know that I firmly believe I am going mad? My brain turns round and round, and my hand burns so that I almost think that, like our old nurse’s stories of the fiend, it will scorch the paper as I write. And I see strange faces in my sleep and in my waking, all mocking at me, and they torture and haunt me: and when I look at those faces I see no human relenting, no! though I weep and throw myself on my knees and implore them to save me. Algernon, my only hope is in you. You know that I have always hitherto refused to ruin you; and even now, though I implore you to deliver me, I will not be so selfish as— as— I know not what I write, but if I cannot be your wife— I will not be his! No! if they drag me to church, it shall be to my grave, not my bridal.

ISABEL ST. LEGER.

When Mordaunt had read this letter, which, in spite of its incoherence, his fears readily explained, he rose hastily; his eyes rested upon a sober-looking man, clad in brown. The proud love no spectators to their emotions.

“Who are you, sir?” said Algernon, quickly.

“Morris Brown,” replied the stranger, coolly and civilly. “Brought that letter to you, sir; shall be very happy to serve you with anything else; just fitted out a young gentleman as ambassador, a nephew to Mrs. Minden,—very old friend of mine. Beautiful slabs you have here, sir, but they want a few knick-knacks; shall be most happy to supply you; got a lovely

little ape, sir, stuffed by the late Lady Waddilove; it would look charming with this old-fashioned carving; give the room quite the air of a museum."

"And so," said Mordaunt, for whose ear the eloquence of Mr. Brown contained only one sentence, "and so you brought this note, and will take back my answer?"

"Yes, sir; anything to keep up family connections; I knew a Lady Morden very well,—very well indeed, sir,—a relation of yours, I presume, by the similarity of the name; made her very valuable presents; shall be most happy to do the same to you, when you are married, sir. You will refurnish the house, I suppose? Let me see; fine proportions to this room, sir; about thirty-six feet by twenty-eight; I'll do the thing twenty per cent cheaper than the trade; and touching the lovely little —"

"Here," interrupted Mordaunt, "you will take back this note, and be sure that Miss Isabel St. Leger has it as soon as possible; oblige me by accepting this trifle,—a trifle indeed compared with my gratitude, if this note reaches its destination safely."

"I am sure," said Mr. Brown, looking with surprise at the gift, which he held with no unwilling hand, "I am sure, sir, that you are very generous, and strongly remind me of your relation, Lady Morden; and if you would like the lovely little ape as a present—I mean *really* a present—you shall have it, Mr. Mordaunt."

But Mr. Mordaunt had left the room, and the sober Morris, looking round, and cooling in his generosity, said to himself, "It is well he did not hear me, however; but I hope he will marry the nice young lady, for I love doing a kindness. This house must be refurnished; no lady will like these old-fashioned chairs."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SQUIRE and fool are the same thing here. — FARQUHAR.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And, with an unthrift love, did run from Venice. — SHAKSPEARE.

THE persecutions which Isabel had undergone had indeed preyed upon her reason as well as her health; and, in her brief intervals of respite from the rage of the uncle, the insults of the aunt, and, worse than all, the addresses of the intended bridegroom, her mind, shocked and unhinged, reverted with such intensity to the sufferings she endured as to give her musings the character of insanity. It was in one of these moments that she had written to Mordaunt; and had the contest continued much longer the reason of the unfortunate and persecuted girl would have totally deserted her.

She was a person of acute, and even poignant, sensibilities, and these the imperfect nature of her education had but little served to guide or to correct; but as her habits were pure and good, the impulses which spring from habit were also sinless and exalted, and, if they erred, "they leaned on virtue's side," and partook rather of a romantic and excessive generosity than of the weakness of *womanhood* or the selfishness of passion. All the misery and debasement of her equivocal and dependent situation had not been able to drive her into compliance with Mordaunt's passionate and urgent prayers; and her heart was proof even to the eloquence of love, when that eloquence pointed towards the worldly injury and depreciation of her lover: but this new persecution was utterly unforeseen in its nature and intolerable from its cause. To marry another; to be torn forever from one in whom her whole heart was wrapped; to be forced not only to forego his love, but to feel that the very thought of him was a crime, — all this, backed by the vehement and galling insults of her relations, and the

sullen and unmoved meanness of her intended bridegroom, who answered her candour and confession with a stubborn indifference and renewed overtures, made a load of evil which could neither be borne with resignation nor contemplated with patience.

She was sitting, after she had sent her letter, with her two relations, for they seldom trusted her out of their sight, when Mr. Glumford was announced. Now, Mr. George Glumford was a country gentleman of what might be termed a third-rate family in the county: he possessed about twelve hundred a year, to say nothing of the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, which, however, did not meet with such contempt in his memory or estimation; was of a race which could date as far back as Charles the Second; had been educated at a country school with sixty others, chiefly inferior to himself in rank; and had received the last finish at a very small hall at Oxford. In addition to these advantages, he had been indebted to nature for a person five feet eight inches high, and stout in proportion; for hair very short, very straight, and of a red hue, which even through powder cast out a yellow glow; for an obstinate dogged sort of nose, beginning in snub, and ending in bottle; for cold, small, gray eyes, a very small mouth, pinched up and avaricious; and very large, very freckled, yet rather white hands, the nails of which were punctiliously cut into a point every other day, with a pair of scissors which Mr. Glumford often boasted had been in his possession since his eighth year; namely, for about thirty-two legitimate revolutions of the sun.

He was one of those persons who are equally close and adventurous; who love the *éclat* of a little speculation, but take exceeding good care that it should be, in their own graceful phrase, "on the safe side of the hedge." In pursuance of this characteristic of mind, he had resolved to fall in love with Miss Isabel St. Leger; for she being very dependent, he could boast to her of his disinterestedness, and hope that she would be economical through a principle of gratitude; and being the nearest relation to the opulent General St. Leger and his unmarried sister there seemed to be every rational

probability of her inheriting the bulk of their fortunes. Upon these hints of prudence spake Mr. George Glumford.

Now, when Isabel, partly in her ingenuous frankness, partly from the passionate promptings of her despair, revealed to him her attachment to another, and her resolution never, with her own consent, to become his, it seemed to the slow but not uncalculating mind of Mr. Glumford not by any means desirable that he should forego his present intentions, but by all means desirable that he should make this reluctance of Isabel an excuse for sounding the intentions and increasing the posthumous liberality of the East Indian and his sister.

"The girl is of my nearest blood," said the Major-General, "and if I don't leave my fortune to her, who the devil should I leave it to, sir?" and so saying, the speaker, who was in a fell paroxysm of the gout, looked so fiercely at the hinting wooer that Mr. George Glumford, who was no Achilles, was somewhat frightened, and thought it expedient to hint no more.

"My brother," said Miss Diana, "is so odd; but he is the most generous of men: besides, the girl has claims upon him."

Upon these speeches Mr. Glumford thought himself secure; and inly resolving to punish the fool for her sulkiness and bad taste as soon as he lawfully could, he continued his daily visits and told his sporting acquaintance that his time was coming.

Revenons à nos moutons. Forgive this preliminary detail, and let us return to Mr. Glumford himself, whom we left at the door, pulling and fumbling at the glove which covered his right hand, in order to present the naked palm to Miss Diana St. Leger. After this act was performed, he approached Isabel, and drawing his chair near to her, proceeded to converse with her as the Ogre did with Puss in Boots; namely, "as civilly as an Ogre could do."

This penance had not proceeded far, before the door was again opened, and Mr. Morris Brown presented himself to the conclave.

"Your servant, General; your servant, Madam. I took the liberty of coming back again, Madam, because I forgot

to show you some very fine silks, the most extraordinary bargain in the world, — quite presents; and I have a Sèvres bowl here, a superb article, from the cabinet of the late Lady Waddilove.”

Now Mr. Brown was a very old acquaintance of Miss Diana St. Leger, for there is a certain class of old maids with whom our fair readers are no doubt acquainted, who join to a great love of expense a great love of bargains, and who never purchase at the regular place if they can find any *irregular* vendor. They are great friends of Jews and itinerants, hand-in-glove with smugglers, Ladies Bountiful to pedlers, are diligent readers of puffs and advertisements, and eternal haunters of sales and auctions. Of this class was Miss Diana a most prominent individual: judge, then, how acceptable to her was the acquaintance of Mr. Brown. That indefatigable merchant of miscellanies had, indeed, at a time when brokers were perhaps rather more rare and respectable than now, a numerous country acquaintance, and thrice a year he performed a sort of circuit to all his customers and connections; hence his visit to St. Leger House, and hence Isabel's opportunity of conveying her epistle.

“Pray,” said Mr. Glumford, who had heard much of Mr. Brown's “presents” from Miss Diana, — “pray don't you furnish rooms, and *things of that sort?*”

“Certainly, sir, certainly, in the best manner possible.”

“Oh, very well; I shall want some rooms furnished soon, — a bedroom and a dressing-room, and things of that sort, you know. And so — perhaps you may have something in your box that will suit me, gloves or handkerchiefs or shirts or things of that sort.”

“Yes, sir, everything, I sell everything,” said Mr. Brown, opening his box. “I beg pardon, Miss Isabel, I have dropped my handkerchief by your chair; allow me to stoop,” and Mr. Brown, stooping under the table, managed to effect his purpose; unseen by the rest, a note was slipped into Isabel's hand, and under pretence of stooping too, she managed to secure the treasure. Love need well be honest if, even when it is most true, it leads us into so much that is false!

Mr. Brown's box was now unfolded before the eyes of the crafty Mr. Glumford, who, having selected three pair of gloves, offered the exact half of the sum demanded.

Mr. Brown lifted up his hands and eyes.

"You see," said the imperturbable Glumford, "that if you let me have them for that, and they last me well, and don't come unsewn, and stand cleaning, you'll have my custom in furnishing the house, and rooms, and — things of that sort."

Struck with the grandeur of this opening, Mr. Brown yielded, and the gloves were bought.

"The fool!" thought the noble George, laughing in his sleeve, "as if I should ever furnish the house from his box!"

Strange that some men should be proud of being mean!

The moment Isabel escaped to dress for dinner, she opened her lover's note. It was as follows:—

Be in *the* room, your retreat, at nine this evening. Let the window be left unclosed. Precisely at that hour I will be with you. I shall have everything in readiness for your flight. Be sure, dearest Isabel, that nothing prevents your meeting me there, even if all your house follow or attend you. I will bear you from all. Oh, Isabel! in spite of the mystery and wretchedness of your letter, I feel too happy, too blest at the thought that our fates will be at length united, and that the union is at hand. Remember nine.

A. M.

Love is a feeling which has so little to do with the world, a passion so little regulated by the known laws of our more steady and settled emotions, that the thoughts which it produces are always more or less connected with exaggeration and romance. To the secret spirit of enterprise which, however chilled by his pursuits and habits, still burned within Mordaunt's breast, there was a wild pleasure in the thought of bearing off his mistress and his bride from the very home and hold of her false friends and real foes; while in the contradictions of the same passion, Isabel, so far from exulting at her approaching escape, trembled at her danger and blushed for her temerity; and the fear and the modesty of woman almost triumphed over her brief energy and fluctuating resolve.

CHAPTER XXVII.

With haste, — the chosen and the lovely bringing;
 Love still goes with her from her place of birth;
 Deep, silent joy, within her soul is springing,
 Though in her glance the light no more is mirth. — MRS. HEMANS.

“DAMN it!” said the General.

“The vile creature!” cried Miss Diana.

“I don’t understand things of that sort,” ejaculated the bewildered Mr. Glumford.

“She has certainly gone,” said the valiant General.

“Certainly!” grunted Miss Diana.

“Gone!” echoed the bridegroom *not* to be.

And she was gone! Never did more loving and tender heart forsake all, and cling to a more loyal and generous nature. The skies were darkened with clouds, —

“And the dim stars rushed through them rare and fast;”

and the winds wailed with a loud and ominous voice; and the moon came forth, with a faint and sickly smile, from her chamber in the mist, and then shrank back, and was seen no more; but neither omen nor fear was upon Mordaunt’s breast, as it swelled beneath the dark locks of Isabel, which were pressed against it.

As Faith clings the more to the cross of life, while the wastes deepen around her steps, and the adders creep forth upon her path, so love clasps that which is its hope and comfort the closer, for the desert which encompasses and the dangers which harass its way.

They had fled to London, and Isabel had been placed with a very distant and very poor, though very high-born, relative of Algernon, till the necessary preliminaries could be passed and the final bond knit. Yet still the generous Isabel would have refused, despite the injury to her own fame, to have ratified a

union which filled her with gloomy presentiments for Mordaunt's fate; and still Mordaunt by little and little broke down her tender scruples and self-immolating resolves, and ceased not his eloquence and his suit till the day of his nuptials was set and come.

The morning was bright and clear; the autumn was drawing towards its close, and seemed willing to leave its last remembrance tinged with the warmth and softness of its parent summer, rather than with the stern gloom and severity of its chilling successor.

And they stood beside the altar, and their vows were exchanged. A slight tremor came over Algernon's frame, a slight shade darkened his countenance; for even in that bridal hour an icy and thrilling foreboding curdled to his heart; it passed, — the ceremony was over, and Mordaunt bore his blushing and weeping bride from the church. His carriage was in attendance; for, not knowing how long the home of his ancestors might be his, he was impatient to return to it. The old Countess d'Arcy, Mordaunt's relation, with whom Isabel had been staying, called them back to bless them; for, even through the coldness of old age, she was touched by the singularity of their love and affected by their nobleness of heart. She laid her wan and shrivelled hand upon each, as she bade them farewell, and each shrank back involuntarily, for the cold and light touch seemed like the fingers of the dead.

Fearful, indeed, is the vicinity of death and life, — the bridal chamber and the charnel. That night the old woman died. It appeared as if Fate had set its seal upon the union it had so long forbidden, and had woven a dark thread even in the marriage-bond. At least, it tore from two hearts, over which the cloud and the blast lay couched in a "grim repose," the last shelter, which, however frail and distant, seemed left to them upon the inhospitable earth.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIVE while ye may, yet happy pair; enjoy
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed. — MILTON.

THE autumn and the winter passed away; Mordaunt's relation continued implacable. Algernon grieved for this, independent of worldly circumstances; for, though he had seldom seen that relation, yet he loved him for former kindness — rather promised, to be sure, than yet shown — with the natural warmth of an affection which has but few objects. However, the old gentleman (a very short, very fat person: very short and very fat people, when they *are* surly, are the devil and all; for the humours of their mind, like those of their body, have something corrupt and unpurgeable in them) wrote him one bluff, contemptuous letter, in a witty strain, — for he was a bit of a humourist, — disowned his connection, and very shortly afterwards died, and left all his fortune to the very Mr. Vavasour who was at law with Mordaunt, and for whom he had always openly expressed the strongest personal dislike: spite to one relation is a marvellous tie to another. Meanwhile the lawsuit went on less slowly than lawsuits usually do, and the final decision was very speedily to be given.

We said the autumn and the winter were gone; and it was in one of those latter days in March, when, like a hoyden girl subsiding into dawning womanhood, the rude weather mellows into a softer and tenderer month, that, by the side of a stream, overshadowed by many a brake and tree, sat two persons.

“I know not, dearest Algernon,” said one, who was a female, “if this is not almost the sweetest month in the year, because it is the month of *Hope*.”

“Ay, Isabel; and they did it wrong who called it harsh, and dedicated it to Mars. I exult even in the fresh winds which hardier frames than mine shrink from, and I love feeling their wild breath fan my cheek as I ride against it. I remember,”

continued Algernon, musingly, "that on this very day three years ago, I was travelling through Germany, alone and on horseback, and I paused, not far from Ens, on the banks of the Danube; the waters of the river were disturbed and fierce, and the winds came loud and angry against my face, dashing the spray of the waves upon me, and filling my spirit with a buoyant and glad delight; and at that time I had been indulging old dreams of poetry, and had laid my philosophy aside; and, in the inspiration of the moment, I lifted up my hand towards the quarter whence the winds came, and questioned them audibly of their birthplace and their bourne; and, as the enthusiasm increased, I compared them to our human life, which a moment is, and then is *not*; and, proceeding from folly to folly, I asked them, as if they were the interpreters of heaven, for a type and sign of my future lot."

"And what said they?" inquired Isabel, smiling, yet smiling timidly.

"They answered not," replied Mordaunt; "but a voice within me seemed to say, 'Look above!' and I raised my eyes, — but I did not see *thee*, love, — so the Book of Fate lied."

"Nay, Algernon, what *did* you see?" asked Isabel, more earnestly than the question deserved.

"I saw a thin cloud, alone amidst many dense and dark ones scattered around; and as I gazed it seemed to take the likeness of a funeral procession — coffin, bearers, priests, all — as clear in the cloud as I have seen them on the earth: and I shuddered as I saw; but the winds blew the vapour onwards, and it mingled with the broader masses of cloud; and then, Isabel, the sun shone forth for a moment, and I mistook, love, when I said you were not there, for *that* sun was you; but suddenly the winds ceased, and the rain came on fast and heavy: so my romance cooled, and my fever slacked; I thought on the inn at Ens, and the blessings of a wood fire, which is lighted in a moment, and I spurred on my horse accordingly."

"It is very strange," said Isabel.

"What, love?" whispered Algernon, kissing her cheek.

"Nothing, dearest, nothing."

At that instant, the deer, which lay waving their lordly

antlers to and fro beneath the avenue which sloped upward from the stream to the house, rose hurriedly and in confusion, and stood gazing, with watchful eyes, upon a man advancing towards the pair.

It was one of the servants with a letter. Isabel saw a faint change (which none else could have seen) in Mordaunt's countenance, as he recognized the writing and broke the seal. When he had read the letter, his eyes fell upon the ground, and then, with a slight start, he lifted them up, and gazed long and eagerly around. Wistfully did he drink, as it were, into his heart the beautiful and expanded scene which lay stretched on either side; the noble avenue which his forefathers had planted as a shelter to their sons, and which now in its majestic growth and its waving boughs seemed to say, "Lo! ye are repaid!" and the never silent and silver stream, by which his boyhood had sat for hours, lulled by its music, and inhaling the fragrance of the reed and wild flower that decoyed the bee to its glossy banks; and the deer, to whose melancholy *belling* he had listened so often in the gray twilight with a rapt and dreaming ear; and the green fern waving on the gentle hill, from whose shade his young feet had startled the hare and the infant fawn; and far and faintly gleaming through the thick trees, which clasped it as with a girdle, the old Hall, so associated with vague hopes and musing dreams, and the dim legends of gone time, and the lofty prejudices of ancestral pride, — all seemed to sink within him, as he gazed, like the last looks of departing friends; and when Isabel, who had not dared to break a silence which partook so strongly of gloom, at length laid her hand upon his arm, and lifted her dark, deep, tender eyes to his, he said, as he drew her towards him, and a faint and sickly smile played upon his lips, —

"It is past, Isabel: henceforth we have no wealth but in each other. The cause has been decided — and — and — we are beggars!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

WE expose our life to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which would make a wise man tremble to think of. — COWLEY.

WE must suppose a lapse of four years from the date of those events which concluded the last chapter; and, to recompense the reader, who I know has a little *penchant* for "High Life," even in the last century, for having hitherto shown him human beings in a state of society not wholly artificial, I beg him to picture to himself a large room, brilliantly illuminated, and crowded "with the magnates of the land." Here, some in saltatory motion, some in sedentary rest, are dispersed various groups of young ladies and attendant swains, talking upon the subject of Lord Rochester's celebrated poem, — namely, "Nothing!" — and lounging around the doors, meditating probably upon the same subject, stand those unhappy victims of dancing daughters, denominated "Papas."

The music has ceased; the dancers have broken up; and there is a general but gentle sweep towards the refreshment-room. In the crowd — having just entered — there glided a young man of an air more distinguished and somewhat more joyous than the rest.

"How do you do, Mr. Linden?" said a tall and (though somewhat *passé*) very handsome woman, blazing with diamonds; "are you just come?"

And, here, by the way, I cannot resist pausing to observe that a friend of mine, meditating a novel, submitted a part of the manuscript to a friendly publisher. "Sir," said the bookseller, "your book is very clever, but it wants dialogue."

"Dialogue!" cried my friend: "you mistake; it is all dialogue."

"Ay, sir, but not what *we* call dialogue; we want a little conversation in fashionable life, — a little elegant chit-chat or so: and, as you must have seen so much of the *beau monde*,

you could do it to the life: we must have something light and witty and entertaining."

"Light, witty, and entertaining!" said our poor friend; "and how the deuce, then, is it to be like conversation in 'fashionable life'? When the very best conversation one can get is so insufferably dull, how do you think people will be amused by reading a copy of the very worst?"

"They *are* amused, sir," said the publisher; "and works of this kind *sell*!"

"I am convinced," said my friend; for he was a man of a placid temper: he took the hint, and his book did sell!

Now this anecdote rushed into my mind after the penning of the little address of the lady in diamonds,—"How do you do, Mr. Linden? Are you just come?"—and it received an additional weight from my utter inability to put into the mouth of Mr. Linden—notwithstanding my desire of representing him in the most brilliant colours—any more happy and eloquent answer than, "Only this instant!"

However, as this is in the true spirit of elegant dialogue, I trust my readers find it as light, witty, and entertaining as, according to the said publisher, the said dialogue is always found by the public.

While Clarence was engaged in talking with this lady, a very pretty, lively, animated girl, with laughing blue eyes, which, joined to the dazzling fairness of her complexion, gave a Hebe-like youth to her features and expression, was led up to the said lady by a tall young man, and consigned, with the ceremonious bow of the *vieille cour*, to her protection.

"Ah, Mr. Linden," cried the young lady, "I am very glad to see you,—such a beautiful ball!—Everybody here that I most like. Have you had any refreshments, Mamma? But I need not ask, for I am sure you have not; do come, Mr. Linden will be our cavalier."

"Well, Flora, as you please," said the elderly lady, with a proud and fond look at her beautiful daughter; and they proceeded to the refreshment-room.

No sooner were they seated at one of the tables, than they were accosted by Lord St. George, a nobleman whom Clar-

ence, before he left England, had met more than once at Mr. Talbot's.

"London," said his lordship to her of the diamonds, "has not seemed like the same place since Lady Westborough arrived; your presence brings out all the other luminaries: and therefore a young acquaintance of mine — God bless me, there he is, seated by Lady Flora — very justly called you the 'evening star.'"

"Was that Mr. Linden's pretty saying?" said Lady Westborough, smiling.

"It was," answered Lord St. George; "and, by the by, he is a very sensible, pleasant person, and greatly improved since he left England last."

"What!" said Lady Westborough, in a low tone (for Clarence, though in earnest conversation with Lady Flora, was within hearing), and making room for Lord St. George beside her, "what! did *you* know him before he went to —? You can probably tell me, then, who — that is to say — what family he is exactly of — the Lindens of Devonshire, or — or —"

"Why, really," said Lord St. George, a little confused, for no man likes to be acquainted with persons whose pedigree he cannot explain, "I don't know what may be his family: I met him at Talbot's four or five years ago; he was then a mere boy, but he struck me as being very clever, and Talbot since told me that he was a nephew of his own."

"Talbot," said Lady Westborough, musingly, "what Talbot?"

"Oh! *the* Talbot — the *ci-devant jeune homme!*"

"What, that charming, clever, animated old gentleman, who used to dress so oddly, and had been so celebrated a *beau garçon* in his day?"

"Exactly so," said Lord St. George, taking snuff, and delighted to find he had set his young acquaintance on so honourable a footing.

"I did not know he was still alive," said Lady Westborough, and then, turning her eyes towards Clarence and her daughter, she added carelessly, "Mr. Talbot is very rich, is he not?"

“Rich as Cræsus,” replied Lord St. George, with a sigh.

“And Mr. Linden is his heir, I suppose?”

“In all probability,” answered Lord St. George; “though I believe I can boast a distant relationship to Talbot. However, I could not make him fully understand it the other day, though I took particular pains to explain it.”

While this conversation was going on between the Marchioness of Westborough and Lord St. George, a dialogue equally interesting to the parties concerned, and I hope, equally light, witty, and entertaining to readers in general, was sustained between Clarence and Lady Flora.

“How long shall you stay in England?” asked the latter, looking down.

“I have not yet been able to decide,” replied Clarence, “for it rests with the ministers, not me. Directly Lord Aspeden obtains another appointment, I am promised the office of Secretary of Legation; but till then, I am—

“‘A captive in Augusta’s towers
To beauty and her train.’”

“Oh!” cried Lady Flora, laughing, “you mean Mrs. Desborough and her train: see where they sweep! Pray go and render her homage.”

“It *is* rendered,” said Linden, in a low voice, “without so long a pilgrimage, but perhaps despised.”

Lady Flora’s laugh was hushed; the deepest blushes suffused her cheeks, and the whole character of that face, before so playful and joyous, seemed changed, as by a spell, into a grave, subdued, and even timid look.

Linden resumed, and his voice scarcely rose above a *whisper*. A whisper! O delicate and fairy sound! music that speaketh to the heart, as if loth to break the spell that binds it while it listens! Sigh breathed into words, and freighting love in tones languid, like homeward bees, by the very sweets with which they are charged! “Do you remember,” said he, “that evening at — when we last parted? and the boldness which at that time you were gentle enough to forgive?”

Lady Flora replied not.



LINDEN AND LADY FLORA AT THE BALL.

“And do you remember,” continued Clarence, “that I told you that it was not as an unknown and obscure adventurer that I would *claim* the hand of her whose heart *as* an adventurer I had won?”

Lady Flora raised her eyes for one moment, and encountering the ardent gaze of Clarence, as instantly dropped them.

“The time is not *yet* come,” said Linden, “for the fulfilment of this promise; but may I — dare I hope, that when it does, I shall not be —”

“Flora, my love,” said Lady Westborough, “let me introduce to you Lord Borodaile.”

Lady Flora turned: the spell was broken; and the lovers were instantly transformed into ordinary mortals. But, as Flora, after returning Lord Borodaile’s address, glanced her eye towards Clarence, she was struck with the sudden and singular change of his countenance; the flush of youth and passion was fled, his complexion was deadly pale, and his eyes were fixed with a searching and unaccountable meaning upon the face of the young nobleman, who was alternately addressing, with a quiet and somewhat haughty fluency, the beautiful mother, and the more lovely though less commanding daughter. Directly Linden perceived that he was observed, he rose, turned away, and was soon lost among the crowd.

Lord Borodaile, the son and heir of the powerful Earl of Ulswater, was about the age of thirty, small, slight, and rather handsome than otherwise, though his complexion was dark and sallow; and a very aquiline nose gave a stern and somewhat severe air to his countenance. He had been for several years abroad, in various parts of the Continent, and (no other field for an adventurous and fierce spirit presenting itself) had served with the gallant Earl of Effingham, in the war between the Turks and Russians, as a volunteer in the armies of the latter. In this service he had been highly distinguished for courage and conduct; and, on his return to England about a twelve-month since, had obtained the command of a cavalry regiment. Passionately fond of his profession, he entered into its minutest duties with a zeal not exceeded by the youngest and poorest subaltern in the army

His manners were very cold, haughty, collected, and self-possessed, and his conversation that of a man who has cultivated his intellect rather in the world than the closet. I mean, that, perfectly ignorant of things, he was driven to converse solely upon persons, and, having imbibed no other philosophy than that which worldly deceits and disappointments bestow, his remarks, though shrewd, were bitterly sarcastic, and partook of all the ill-nature for which a very scanty knowledge of the world gives a sour and malevolent mind so ready an excuse.

“How very disagreeable Lord Borodalle is!” said Lady Flora, when the object of the remark turned away and rejoined some idlers of his corps.

“Disagreeable!” said Lady Westborough. “I think him charming: he is so sensible. How true his remarks on the world are!”

Thus is it always: the young judge harshly of those who undeceive or revolt their enthusiasm; and the more advanced in years, who have not learned by a diviner wisdom to look upon the human follies and errors by which they have suffered with a pitying and lenient eye, consider every maxim of severity on those frailties as the proof of a superior knowledge, and praise that as a profundity of thought which in reality is but an infirmity of temper.

Clarence is now engaged in a *minuet de la cour* with the beautiful Countess of ——, the best dancer of the day in England. Lady Flora is flirting with half a dozen *beaux*, the more violently in proportion as she observes the animation with which Clarence converses, and the grace with which his partner moves; and, having thus left our two principal personages occupied and engaged, let us turn for a moment to a room which we have not entered.

This is a forlorn, deserted chamber, destined to cards, which are never played in this temple of Terpsichore. At the far end of this room, opposite to the fireplace, are seated four men, engaged in earnest conversation.

The tallest of these was Lord Quintown, a nobleman remarkable at that day for his personal advantages, his good fortune with the *beau sexe*, his attempts at parliamentary eloquence, in

which he was lamentably unsuccessful, and his adherence to Lord North. Next to him sat Mr. St. George, the younger brother of Lord St. George, a gentleman to whom power and place seemed married without hope of divorce; for, whatever had been the changes of ministry for the last twelve years, he, secure in a lucrative though subordinate situation, had "smiled at the whirlwind and defied the storm," and, while all things shifted and vanished round him, like clouds and vapours, had remained fixed and stationary as a star. "Solid St. George," was his appellative by his friends, and his enemies did not grudge him the title. The third was the minister for —; and the fourth was Clarence's friend, Lord Aspeden. Now this nobleman, blessed with a benevolent, smooth, calm countenance, valued himself especially upon his diplomatic elegance in turning a compliment.

Having a great taste for literature as well as diplomacy, this respected and respectable peer also possessed a curious felicity for applying quotation; and nothing rejoiced him so much as when, in the same phrase, he was enabled to set the two jewels of his courtliness of flattery and his profundity of erudition. Unhappily enough, his compliments were seldom as well taken as they were meant; and, whether from the ingratitude of the persons complimented or the ill fortune of the noble adulator, seemed sometimes to produce indignation in place of delight. It has been said that his civilities had cost Lord Aspeden four duels and one beating; but these reports were probably the malicious invention of those who had never tasted the delicacies of his flattery.

Now these four persons being all members of the Privy Council, and being thus engaged in close and earnest conference were, you will suppose, employed in discussing their gravities and secrets of state: no such thing; that whisper from Lord Quintown, the handsome nobleman, to Mr. St. George, is no hoarded and valuable information which would rejoice the heart of the editor of an Opposition paper, no direful murmur, "perplexing monarchs with the dread of change;" it is only a recent piece of scandal, touching the virtue of a lady of the court, which (albeit the sage listener seems to pay so devout an atten-

tion to the news) is far more interesting to the gallant and handsome informant than to his brother statesman; and that emphatic and vehement tone with which Lord Aspeden is assuring the minister for — of some fact, is merely an angry denunciation of the chicanery practised at the last Newmarket.

“By the by, Aspeden,” said Lord Quintown, “who is that good-looking fellow always flirting with Lady Flora Ardenne, — an *attaché* of yours, is he not?”

“Oh! Linden, I suppose you mean. A very sensible, clever young fellow, who has a great genius for business and plays the flute admirably. I must have him for my secretary, my dear lord, mind that.”

“With such a recommendation, Lord Aspeden,” said the minister, with a bow, “the state would be a great loser did it not elect your *attaché*, who plays so admirably on the flute, to the office of your secretary. Let us join the dancers.”

“I shall go and talk with Count B——,” quoth Mr. St. George.

“And I shall make my court to his beautiful wife,” said the minister, sauntering into the ballroom, to which his fine person and graceful manners were much better adapted than was his genius to the cabinet or his eloquence to the senate.

The morning had long dawned, and Clarence, for whose mind pleasure was more fatiguing than business, lingered near the door, to catch one last look of Lady Flora before he retired. He saw her leaning on the arm of Lord Borodaile, and hastening to join the dancers with her usual light step and laughing air; for Clarence’s short conference with her had, in spite of his subsequent flirtations, rendered her happier than she had ever felt before. Again a change passed over Clarence’s countenance, — a change which I find it difficult to express without borrowing from those celebrated German dramatists who could portray in such exact colours “a look of mingled joy, sorrow, hope, passion, rapture, and despair;” for the look was not that of jealousy alone, although it certainly partook of its nature, but a little also of interest, and a little of sorrow; and when he turned away, and slowly descended the stairs, his eyes were full of tears, and his thoughts far — far away; — whither?

CHAPTER XXX.

QUÆ fert adolescentia

Ea ne me celet consuefecit filium.¹ — TERENCE.

THE next morning Clarence was lounging over his breakfast, and glancing listlessly now at the pages of the newspapers, now at the various engagements for the week, which lay confusedly upon his table, when he received a note from Talbot, requesting to see him as soon as possible.

“Had it not been for that man,” said Clarence to himself, “what should I have been now? But, at least, I have not disgraced his friendship. I have already ascended the roughest because the lowest steps on the hill where Fortune builds her temple. I have already won for the name I have chosen some ‘golden opinions’ to gild its obscurity. One year more may confirm my destiny and ripen hope into success: then — then, I may perhaps throw off a disguise that, while it befriended, has not degraded me, and avow myself to *her*! Yet how much better to dignify the name I have assumed than to owe respect only to that which I have not been deemed worthy to inherit! Well, well, these are bitter thoughts; let me turn to others. How beautiful Flora looked last night! and, *he* — *he* — but enough of this: I must dress, and then to Talbot.”

Muttering these wayward fancies, Clarence rose, completed his toilet, sent for his horses, and repaired to a village about seven miles from London, where Talbot, having yielded to Clarence’s fears and solicitations, and left his former insecure tenement, now resided under the guard and care of an especial and private watchman.

It was a pretty, quiet villa, surrounded by a plantation and

¹ “The things which youth proposes I accustomed my son that he should never conceal from me.”

pleasure-ground of some extent for a suburban residence, in which the old philosopher (for though in some respects still frail and prejudiced, Talbot deserved that name) held his home. The ancient servant, on whom four years had passed lightly and favouringly, opened the door to Clarence, with his usual smile of greeting and familiar yet respectful salutation, and ushered our hero into a room, furnished with the usual fastidious and rather feminine luxury which characterized Talbot's tastes. Sitting with his back turned to the light, in a large easy-chair, Clarence found the wreck of the once gallant, gay Lothario.

There was not much alteration in his countenance since we last saw him; the lines, it is true, were a little more decided, and the cheeks a little more sunken; but the dark eye beamed with all its wonted vivacity, and the delicate contour of the mouth preserved all its physiognomical characteristics of the inward man. He rose with somewhat more difficulty than he was formerly wont to do, and his limbs had lost much of their symmetrical proportions; yet the kind clasp of his hand was as firm and warm as when it had pressed that of the boyish *attaché* four years since; and the voice which expressed his salutation yet breathed its unconquered suavity and distinctness of modulation. After the customary greetings and inquiries were given and returned, the young man drew his chair near to Talbot's, and said, —

“You sent for me, dear sir; have you anything more important than usual to impart to me? — or — and I hope *this* is the case — have you at last thought of any commission, however trifling, in the execution of which I can be of use?”

“Yes, Clarence, I wish your judgment to select me some strawberries, — you know that I am a great epicure in fruit, — and get me the new work Dr. Johnson has just published. There, are you contented? And now, tell me all about your horse; does he step well? Has he the true English head and shoulder? Are his legs fine, yet strong? Is he full of spirit and devoid of vice?”

“He is all this, sir, thanks to you for **him**.”

“Ah!” cried Talbot, —

“‘Old as I am, for riding feats unfit,
The shape of horses I remember yet.’

And now let us hear how you like Ranelagh; and above all how you liked the ball last night.”

And the vivacious old man listened with the profoundest appearance of interest to all the particulars of Clarence's animated detail. His vanity, which made him wish to be loved, had long since taught him the surest method of becoming so; and with him, every visitor, old, young, the man of books, or the disciple of the world, was sure to find the readiest and even eagerest sympathy in every amusement or occupation. But for Clarence, this interest lay deeper than in the surface of courtly breeding. Gratitude had first bound to him his adopted son, then a tie yet unexplained, and lastly, but not least, the pride of protection. He was vain of the personal and mental attractions of his *protégé*, and eager for the success of one whose honours would reflect credit on himself.

But there was one part of Clarence's account of the last night to which the philosopher paid a still deeper attention, and on which he was more minute in his advice; what this was, I cannot, as yet, reveal to the reader.

The conversation then turned on light and general matters, — the scandal, the literature, the politics, the *on dits* of the day; and lastly upon women; thence Talbot dropped into his office of Mentor.

“A celebrated cardinal said, very wisely, that few ever did anything among men until women were no longer an object to them. That is the reason, by the by, why I never succeeded with the former, and why people seldom acquire any reputation, except for a hat, or a horse, till they marry. Look round at the various occupations of life. How few bachelors are eminent in any of them! So you see, Clarence, you will have my leave to marry Lady Flora as soon as you please.”

Clarence coloured, and rose to depart. Talbot followed him to the door, and then said, in a careless way, “By the by, I had almost forgotten to tell you that, as you have now many new expenses, you will find the yearly sum you have hitherto received doubled. To give you this information is the chief

reason why I sent for you this morning. God bless you, my dear boy."

And Talbot shut the door, despite his politeness, in the face and thanks of his adopted son.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THERE is a great difference between seeking to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at. — LORD SHAFTESBURY.

BEHOLD our hero, now in the zenith of distinguished dissipation! Courteous, attentive, and animated, the women did not esteem him the less for admiring them rather than himself; while, by the gravity of his demeanour to men, — the eloquent, yet unpretending flow of his conversation, whenever topics of intellectual interest were discussed, the plain and solid sense which he threw into his remarks, and the avidity with which he courted the society of all distinguished for literary or political eminence, — he was silently but surely establishing himself in esteem as well as popularity, and laying the certain foundation of future honour and success.

Thus, although he had only been four months returned to England, he was already known and courted in every circle, and universally spoken of as among "the most rising young gentlemen" whom fortune and the administration had marked for their own. His history, during the four years in which we have lost sight of him, is briefly told.

He soon won his way into the good graces of Lord Aspeden; became his private secretary and occasionally his confidant. Universally admired for his attraction of form and manner, and, though aiming at reputation, not averse to pleasure, he had that position which fashion confers at the court of —, when Lady Westborough and her beautiful daughter, then only seventeen, came to —, in the progress of a Continental tour, about a year before his return to England. Clarence and

Lady Flora were naturally brought much together in the restricted circle of a small court, and intimacy soon ripened into attachment.

Lord Aspeden being recalled, Clarence accompanied him to England; and the ex-minister, really liking much one who was so useful to him, had faithfully promised to procure him the office and honour of secretary whenever his lordship should be reappointed minister.

Three intimate acquaintances had Clarence Linden. The one was the Honourable Henry Trollop, the second Mr. Callythorpe, and the third Sir Christopher Findlater. We will sketch them to you in an instant. Mr. Trollop was a short, stout gentleman, with a very thoughtful countenance, — that is to say, he wore spectacles and took snuff.

Mr. Trollop — we delight in pronouncing that soft liquid name — was eminently distinguished by a love of metaphysics, — metaphysics were in a great measure the order of the day; but Fate had endowed Mr. Trollop with a singular and felicitous confusion of idea. Reid, Berkeley, Cudworth, Hobbes, all lay jumbled together in most edifying chaos at the bottom of Mr. Trollop's capacious mind; and whenever he opened his mouth, the imprisoned enemies came rushing and scrambling out, overturning and contradicting each other in a manner quite astounding to the ignorant spectator. Mr. Callythorpe was meagre, thin, sharp, and yellow. Whether from having a great propensity for nailing stray acquaintances, or being particularly heavy company, or from any other cause better known to the wits of the period than to us, he was occasionally termed by his friends the "yellow hammer." The peculiar characteristics of this gentleman were his sincerity and friendship. These qualities led him into saying things the most disagreeable, with the civilest and coolest manner in the world, — always prefacing them with, "You know, my dear so-and-so, *I* am your true friend." If this proof of amity was now and then productive of altercation, Mr. Callythorpe, who was a great patriot, had another and a nobler plea, — "Sir," he would say, putting his hand to his heart, — "sir, I'm an Englishman: I know not what it is to feign." Of a very different stamp was Sir

Christopher Findlater. Little cared he for the subtleties of the human mind, and not much more for the disagreeable duties of "an Englishman." Honest and jovial, red in the cheeks, empty in the head, born to twelve thousand a year, educated in the country, and heir to an earldom, Sir Christopher Findlater piqued himself, notwithstanding his worldly advantages, usually so destructive to the kindlier affections, on having the best heart in the world, and this good heart, having a very bad head to regulate and support it, was the perpetual cause of error to the owner and evil to the public.

One evening, when Clarence was alone in his rooms, Mr. Trollop entered.

"My dear Linden," said the visitor, "how are you?"

"I am, as I hope you are, very well," answered Clarence.

"The human mind," said Trollop, taking off his great-coat, —

"Sir Christopher Findlater and Mr. Callythorpe, sir," said the valet.

"Pshaw! What has Sir Christopher Findlater to do with the human mind?" muttered Mr. Trollop.

Sir Christopher entered with a swagger and a laugh. "Well, old fellow, how do you do? Deuced cold this evening."

"Though it is an evening in May," observed Clarence; "but then, this cursed climate."

"Climate!" interrupted Mr. Callythorpe, "it is the best climate in the world: I am an Englishman, and I never abuse my country.

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

"As to climate," said Trollop, "there is no climate, neither here nor elsewhere: the climate is in your mind, the chair is in your mind, and the table too, though I dare say you are stupid enough to think the two latter are in the room; the human mind, my dear Findlater —"

"Don't *mind* me, Trollop," cried the baronet, "I can't bear your clever heads: give me a good heart; that's worth all the heads in the world; d—n me if it is not! Eh, Linden?"

“Your good heart,” cried Trollop, in a passion (for all your self-called philosophers are a little choleric), “your good heart is all cant and nonsense : there is no heart at all ; we are all mind.”

“I’ll be hanged if I’m all mind,” said the baronet.

“At least,” quoth Linden, gravely, “no one ever accused you of it before.”

“We are all mind,” pursued the reasoner ; “we are all mind, *un moulin à raisonnement*. Our ideas are derived from two sources, sensation or memory. That neither our thoughts nor passions, nor our ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, everybody will allow ;¹ therefore, you see, the human mind is — in short, there is nothing *in* the world but the human mind !”

“Nothing could be better demonstrated,” said Clarence.

“I don’t believe it,” quoth the baronet.

“But you do believe it, and you must believe it,” cried Trollop ; “for ‘the Supreme Being has implanted within us the principle of credulity,’ and therefore you do believe it !”

“But I don’t,” cried Sir Christopher.

“You are mistaken,” replied the metaphysician, calmly ; “because I *must* speak truth.”

“Why must you, pray ?” said the baronet.

“Because,” answered Trollop, taking snuff, “there is a principle of veracity implanted in our nature.”

“I wish I were a metaphysician,” said Clarence, with a sigh.

“I am glad to hear you say so ; for you know, my dear Linden,” said Callythorpe, “that I am your true friend, and I must therefore tell you that you are shamefully ignorant. You are not offended ?”

“Not at all !” said Clarence, trying to smile.

“And you, my dear Findlater” (turning to the baronet), “you know that I wish you well ; you know that I never flatter ; I’m your real friend, so you must not be angry ; but you really are not considered a Solomon.”

“Mr. Callythorpe !” exclaimed the baronet in a rage (the

¹ Berkeley, Sect. iii., “Principles of Human Knowledge.”

best-hearted people can't always bear truth), "what do you mean?"

"You must not be angry, my good sir; you must not, really. I can't help telling you of your faults; for I am a true Briton, sir, a true Briton, and leave lying to slaves and Frenchmen."

"You are in an error," said Trollop; "Frenchmen don't lie, at least not naturally, for in the human mind, as I before said, the Divine Author has implanted a principle of veracity which —"

"My dear sir," interrupted Callythorpe, very affectionately, "you remind me of what people say of *you*."

"Memory may be reduced to sensation, since it is only a weaker sensation," quoth Trollop; "but proceed."

"You know, Trollop," said Callythorpe, in a singularly endearing intonation of voice, "you know that I never flatter; flattery is unbecoming a true friend, — nay, more, it is unbecoming a native of our happy isles, and people do say of you that you know nothing whatsoever, no, not an iota, of all that nonsensical, worthless philosophy of which you are always talking. Lord St. George said the other day 'that you were very conceited.' — 'No, not conceited,' replied Dr. —, 'only ignorant;' so if I were you, Trollop, I would cut metaphysics; you're not offended?"

"By no means," cried Trollop, foaming at the mouth.

"For my part," said the good-hearted Sir Christopher, whose wrath had now subsided, rubbing his hands, — "for my part, I see no good in any of those things: I never read — never — and I don't see how I'm a bit the worse for it. A good man, Linden, in my opinion, only wants to do his duty, and that is very easily done."

"A good man; and what is good?" cried the metaphysician, triumphantly. "Is it implanted within us? Hobbes, according to Reid, who is our last, and consequently best, philosopher, endeavours to demonstrate that there is no difference between right and wrong."

"I have no idea of what you mean," cried Sir Christopher.

"Idea!" exclaimed the pious philosopher. "Sir, give me leave to tell you that no solid proof has ever been advanced of

the existence of ideas: they are a mere fiction and hypothesis. Nay, sir, 'hence arises that scepticism which disgraces our philosophy of the mind.' Ideas!— Findlater, you are a sceptic and an idealist."

"I?" cried the affrighted baronet; "upon my honour I am no such thing. Everybody knows that I am a Christian, and —"

"Ah!" interrupted Callythorpe, with a solemn look, "everybody knows that you are not one of those horrid persons, — those atrocious deists and atheists and sceptics, from whom the Church and freedom of old England have suffered such danger. I am a true Briton of the good old school; and I confess, Mr. Trollop, that I do not like to hear any opinions but the right ones."

"Right ones being only those which Mr. Callythorpe professes," said Clarence.

"Exactly so!" rejoined Mr. Callythorpe.

"The human mind," commenced Mr. Trollop, stirring the fire; when Clarence, who began to be somewhat tired of this conversation, rose. "You will excuse me," said he, "but I am particularly engaged, and it is time to dress. Harrison will get you tea or whatever else you are inclined for."

"The human mind," renewed Trollop, not heeding the interruption; and Clarence forthwith left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

You blame Marcius for being proud. — *Coriolanus*.

Here is another fellow, a marvellous pretty hand at fashioning a compliment. — *The Tanner of Tyburn*

THERE was a brilliant ball at Lady T——'s, a personage who, every one knows, did in the year 17— give the best balls, and have the best-dressed people at them, in London. It was about half-past twelve, when Clarence, released from his three friends, arrived at the countess's. When he entered,

the first thing which struck him was Lord Borodaile in close conversation with Lady Flora.

Clarence paused for a few moments, and then, sauntering towards them, caught Flora's eye, — coloured, and advanced. Now, if there was a haughty man in Europe, it was Lord Borodaile. He was not proud of his birth, nor fortune, but he was proud of himself; and, next to that pride, he was proud of being a gentleman. He had an exceeding horror of all common people; a Claverhouse sort of supreme contempt to "puddle blood;" his lip seemed to wear scorn as a garment; a lofty and stern self-admiration, rather than self-love, sat upon his forehead as on a throne. He had, as it were, an awe of himself; his thoughts were so many mirrors of Viscount Borodaile dressed *en dieu*. His mind was a little Versailles, in which *self* sat like Louis XIV., and saw nothing but pictures of *itself*, sometimes as Jupiter and sometimes as Apollo. What marvel then, that Lord Borodaile was a very unpleasant companion? for every human being he had "something of contempt." His eye was always eloquent in disdain; to the plebeian it said, "You are not a gentleman;" to the prince, "You are not Lord Borodaile."

Yet, with all this, he had his good points. He was brave as a lion; strictly honourable; and though very ignorant, and very self-sufficient, had that sort of dogged good sense which one very often finds in men of stern hearts, who, if they have many prejudices, have little feeling, to overcome.

Very stiffly and very haughtily did Lord Borodaile draw up, when Clarence approached and addressed Lady Flora; much more stiffly and much more haughtily did he return, though with old-fashioned precision of courtesy, Clarence's bow, when Lady Westborough introduced them to each other. Not that this *hauteur* was intended as a particular affront: it was only the agreeability of his lordship's *general* manner.

"Are you engaged?" said Clarence to Flora.

"I am, at present, to Lord Borodaile."

"After him, may I hope?"

Lady Flora nodded assent, and disappeared with Lord Borodaile.

His Royal Highness the Duke of —— came up to Lady Westborough; and Clarence, with a smiling countenance and an absent heart, plunged into the crowd. There he met Lord Aspeden, in conversation with the Earl of Holdenworth, one of the administration.

“Ah, Linden,” said the diplomatist, “let me introduce you to Lord Holdenworth, — a clever young man, my dear lord, and plays the flute beautifully.” With this eulogium, Lord Aspeden glided away; and Lord Holdenworth, after some conversation with Linden, honoured him by an invitation to dinner the next day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“TIS true his nature may with faults abound;
But who will cavil when the *heart* is sound? — STEPHEN MONTAGUE.
Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.¹ — HORACE.

THE next day Sir Christopher Findlater called on Clarence. “Let us lounge in the park,” said he.

“With pleasure,” replied Clarence; and into the park they lounged.

By the way they met a crowd, who were hurrying a man to prison. The good-hearted Sir Christopher stopped: “Who is that poor fellow?” said he.

“It is the celebrated” (in England all criminals are celebrated. Thurtell was a hero, Thistlewood a patriot, and Fauntleroy was discovered to be exactly like Buonaparte!) “it is the celebrated robber, John Jefferies, who broke into Mrs. Wilson’s house, and cut the throats of herself and her husband, wounded the maid-servant, and split the child’s skull with the poker.” Clarence pressed forward: “I have seen that man before,” thought he. He looked again, and recognized the face of the robber who had escaped from Tal

¹ The foolish while avoiding vice run into the opposite extremes.”

bot's house on the eventful night which had made Clarence's fortune. It was a strongly-marked and rather handsome countenance, which would not be easily forgotten; and a single circumstance of excitement will stamp features on the memory as deeply as the commonplace intercourse of years.

"John Jefferies!" exclaimed the baronet; "let us come away."

"Linden," continued Sir Christopher, "that fellow was my servant once. He robbed me to some considerable extent. I caught him. He appealed to my heart; and you know, my dear fellow, that was irresistible, so I let him off. Who could have thought he would have turned out so?" And the baronet proceeded to eulogize his own good-nature, by which it is just necessary to remark that one miscreant had been saved for a few years from transportation, in order to rob and murder *ad libitum*, and, having fulfilled the office of a common pest, to suffer on the gallows at last. What a fine thing it is to have a good heart! Both our gentlemen now sank into a reverie, from which they were awakened, at the entrance of the park, by a young man in rags who, with a piteous tone, supplicated charity. Clarence, who, to his honour be it spoken, spent an allotted and considerable part of his income in judicious and laborious benevolence, had read a little of political morals, then beginning to be understood, and walked on. The good-hearted baronet put his hand in his pocket, and gave the beggar half a guinea, by which a young, strong man, who had only just commenced the trade, was confirmed in his imposition for the rest of his life; and, instead of the useful support, became the pernicious incumbrance of society.

Sir Christopher had now recovered his spirits. "What's like a good action?" said he to Clarence, with a swelling breast.

The park was crowded to excess; our loungers were joined by Lord St. George. His lordship was a stanch Tory. He could not endure Wilkes, liberty, or general education. He launched out against the enlightenment of domestics.¹

¹ The ancestors of our present footmen, if we may believe Sir William Temple, seem to have been to the full as intellectual as their descendants.

“What has made you so bitter?” said Sir Christopher.

“My valet,” cried Lord St. George, — “he has invented a new toasting-fork, is going to take out a patent, make his fortune, *and leave me*; that’s what I call ingratitude, Sir Christopher; for I ordered his wages to be raised five pounds but last year.”

“It *was* very ungrateful,” said the ironical Clarence.

“Very!” reiterated the good-hearted Sir Christopher.

“You cannot recommend me a valet, Findlater,” renewed his lordship, “a good, honest, sensible fellow, who can neither read nor write?”

“N-o-o, — that is to say, yes! I can; my old servant Collard is out of place, and is as ignorant as — as —”

“I — or you are?” said Lord St. George, with a laugh.

“Precisely,” replied the baronet.

“Well, then, I take your recommendation: send him to me to-morrow at twelve.”

“I will,” said Sir Christopher.

“My dear Findlater,” cried Clarence, when Lord St. George was gone, “did you not tell me, some time ago, that Collard was a great rascal, and very intimate with Jefferies? and now you recommend him to Lord St. George!”

“Hush, hush, hush!” said the baronet; “he was a great rogue to be sure: but, poor fellow, he came to me yesterday with tears in his eyes, and said he should starve if I would not give him a character; so what could I do?”

“At least, tell Lord St. George the truth,” observed Clarence.

“But then Lord St. George would not take him!” rejoined the good-hearted Sir Christopher, with forcible *naïveté*. “No, no, Linden, we must not be so hard-hearted; we must forgive and forget;” and so saying, the baronet threw out his chest, with the conscious exultation of a man who has uttered a noble sentiment. The moral of this little history is that Lord St. George, having been pillaged “through thick and thin,” as

“I have had,” observes the philosophic statesman, “several servants far gone in divinity, others in poetry; have known, in the families of some friends, a keeper deep in the Rosicrucian mysteries and a laundress firm in those of Epicurus.”

the proverb has it, for two years, at last missed a gold watch, and Monsieur Collard finished his career as his exemplary tutor, Mr. John Jefferies, had done before him. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have a good heart!

But to return. Just as our wanderers had arrived at the farther end of the park, Lady Westborough and her daughter passed them. Clarence, excusing himself to his friend, hastened towards them, and was soon occupied in saying the prettiest things in the world to the prettiest person, at least in his eyes; while Sir Christopher, having done as much mischief as a good heart well can do in a walk of an hour, returned home to write a long letter to his mother, against "learning and all such nonsense, which only served to blunt the affections and harden the heart."

"Admirable young man!" cried the mother, with tears in her eyes. "A good heart is better than all the heads in the world."

Amen!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"MAKE way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, or you will compel me to do that I may be sorry for!"

"You shall make no way here but at your peril," said Sir Geoffrey; "this is my ground." — *Peveril of the Peak.*

ONE night on returning home from a party at Lady Westborough's in Hanover Square, Clarence observed a man before him walking with an uneven and agitated step. His right hand was clenched, and he frequently raised it as with a sudden impulse, and struck fiercely as if at some imagined enemy.

The stranger slackened his pace. Clarence passed him, and, turning round to satisfy the idle curiosity which the man's eccentric gestures had provoked, his eye met a dark, lowering, iron countenance, which, despite the lapse of four years, he recognized on the moment: it was Wolfe, the republican.

Clarence moved, involuntarily, with a quicker step; but in a few minutes, Wolfe, who was vehemently talking to himself, once more passed him; the direction he took was also Clarence's way homeward, and he therefore followed the republican, though at some slight distance, and on the opposite side of the way. A gentleman on foot, apparently returning from a party, met Wolfe, and, with an air half haughty, half unconscious, took the wall; though, according to old-fashioned rules of street courtesy, he was on the wrong side for asserting the claim. The stern republican started, drew himself up to his full height, and sturdily and doggedly placed himself directly in the way of the unjust claimant. Clarence was now nearly opposite to the two, and saw all that was going on.

With a motion a little rude and very contemptuous, the passenger attempted to put Wolfe aside, and win his path. Little did he know of the unyielding nature he had to do with; the next instant the republican, with a strong hand, forced him from the pavement into the very kennel, and silently and coldly continued his way.

The wrath of the discomfited passenger was vehemently kindled.

"Insolent dog!" cried he, in a loud and arrogant tone, "your baseness is your protection." Wolfe turned rapidly, and made but two strides before he was once more by the side of his defeated opponent.

"What did you say?" he asked, in his low, deep, hoarse voice.

Clarence stopped. "There will be mischief done here," thought he, as he called to mind the stern temper of the republican.

"Merely," said the other, struggling with his rage, "that it is not for men of my rank to avenge the insults offered us by those of yours!"

"Your rank!" said Wolfe, bitterly retorting the contempt of the stranger, in a tone of the loftiest disdain; "your rank! poor changeling! And what are you, that you should lord it over me? Are your limbs stronger? your muscles firmer?"

your proportions juster? your mind acuter? your conscience clearer? Fool! fool! go home and measure yourself with lackeys!"

The republican ceased, and pushing the stranger aside, turned slowly away. But this last insult enraged the passenger beyond all prudence. Before Wolfe had proceeded two paces, he muttered a desperate but brief oath, and struck the reformer with a strength so much beyond what his figure (which was small and slight) appeared to possess, that the powerful and gaunt frame of Wolfe recoiled backward several steps, and, had it not been for the iron railing of the neighbouring area, would have fallen to the ground.

Clarence pressed forward: the face of the rash aggressor was turned towards him; the features were Lord Borodaile's. He had scarcely time to make this discovery, before Wolfe had recovered himself. With a wild and savage cry, rather than exclamation, he threw himself upon his antagonist, twined his sinewy arms round the frame of the struggling but powerless nobleman, raised him in the air with the easy strength of a man lifting a child, held him aloft for one moment with a bitter and scornful laugh of wrathful derision, and then dashed him to the ground, and planting his foot upon Borodaile's breast said, —

"So shall it be with all of you: there shall be but one instant between your last offence and your first but final debasement. Lie there! it is your proper place! By the only law which you yourself acknowledge, the law which gives the right divine to the strongest; if you stir limb or muscle, I will crush the breath from your body."

But Clarence was now by the side of Wolfe, a new and more powerful opponent.

"Look you," said he: "you have received an insult, and you have done justice yourself. I condemn the offence, and quarrel not with you for the punishment; but that punishment is now past: remove your foot, or —"

"What?" shouted Wolfe, fiercely, his lurid and vindictive eye flashing with the released fire of long-pent and cherished passions.

“Or,” answered Clarence, calmly, “I will hinder you from committing murder.”

At that instant the watchman’s voice was heard, and the night’s guardian himself was seen hastening from the far end of the street towards the place of contest. Whether this circumstance, or Clarence’s answer, somewhat changed the current of the republican’s thoughts, or whether his anger, suddenly raised, was now as suddenly subsiding, it is not easy to decide; but he slowly and deliberately moved his foot from the breast of his baffled foe, and bending down seemed endeavouring to ascertain the mischief he had done. Lord Borodaile was perfectly insensible.

“You have killed him!” cried Clarence in a voice of horror, “but you shall not escape;” and he placed a desperate and nervous hand on the republican.

“Stand off,” said Wolfe, “my blood is up! I would not do more violence to-night than I have done. Stand off! the man moves; see!”

And Lord Borodaile, uttering a long sigh, and attempting to rise, Clarence released his hold of the republican, and bent down to assist the fallen nobleman. Meanwhile, Wolfe, muttering to himself, turned from the spot, and strode haughtily away.

The watchman now came up, and, with his aid, Clarence raised Lord Borodaile. Bruised, stunned, half insensible as he was, that personage lost none of his characteristic stateliness; he shook off the watchman’s arm, as if there was contamination in the touch; and his countenance, still menacing and defying in its expression, turned abruptly towards Clarence, as if he yet expected to meet and struggle with a foe.

“How are you, my lord?” said Linden; “not severely hurt, I trust?”

“Well, quite well,” cried Borodaile. “Mr. Linden, I think? — I thank you cordially for your assistance; but the dog, the rascal, where is he?”

“Gone,” said Clarence.

“Gone! Where — where?” cried Borodaile; “that living man should insult me, and yet escape!”

"Which way did the fellow go?" said the watchman, anticipative of half-a-crown. "I will run after him in a trice, your honour: *I warrant I nab him.*"

"No — no —" said Borodaile, haughtily; "I leave my quarrels to no man; if I could not master him myself, no one else shall do it for me. Mr. Linden, excuse me, but I am perfectly recovered, and can walk very well without your polite assistance. Mr. Watchman, I am obliged to you: there is a guinea to reward your trouble."

With these words, intended as a farewell, the proud patrician, smothering his pain, bowed with extreme courtesy to Clarence, again thanked him, and walked on unaided and alone.

"He is a game blood," said the watchman, pocketing the guinea.

"He is worthy his name," thought Clarence; "though he was in the wrong, my heart yearns to him."



CHAPTER XXXV.

THINGS wear a vizard which I think to like not. — *Tanner of Tyburn.*

CLARENCE, from that night, appeared to have formed a sudden attachment to Lord Borodaile. He took every opportunity of cultivating his intimacy, and invariably treated him with a degree of consideration which his knowledge of the world told him was well calculated to gain the good will of his haughty and arrogant acquaintance; but all this was ineffectual in conquering Borodaile's coldness and reserve. To have been once seen in a humiliating and degrading situation is quite sufficient to make a proud man hate the spectator, and, with the confusion of all prejudiced minds, to transfer the sore remembrance of the event to the association of the witness. Lord Borodaile, though always ceremoniously civil, was immovably distant; and avoided as well as he was able

Clarence's insinuating approaches and address. To add to his indisposition to increase his acquaintance with Linden, a friend of his, a captain in the Guards, once asked him who that Mr. Linden was? and, on his lordship's replying that he did not know, Mr. Percy Bobus, the son of a wine-merchant, though the nephew of a duke, rejoined, "Nobody *does* know."

"Insolent intruder!" thought Lord Borodaile: "a man whom nobody knows to make such advances to *me*!"

A still greater cause of dislike to Clarence arose from jealousy. Ever since the first night of his acquaintance with Lady Flora, Lord Borodaile had paid her unceasing attention. In good earnest, he was greatly struck by her beauty, and had for the last year meditated the necessity of presenting the world with a Lady Borodaile. Now, though his lordship did look upon himself in as favourable a light as a man well can do, yet he could not but own that Clarence *was* very handsome, had a devilish gentlemanlike air, talked with a better grace than the generality of young men, and danced to perfection. "I detest that fellow!" said Lord Borodaile, involuntarily and aloud, as these unwilling truths forced themselves upon his mind.

"Whom do you detest?" asked Mr. Percy Bobus, who was lying on the sofa in Lord Borodaile's drawing-room, and admiring a pair of red-heeled shoes which decorated his feet.

"That puppy Linden!" said Lord Borodaile, adjusting his cravat.

"He is a deuced puppy, certainly!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, turning round in order to contemplate more exactly the shape of his right shoe. "I can't bear conceit, Borodaile."

"Nor I: I abhor it; it is so d—d disgusting!" replied Lord Borodaile, leaning his chin upon his two hands, and looking full into the glass. "Do you use MacNeile's divine pomatum?"

"No, it's too hard; I get mine from Paris: shall I send you some?"

"Do," said Lord Borodaile.

"Mr. Linden, my lord," said the servant, throwing open the door; and Clarence entered.

"I am very fortunate," said he, with that smile which so few ever resisted, "to find you at home, Lord Borodaile; but as the day was wet, I thought I should have some chance of that pleasure; I therefore wrapped myself up in my roque-laure, and here I am."

Now, nothing could be more diplomatic than the compliment of choosing a wet day for a visit, and exposing one's self to "the pitiless shower," for the greater probability of finding the person visited at home. Not so thought Lord Borodaile; he drew himself up, bowed very solemnly, and said, with cold gravity, —

"You are very obliging, *Mr. Linden.*"

Clarence coloured, and bit his lip as he seated himself. Mr. Percy Bobus, with true insular breeding, took up the newspaper.

"I think I saw you at Lady C.'s last night," said Clarence; "did you stay there long?"

"No, indeed," answered Borodaile; "I hate her parties."

"One *does* meet such odd people there," observed Mr. Percy Bobus; "creatures one never sees anywhere else."

"I hear," said Clarence, who never abused any one, even the givers of stupid parties, if he could help it, and therefore thought it best to change the conversation, — "I hear, Lord Borodaile, that some hunters of yours are to be sold. I purpose being a bidder for Thunderbolt."

"I have a horse to sell you, Mr. Linden," cried Mr. Percy Bobus, springing from the sofa into civility; "a superb creature."

"Thank you," said Clarence, laughing; "but I can only afford to buy *one*, and I have taken a great fancy to Thunderbolt."

Lord Borodaile, whose manners were very antiquated in their affability, bowed. Mr. Bobus sank back into his sofa, and resumed the paper.

A pause ensued. Clarence was chilled in spite of himself. Lord Borodaile played with a paper-cutter.

“Have you been to Lady Westborough’s lately?” said Clarence, breaking silence.

“I was there last night,” replied Lord Borodaile.

“Indeed!” cried Clarence. “I wonder I did not see you there, for I dined with them.”

Lord Borodaile’s hair curled of itself. “*He* dined there, and I only asked in the evening!” thought he; but his sarcastic temper suggested a very different reply.

“Ah,” said he, elevating his eyebrows, “Lady Westborough told me she had had some people to dinner whom she had been *obliged* to ask. Bobus, is that the ‘Public Advertiser’? See whether that d—d fellow Junius has been writing any more of his venomous letters.”

Clarence was not a man apt to take offence, but he felt his bile rise. “It will not do to show it,” thought he; so he made some further remark in a jesting vein; and, after a very ill-sustained conversation of some minutes longer, rose, apparently in the best humour possible, and departed, with a solemn intention never again to enter the house. Thence he went to Lady Westborough’s.

The marchioness was in her boudoir: Clarence was as usual admitted; for Lady Westborough loved amusement above all things in the world, and Clarence had the art of affording it better than any young man of her acquaintance. On entering, he saw Lady Flora hastily retreating through an opposite door. She turned her face towards him for one moment: that moment was sufficient to freeze his blood: the large tears were rolling down her cheeks, which were as white as death, and the expression of those features, usually so laughing and joyous, was that of utter and ineffable despair.

Lady Westborough was as lively, as bland, and as agreeable as ever: but Clarence thought he detected something restrained and embarrassed lurking beneath all the graces of her exterior manner; and the single glance he had caught of the pale and altered face of Lady Flora was not calculated to reassure his mind or animate his spirits. His visit was short; when he left the room, he lingered for a few moments in the ante-chamber in the hope of again seeing Lady Flora. While thus loitering, his

ear caught the sound of Lady Westborough's voice: "When Mr. Linden calls again, you have my orders never to admit him into this room; he will be shown into the drawing-room."

With a hasty step and a burning cheek Clarence quitted the house, and hurried, first to his solitary apartments, and thence, impatient of loneliness, to the peaceful retreat of his benefactor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A MAIDEN'S thoughts do check my trembling hand. — DRAYTON.

THERE is something very delightful in turning from the inquietness and agitation, the fever, the ambition, the harsh and worldly realities of man's character to the gentle and deep recesses of woman's more secret heart. Within her musings is a realm of haunted and fairy thought, to which the things of this turbid and troubled life have no entrance. What to her are the changes of state, the rivalries and contentions which form the staple of *our* existence? For her there is an intense and fond philosophy, before whose eye substances flit and fade like shadows, and shadows grow glowingly into truth. Her soul's creations are not as the moving and mortal images seen in the common day: they are things, like spirits steeped in the dim moonlight, heard when all else are still, and busy when earth's labourers are at rest! They are

"Such stuff
As dreams are made of, and their little life
Is rounded by a sleep."

Hers is the real and uncentred *poetry of being*, which pervades and surrounds her as with an air, which peoples her visions and animates her love, which shrinks from earth into itself, and finds marvel and meditation in all that it beholds within, and which spreads even over the heaven in whose faith she so ardently believes the mystery and the tenderness of romance.

LETTER I.

FROM LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS ELEANOR
TREVANION.

You say that I have not written to you so punctually of late as I used to do before I came to London, and you impute my negligence to the gayeties and pleasures by which I am surrounded. *Eh bien!* my dear Eleanor, could you have thought of a better excuse for me? You know how fond *we* — ay, dearest, you as well as I — used to be of dancing, and how earnestly we were wont to anticipate those children's balls at my uncle's, which were the only ones we were ever permitted to attend. I found a stick the other day, on which I had cut seven notches, significant of seven days more to the next ball; we reckoned time by balls then, and danced chronologically. Well, my dear Eleanor, here I am now, brought out, tolerably well-behaved, only not dignified enough, according to Mamma, — as fond of laughing, talking, and dancing as ever; and yet, do you know, a ball, though still very delightful, is far from being the most important event in creation; its anticipation does not keep me awake of a night: and what is more to the purpose, its recollection does not make me lock up my writing-desk, burn my *portefeuille*, and forget you, all of which you seem to imagine it has been able to effect.

No, dearest Eleanor, you are mistaken; for, were she twice as giddy and ten times as volatile as she is, your own Flora could never, never forget you, nor the happy hours we have spent together, nor the pretty goldfinches we had in common, nor the little Scotch duets we used to sing together, nor our longings to change them into Italian, nor our disappointment when we did so, nor our laughter at Signor Shrikalini, nor our tears when poor darling Bijou died. And do you remember, dearest, the charming green lawn where we used to play together, and plan tricks for your governess? She was very, very cross, though, I think, we were a little to blame too. However, I was much the worst! And pray, Eleanor, don't you remember how we used to like being called pretty, and told of the conquests we should make? Do you like all that now? For my part, I am tired of it, at least from the generality of one's flatterers.

Ah! Eleanor, or "heigho!" as the young ladies in novels write, do you remember how jealous I was of you at —, and how spiteful I was, and how you were an angel, and bore with me, and kissed me, and told me that — that I had nothing to fear? Well, Clar — I mean Mr. Liuden, is now in town and so popular, and so admired! I wish we

were at — again, for there we saw him every day, and now we don't meet more than three times a week; and though I like hearing him praised above all things, yet I feel very uncomfortable when that praise comes from very, very pretty women. I wish we were at — again! Mamma, who is looking more beautiful than ever, is very kind! she says nothing to be sure, but she must see how — that is to say — she must know that — that I — I mean that Clarence is very attentive to me, and that I blush and look exceedingly silly whenever he is; and therefore I suppose that whenever Clarence thinks fit to ask me, I shall not be under the necessity of getting up at six o'clock, and travelling to Gretna Green, through that odious North Road, up the Highgate Hill, and over Finchley Common.

“But when will he ask you?” My dearest Eleanor, that is more than I can say. To tell you the truth, there is something about Linden which I cannot thoroughly understand. They say he is nephew and heir to the Mr. Talbot whom you may have heard Papa talk of; but if so, why the hints, the insinuations, of not being what he seems, which Clarence perpetually throws out, and which only excite my interest without gratifying my curiosity? “It is not,” he has said, more than once, “as an obscure adventurer that I will claim your love;” and if I venture, which is very seldom (for I am a little afraid of him), to question his meaning, he either sinks into utter silence, for which, if I had loved *according to book*, and not so naturally, I should be very angry with him, or twists his words into another signification, such as that he would not claim me till he had become something higher and nobler than he is now. Alas, my dear Eleanor, it takes a long time to make an ambassador out of an *attaché*.

See now if you reproached me justly with scanty correspondences. If I write a line more, I must begin a new sheet, and that will be beyond the power of a frank, — a thing which would, I know, break the heart of your dear, good, generous, but a little too prudent aunt, and irrevocably ruin me in her esteem. So God bless you, dearest Eleanor, and believe me most affectionately yours,

FLORA ARDENNE.

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Pray, dearest Eleanor, does that good aunt of yours — now don't frown, I am not going to speak disrespectfully of her — ever take a liking to young gentlemen whom you detest, and insist upon the fallacy of your opinion and the unerring rectitude of hers? If so, you can pity

and comprehend my grief. Mamma has formed quite an attachment to a very disagreeable person! He is Lord Borodaile, the eldest, and I believe, the only son of Lord Ulswater. Perhaps you may have met him abroad, for he has been a great traveller; his family is among the most ancient in England, and his father's estate covers half a county. All this Mamma tells me, with the most earnest air in the world, whenever I declaim upon his impertinence or *disagreeability* (is there such a word? there ought to be). "Well," said I to-day, "what's that to me?" "It may be a great deal to you," replied Mamma, significantly, and the blood rushed from my face to my heart. She could not, Eleanor, she could not mean, after all her kindness to Clarence, and in spite of all her penetration into my heart, — oh, no, no, — she could not. How terribly suspicious this love makes one!

But if I disliked Lord Borodaile at first, I have hated him of late; for, somehow or other, he is always in the way. If I see Clarence hastening through the crowd to ask me to dance, at that very instant up steps Lord Borodaile with his cold, changeless face, and his haughty old-fashioned bow, and his abominable dark complexion; and Mamma smiles; and he hopes he finds me disengaged; and I am hurried off; and poor Clarence looks so disappointed and so wretched! You have no idea how ill-tempered this makes me. I could not help asking Lord Borodaile yesterday if he was *never* going abroad again, and the hateful creature played with his cravat, and answered "Never!" I was in hopes that my sullenness would drive his lordship away: *tout au contraire*; "Nothing," said he to me the other day, when he was in full pout, "nothing is so plebeian as good-humour!"

I wish, then, Eleanor, that he could see your governess: she must be majesty itself in his eyes!

Ah, dearest, how we belie ourselves! At this moment, when you might think, from the idle, rattling, silly flow of my letter, that my heart was as light and free as it was when we used to play on the green lawn, and under the sunny trees, in the merry days of our childhood, the tears are running down my cheeks; see where they have fallen on the page, and my head throbs as if my thoughts were too full and heavy for it to contain. It is past one! I am alone, and in my own room. Mamma is gone to a rout at H — House; but I knew I should not meet Clarence there, and so said I was ill, and remained at home. I have done so often of late, whenever I have learned from *him* that he was not going to the same place as Mamma. Indeed, I love much better to sit alone and think over his words and looks; and I have drawn, after repeated attempts, a profile likeness of him; and oh, Eleanor, I cannot tell you how dear it is to me; and yet there is not a line, not a

look of his countenance which I have not learned by heart, without such useless aids to my memory. But I am ashamed of telling you all this, and my eyes ache so, that I can write no more.

Ever, as ever, dearest Eleanor, your affectionate friend.

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Eleanor, I am undone! My mother — my mother has been so cruel; but she cannot, she cannot intend it, or she knows very little of my heart. With some ties may be as easily broken as formed; with others they are twined around life itself.

Clarence dined with us yesterday, and was unusually animated and agreeable. He was engaged on business with Lord Aspeden afterwards, and left us early. We had a few people in the evening, Lord Borodaile among the rest; and my mother spoke of Clarence, and his relationship to and expectations from Mr. Talbot. Lord Borodaile sneered; "You are mistaken," said he, sarcastically; "Mr. Linden may feel it convenient to give out that he is related to so old a family as the Talbots; and since Heaven only knows who or what he is, he may as well claim alliance with one person as another; but he is certainly not the nephew of Mr. Talbot of Scarsdale Park, for that gentleman had no sisters and but one brother, who left an only daughter; that daughter had also but one child, certainly no relation to Mr. Linden. I can vouch for the truth of this statement; for the Talbots are related to, or at least nearly connected with, myself; and I thank Heaven that I have a pedigree, even in its collateral branches, worth learning by heart." And then Lord Borodaile — I little thought, when I railed against him, what serious cause I should have to hate him — turned to me and harassed me with his tedious attentions the whole of the evening.

This morning Mamma sent for me into her boudoir. "I have observed," said she, with the greatest indifference, "that Mr. Linden has, *of late*, been much too particular in his manner towards you: your foolish and undue familiarity with every one has perhaps given him encouragement. After the gross imposition which Lord Borodaile exposed to us last night, I cannot but consider the young man as a mere adventurer, and must not only insist on your putting a total termination to civilities which we must henceforth consider presumption, but I myself shall consider it incumbent upon me greatly to limit the advances he has thought proper to make towards my acquaintance."

You may guess how thunderstruck I was by this speech. I could not answer; my tongue literally clove to my mouth, and I was only relieved

by a sudden and violent burst of tears. Mamma looked exceedingly displeased, and was just going to speak, when the servant threw open the door and announced Mr. Linden. I rose hastily, and had only just time to escape, as he entered; but when I heard that dear, dear voice, I could not resist turning for one moment. He saw me; and was struck mute, for the agony of my soul was stamped visibly on my countenance. That moment was over: with a violent effort I tore myself away.

Eleanor, I can now write no more. God bless you! and *me* too; for I am very, very unhappy.

F. A.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHAT a charming character is a kind old man. — STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

“CHEER up, my dear boy,” said Talbot, kindly, “we must never despair. What though Lady Westborough has forbidden you the boudoir, a boudoir is a very different thing from a daughter, and you have no right to suppose that the veto extends to both. But now that we are on this subject, do let me reason with you seriously. Have you not already tasted all the pleasures, and been sufficiently annoyed by some of the pains, of acting the ‘Incognito’? Be ruled by me: resume your proper name; it is at least one which the proudest might acknowledge; and its discovery will remove the greatest obstacle to the success which you so ardently desire.”

Clarence, who was labouring under strong excitement, paused for some moments, as if to collect himself, before he replied: “I have been thrust from my father’s home; I have been made the victim of another’s crime; I have been denied the rights and name of son; perhaps (and I say this bitterly) justly denied them, despite of my own innocence. What would you have me do? Resume a name never conceded to me, — perhaps not righteously mine, — thrust myself upon the unwilling and shrinking hands which disowned and rejected me; blazon my virtues by pretensions which I myself have promised to forego, and foist myself on the notice of

strangers by the very claims which my nearest relations dispute? Never! never! never! With the simple name I have assumed; the friend I myself have won, — you, my generous benefactor, my real father, who never forsook nor insulted me for my misfortunes, — with these I have gained some steps in the ladder; with these, and those gifts of nature, a stout heart and a willing hand, of which none can rob me, I will either ascend the rest, even to the summit, or fall to the dust, unknown, but not contemned; unlamented, but not despised.”

“Well, well,” said Talbot, brushing away a tear which he could not deny to the feeling, even while he disputed the judgment, of the young adventurer, — “well, this is all very fine and very foolish; but you shall never want friend or father while I live, or when I have ceased to live; but come, — sit down, share my dinner, which is not very good, and my desert, which is: help me to entertain two or three guests who are coming to me in the evening, to talk on literature, sup, and sleep; and to-morrow you shall return home, and see Lady Flora in the drawing-room if you cannot in the boudoir.”

And Clarence was easily persuaded to accept the invitation.

Talbot was not one of those men who are forced to exert themselves to be entertaining. He had the pleasant and easy way of imparting his great general and curious information, that a man, partly humourist, partly philosopher, who values himself on being a man of letters, and is in spite of himself a man of the world, always ought to possess. Clarence was soon beguiled from the remembrance of his mortifications, and, by little and little, entirely yielded to the airy and happy flow of Talbot’s conversation.

In the evening, three or four men of literary eminence (as many as Talbot’s small Tusculum would accommodate with beds) arrived, and in a conversation, free alike from the jargon of pedants and the insipidities of fashion, the night fled away swiftly and happily, even to the lover.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WE are here [in the country] among the vast and noble scenes of Nature; we are there [in the town] among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty,— we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice; our senses are here feasted with all the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries: here pleasure, methinks, looks like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife; it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot. — COWLEY.

DRAW up the curtain! The scene is the Opera.

The pit is crowded; the connoisseurs in the front row are in a very ill humour. It must be confessed that extreme heat is a little trying to the temper of a critic.

The Opera then was not what it is now, nor even what it had been in a former time. It is somewhat amusing to find Goldsmith questioning, in one of his essays, whether the Opera could ever become popular in England. But on the night on which the reader is summoned to that "theatre of sweet sounds" a celebrated singer from the Continent made his first appearance in London, and all the world thronged to "that odious Opera-house" to hear, or to say they had heard, the famous Sopraniello.

With a nervous step, Clarence proceeded to Lady Westborough's box; and it was many minutes that he lingered by the door before he summoned courage to obtain admission.

He entered; the box was crowded; but Lady Flora was not there. Lord Borodaile was sitting next to Lady Westborough. As Clarence entered, Lord Borodaile raised his eyebrows, and Lady Westborough her glass. However disposed a great person may be to drop a lesser one, no one of real birth or breeding ever cuts another. Lady Westborough, therefore, though much colder, was no less civil than usual; and Lord Borodaile bowed lower than ever to *Mr.* Linden, as he punctiliously called him. But Clarence's quick eye discovered instantly that he

was no welcome intruder, and that his day with the beautiful marchioness was over. His visit, consequently, was short and embarrassed. When he left the box, he heard Lord Borodaile's short, slow, sneering laugh, followed by Lady Westborough's "hush" of reproof.

His blood boiled. He hurried along the passage, with his eyes fixed upon the ground and his hand clenched.

"What ho! Linden, my good fellow; why, you look as if all the ferocity of the great Figg were in your veins," cried a good-humoured voice. Clarence started, and saw the young and high-spirited Duke of Haverfield.

"Are you going behind the scenes?" said his grace. "I have just come thence; and you had much better drop into La Meronville's box with me. You sup with her to-night, do you not?"

"No, indeed!" replied Clarence; "I scarcely know her, except by sight."

"Well, and what think you of her?"

"That she is the prettiest Frenchwoman I ever saw."

"Commend me to secret sympathies!" cried the duke. "She has asked me three times who you were, and told me three times you were the handsomest man in London and had quite a foreign air; the latter recommendation being of course far greater than the former. So, after this, you cannot refuse to accompany me to her box and make her acquaintance."

"Nay," answered Clarence, "I shall be too happy to profit by the taste of so discerning a person; but it is cruel in you, Duke, not to feign a little jealousy, — a little reluctance to introduce so formidable a rival."

"Oh, as to me," said the duke, "I only like her for her mental, not her personal, attractions. She is very agreeable, and a little witty; sufficient attractions for one in her situation."

"But do tell me a little of her history," said Clarence; "for, in spite of her renown, I only know her as La belle Meronville. Is she not living *en ami* with some one of our acquaintance?"

"To be sure," replied the duke, "with Lord Borodaile. She is prodigiously extravagant; and Borodaile affects to be pro-

digiously fond: but as there is only a certain fund of affection in the human heart, and all Lord Borodaile's is centred in Lord Borodaile, that cannot really be the case."

"Is he jealous of her?" said Clarence.

"Not in the least! nor indeed, does she give him any cause. She is very gay, very talkative, gives excellent suppers, and always has her box at the Opera crowded with admirers; but that is all. She encourages many, and favours but one. Happy Borodaile! My lot is less fortunate! You know, I suppose, that Julia has deserted me?"

"You astonish me, — and for what?"

"Oh, she told me, with a vehement burst of tears, that she was convinced I did not love her, and that a hundred pounds a month was not sufficient to maintain a milliner's apprentice. I answered the first assertion by an assurance that I adored her: but I preserved a total silence with regard to the latter; and so I found Trevanion *tête-à-tête* with her the next day."

"What did you?" said Clarence.

"Sent my valet to Trevanion with an old coat of mine, my compliments, and my hopes that, as Mr. Trevanion was so fond of my cast-off conveniences, he would honour me by accepting the accompanying trifle."

"He challenged you, without doubt?"

"Challenged me! No: he tells all his friends that I am the wittiest man in Europe."

"A fool can speak the truth, you see," said Clarence, laughing.

"Thank you, Linden; you shall have my good word with La Meronville for that: *mais allons*."

Mademoiselle *de la Meronville*, as she pointedly entitled herself, was one of those charming adventuresses, who, making the most of a good education and a prepossessing person, a delicate turn for letter-writing, and a lively vein of conversation, came to England for a year or two, as Spaniards were wont to go to Mexico, and who return to their native country with a profound contempt for the barbarians whom they have so egregiously despoiled. Mademoiselle *de la Meronville* was small, beautifully formed, had the prettiest hands and feet in

the world, and laughed *musically*. By the by, how difficult it is to laugh, or even to smile, at once naturally and gracefully! It is one of Steele's finest touches of character, where he says of Will Honeycombe, "He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily."

In a word, the pretty Frenchwoman was precisely formed to turn the head of a man like Lord Borodaile, who loved to be courted and who required to be amused. Mademoiselle de la Meronville received Clarence with a great deal of grace, and a little reserve, the first chiefly natural, the last wholly artificial.

"Well," said the duke (in French), "you have not told me who are to be of your party this evening, — Borodaile, I suppose, of course?"

"No, he cannot come to-night."

"Ah, *quel malheur!* then the hock will not be iced enough: Borodaile's looks are the best wine-coolers in the world."

"Fie!" cried La Meronville, glancing towards Clarence: "I cannot endure your malevolence; wit makes you very bitter."

"And that is exactly the reason why *La belle Meronville* loves me so: nothing is so sweet to one person as bitterness upon another; it is human nature and French nature (which is a very different thing) into the bargain."

"Bah! my Lord Duke, you judge of others by yourself."

"To be sure I do," cried the duke; "and that is the best way of forming a right judgment. Ah! what a foot that little *figurante* has; you don't admire her, Linden?"

"No, Duke; my admiration is like the bird in the cage, — chained here, and cannot fly away!" answered Clarence, with a smile at the frippery of his compliment.

"Ah, Monsieur," cried the pretty Frenchwoman, leaning back, "you have been at Paris, I see: one does not learn those graces of language in England. I have been five months in your country; brought over the prettiest dresses imaginable, and have only received three compliments, and (pity me!) two out of the three were upon my pronunciation of 'How do you do?'"

"Well," said Clarence, "I should have imagined that in England, above all other countries, your vanity would have been gratified, for you know we pique ourselves on our sincerity, and say all we think."

"Yes? then you always think very unpleasantly. What an alternative! which is the best, to speak ill or to think ill of one?"

"*Pour l'amour de Dieu*," cried the duke, "don't ask such puzzling questions; you are always getting into those moral subtleties, which I suppose you learn from Borodaile. He is a wonderful metaphysician, I hear; I can answer for his chemical powers: the moment he enters a room the very walls grow damp; as for me, I dissolve; I should flow into a fountain, like Arethusa, if happily his lordship did not freeze one again into substance as fast as he dampens one into thaw."

"*Fi donc!*" cried La Meronville. "I should be very angry had you not taught me to be very indifferent—"

"*To him!*" said the duke, dryly. "I'm glad to hear it. He is not worth *une grande passion*, believe me; but tell me, *ma belle*, who else sups with you?"

"*D'abord*, Monsieur Linden, I trust," answered La Meronville, with a look of invitation, to which Clarence bowed and smiled his assent, "Milord D—, and Monsieur Trevanion, Mademoiselle Caumartin, and Le Prince Pietro del Ordino."

"Nothing can be better arranged," said the duke. "But see, they are just going to drop the curtain. Let me call your carriage."

"You are too good, milord," replied La Meronville, with a bow which said, "of course;" and the duke, who would not have stirred three paces for the first princess of the blood, hurried out of the box (despite of Clarence's offer to undertake the commission) to inquire after the carriage of the most notorious adventuress of the day.

Clarence was alone in the box with the beautiful French-woman. To say truth, Linden was far too much in love with Lady Flora, and too occupied, as to his other thoughts, with the projects of ambition, to be easily led into any disreputable or criminal *liaison*; he therefore conversed with his usual

ease, though with rather more than his usual gallantry, without feeling the least touched by the charms of La Meronville or the least desirous of supplanting Lord Borodaile in her favour.

The duke reappeared, and announced the carriage. As, with La Meronville leaning on his arm, Clarence hurried out, he accidentally looked up, and saw on the head of the stairs Lady Westborough with her party (Lord Borodaile among the rest) in waiting for her carriage. For almost the first time in his life, Clarence felt ashamed of himself; his cheek burned like fire, and he involuntarily let go the fair hand which was leaning upon his arm. However, the weaker our course the better face we should put upon it, and Clarence, recovering his presence of mind, and vainly hoping he had not been perceived, buried his face as well as he was able in the fur collar of his cloak, and hurried on.

“You saw Lord Borodaile?” said the duke to La Meronville, as he handed her into her carriage.

“Yes, I accidentally looked back after we had passed him, and then I saw him.”

“Looked back!” said the duke; “I wonder he did not turn you into a pillar of salt.”

“*Fi donc!*” cried La belle Meronville, tapping his grace playfully on the arm, in order to do which *she was forced to lean* a little harder upon Clarence’s, which she had not yet relinquished — “*Fi donc! François, chez moi!*”

“My carriage is just behind,” said the duke. “You will go with me to La Meronville’s, of course?”

“Really, my dear duke,” said Clarence, “I wish I could excuse myself from this party. I have another engagement.”

“Excuse yourself? and leave me to the mercy of Mademoiselle Caumartin, who has the face of an ostrich, and talks me out of breath! Never, my dear Linden, never! Besides, I want you to see how well I shall behave to Trevanion. Here is the carriage. *Entrez, mon cher.*”

And Clarence, weakly and foolishly (but he *was* very young and very unhappy, and so, longing for an escape from his own thoughts) entered the carriage, and drove to the supper party,

in order to prevent the Duke of Haverfield being talked out of breath by Mademoiselle Caumartin, who had the face of an ostrich.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

YET truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
 Charged with rich words, poured out in thought's defence;
 Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
 Or a Platonic piety, confined
 To the sole temple of the inward mind;
 And one there is who builds immortal lays,
 Though doomed to tread in solitary ways;
 Though doomed to tread in solitary ways;
 Darkness before, and danger's voice behind!
 Yet not alone —

WORDSWORTH.

LONDON, thou Niobe, who sittest in stone, amidst thy stricken and fated children; nurse of the desolate, that hidest in thy bosom the shame, the sorrows, the sins of many sons; in whose arms the fallen and the outcast shroud their distresses, and shelter from the proud man's contumely; Epitome and Focus of the disparities and maddening contrasts of this wrong world, that assemblest together in one great heap the woes, the joys, the elevations, the debasements of the various tribes of man; mightiest of levellers, confounding in thy whirlpool all ranks, all minds, the graven labours of knowledge, the straws of the maniac, purple and rags, the regalities and the loathsomeness of earth, — palace and lazar-house combined! Grave of the living, where, mingled and massed together, we couch, but rest not, — “for in that sleep *of life* what dreams *do* come,” — each vexed with a separate vision, — “shadows” which “grieve the heart,” unreal in their substance, but faithful in their warnings, flitting from the eye, but gravating unfleeting memories on the mind, which reproduce new dreams over and over, until the phantasm ceases, and the pall of a heavier torpor falls upon the brain, and all is still and dark and hushed! “From the stir of thy great Babel,” and

the fixed tinsel glare in which sits pleasure like a star, "which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays," we turn to thy deeper and more secret haunts. Thy wilderness is all before us — where to choose our place of rest; and, to our eyes, thy hidden recesses are revealed.

The clock of St. Paul's had tolled the second hour of morning. Within a small and humble apartment in the very heart of the city, there sat a writer, whose lucubrations, then obscure and unknown, were destined, years afterwards, to excite the vague admiration of the crowd and the deeper homage of the wise. They were of that nature which is slow in winning its way to popular esteem; the result of the hived and hoarded knowledge of years; the produce of deep thought and sublime aspirations, influencing, in its bearings, the interests of the many, yet only capable of analysis by the judgment of the few. But the stream broke forth at last from the cavern to the daylight, although *the source* was never traced; or, to change the image, — albeit none know the hand which executed and the head which designed, the monument of a mighty intellect has been at length dug up, as it were, from the envious earth, the brighter for its past obscurity, and the more certain of immortality from the temporary neglect it has sustained.

The room was, as we before said, very small, and meanly furnished; yet were there a few articles of costliness and luxury scattered about, which told that the tastes of its owner had not been quite humbled to the level of his fortunes. One side of the narrow chamber was covered with shelves, which supported books in various languages, and though chiefly on scientific subjects, not utterly confined to them. Among the doctrines of the philosopher, and the golden rules of the moralist, were also seen the pleasant dreams of poets, the legends of Spenser, the refining moralities of Pope, the lofty errors of Lucretius, and the sublime relics of *our* "dead kings of melody."¹ And over the hearth was a picture, taken in more prosperous days, of one who had been and was yet to the tenant of that abode, better than fretted roofs and glittering banquets, the objects of ambition, or even the immortality of

¹ Shakspeare and Milton.

fame. It was the face of one very young and beautiful, and the deep, tender eyes looked down, as with a watchful fondness, upon the lucubrator and his labours. While beneath the window, which was left unclosed, for it was scarcely June, were simple yet not inelegant vases, filled with flowers, —

“ Those lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave.”¹

The writer was alone, and had just paused from his employment; he was leaning his face upon one hand, in a thoughtful and earnest mood, and the air which came chill, but gentle, from the window, slightly stirred the locks from the broad and marked brow, over which they fell in thin but graceful waves. Partly owing perhaps to the waning light of the single lamp and the lateness of the hour, his cheek seemed very pale, and the complete though contemplative rest of the features partook greatly of the quiet of habitual sadness, and a little of the languor of shaken health; yet the expression, despite the proud cast of the brow and profile, was rather benevolent than stern or dark in its pensiveness, and the lines spoke more of the wear and harrow of deep thought than the inroads of ill-regulated passion.

There was a slight tap at the door; the latch was raised, and the original of the picture I have described entered the apartment.

Time had not been idle with her since that portrait had been taken: the round elastic figure had lost much of its youth and freshness; the step, though light, was languid, and in the centre of the fair, smooth cheek, which was a little sunken, burned one deep bright spot, — fatal sign to those who have watched the progress of the most deadly and deceitful of our national maladies; yet still the form and countenance were eminently interesting and lovely; and though the bloom was gone forever, the beauty, which not even death could wholly have despoiled, remained to triumph over debility, misfortune, and disease.

¹ Herrick.

She approached the student, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Dearest!" said he, tenderly yet reproachfully, "yet up, and the hour so late and yourself so weak? Fie, I must learn to scold you."

"And how," answered the intruder, "how could I sleep or rest while you are consuming your very life in those thankless labours?"

"By which," interrupted the writer, with a faint smile, "we glean our scanty subsistence."

"Yes," said the wife (for she held that relation to the student), and the tears stood in her eyes, "I know well that every morsel of bread, every drop of water, is wrung from your very heart's blood, and I — I am the cause of all; but surely you exert yourself too much, more than can be requisite? These night damps, this sickly and chilling air, heavy with the rank vapours of the coming morning, are not suited to thoughts and toils which are alone sufficient to sear your mind and exhaust your strength. Come, my own love, to bed; and yet first come and look upon our child, how sound she sleeps! I have leaned over her for the last hour, and tried to fancy it was you whom I watched, for she has learned already your smile and has it even when she sleeps."

"She has cause to smile," said the husband, bitterly.

"She has, *for she is yours!* and even in poetry and humble hopes, that is an inheritance which may well teach her pride and joy. Come, love, the air is keen, and the damp rises to your forehead, — yet stay, till I have kissed it away."

"Mine own love," said the student, as he rose and wound his arm round the slender waist of his wife, "wrap your shawl closer over your bosom, and let us look for one instant upon the night. I cannot sleep till I have slaked the fever of my blood: the air has nothing of coldness in its breath for me."

And they walked to the window and looked forth. All was hushed and still in the narrow street; the cold gray clouds were hurrying fast along the sky; and the stars, weak and waning in their light, gleamed forth at rare intervals upon the mute city, like expiring watch-lamps of the dead.

They leaned out and spoke not; but when they looked above upon the melancholy heavens, they drew nearer to each other, as if it were their natural instinct to do so whenever the world without seemed discouraging and sad.

At length the student broke the silence; but his thoughts, which were wandering and disjointed, were breathed less to her than vaguely and unconsciously to himself. "Morn breaks, — another and another! — day upon day! — while we drag on our load like the blind beast which knows not when the burden shall be cast off and the hour of rest be come."

The woman pressed her hand to her bosom, but made no rejoinder — she knew his mood — and the student continued, —

"And so life frets itself away! Four years have passed over our seclusion — four years! a great segment in the little circle of our mortality; and of those years what day has pleasure won from labour, or what night has sleep snatched wholly from the lamp? Weaker than the miser, the insatiable and restless mind traverses from east to west; and from the nooks, and corners, and crevices of earth collects, fragment by fragment, grain by grain, atom by atom, the riches which it gathers to its coffers — for what? — to starve amidst the plenty! The fantasies of the imagination bring a ready and substantial return: not so the treasures of thought. Better that I had renounced the soul's labour for that of its hardier frame — better that I had 'sweated in the eye of Phœbus,' than 'eat my heart with crosses and with cares,' — seeking truth and wanting bread — adding to the indigence of poverty its humiliation; wroth with the arrogance of men, who weigh in the shallow scales of their meagre knowledge the product of lavish thought, and of the hard hours for which health, and sleep, and spirit have been exchanged; — sharing the lot of those who would enchant the old serpent of evil, which refuses the voice of the charmer! — struggling against the prejudice and bigoted delusion of the bandaged and fettered herd to whom, in our fond hopes and aspirations, we trusted to give light and freedom; seeing the slavish judgments we would have redeemed from error clashing their chains at us in ire;

— made criminal by our very benevolence ; — the martyrs whose zeal is rewarded with persecution, whose prophecies are crowned with contempt ! — Better, oh, better that I had not listened to the vanity of a heated brain — better that I had made my home with the lark and the wild bee, among the fields and the quiet hills, where life, if obscurer, is less debased, and hope, if less eagerly indulged, is less bitterly disappointed. The frame, it is true, might have been bowed to a harsher labour, but the heart would at least have had its rest from anxiety, and the mind its relaxation from thought.”

The wife’s tears fell upon the hand she clasped. The student turned, and his heart smote him for the selfishness of his complaint. He drew her closer and closer to his bosom ; and gazing fondly upon those eyes which years of indigence and care might have robbed of their young lustre, but not of their undying tenderness, he kissed away her tears, and addressed her in a voice which never failed to charm her grief into forgetfulness.

“Dearest and kindest,” he said, “was I not to blame for accusing those privations or regrets which have only made us love each other the more ? Trust me, mine own treasure, that it is only in the peevishness of an inconstant and fretful humour that I have murmured against my fortune. For, in the midst of all, I look upon you, my angel, my comforter, my young dream of love, which God, in His mercy, breathed into waking life — I look upon you, and am blessed and grateful. Nor in my juster moments do I accuse even the nature of these studies, though they bring us so scanty a reward. Have I not hours of secret and overflowing delight, the triumphs of gratified research — flashes of sudden light, which reward the darkness of thought, and light up my solitude as a revel ? — These feelings of rapture, which nought but Science can afford, amply repay her disciples for worse evils and severer handships than it has been my destiny to endure. Look along the sky, how the vapours struggle with the still yet feeble stars : even so have the mists of error been pierced, though not scattered, by the dim but holy lights of past wisdom ; and now the

morning is at hand, and in that hope we journey on, doubtful, but not utterly in darkness. Nor is this *all my* hope; there is a loftier and more steady comfort than that which mere philosophy can bestow. If the certainty of future fame bore Milton rejoicing through his blindness, or cheered Galileo in his dungeon, what stronger and holier support shall not be given to *him* who has loved mankind as his brothers, and devoted his labours to their cause? — who has not sought, but relinquished, his own renown? — who has braved the present censures of men for their future benefit, and trampled upon glory in the energy of benevolence? Will there not be for him something more powerful than fame to comfort his sufferings and to sustain his hopes? If the wish of mere posthumous honour be a feeling rather vain than exalted, the love of our race affords us a more rational and noble desire of remembrance. Come what will, that love, if it animates our toils and directs our studies, shall when we are dust make our relics of value, our efforts of avail, and consecrate the desire of fame, which were else a passion selfish and impure, by connecting it with the welfare of ages and the eternal interests of the world and its Creator! Come, we will to bed.”

CHAPTER XL.

A MAN may be formed by nature for an admirable citizen, and yet, from the purest motives, be a dangerous one to the State in which the accident of birth has placed him. — STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE night again closed, and the student once more resumed his labours. The spirit of his hope and comforter of his toils sat by him, ever and anon lifting her fond eyes from her work to gaze upon his countenance, to sigh, and to return sadly and quietly to her employment.

A heavy step ascended the stairs, the door opened, and the tall figure of Wolfe, the republican, presented itself. The

female rose, pushed a chair towards him with a smile and grace suited to better fortunes, and, retiring from the table, reseated herself silent and apart.

"It is a fine night," said the student, when the mutual greetings were over. "Whence come you?"

"From contemplating human misery and worse than human degradation," replied Wolfe, slowly seating himself.

"Those words specify no place: they apply universally," said the student, with a sigh.

"Ay, Glendower, for misgovernment is universal," rejoined Wolfe.

Glendower made no answer.

"Oh!" said Wolfe, in the low, suppressed tone of intense passion which was customary to him, "it maddens me to look upon the willingness with which men hug their trappings of slavery, — bears, proud of the rags which deck and the monkeys which ride them. But it frets me yet more when some lordling sweeps along, lifting his dull eyes above the fools whose only crime and debasement are — what? — their subjection to *him!* Such a one I encountered a few nights since; and he will remember the meeting longer than I shall. I taught that 'god to tremble.'"

The female rose, glanced towards her husband, and silently withdrew.

Wolfe paused for a few moments, looked curiously and pryingly round, and then rising went forth into the passage to see that no loiterer or listener was near; returned, and drawing his chair close to Glendower, fixed his dark eye upon him, and said, —

"You are poor, and your spirit rises against your lot; you are just, and your heart swells against the general oppression you behold: can you not dare to remedy your ills and those of mankind?"

"I can dare," said Glendower, calmly, though haughtily, "all things but crime."

"And which is crime? — the rising against, or the submission to, evil government? Which is crime, I ask you?"

"That which is the most imprudent," answered Glendower

"We may sport in ordinary cases with our own safeties, but only in rare cases with the safety of others."

Wolfe rose, and paced the narrow room impatiently to and fro. He paused by the window and threw it open. "Come here," he cried, — "come and look out."

Glendower did so; all was still and quiet.

"Why did you call me?" said he; "I see nothing."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Wolfe; "look again; look on yon sordid and squalid huts; look at yon court, that from this wretched street leads to abodes to which these are as palaces; look at yon victims of vice and famine, plying beneath the midnight skies their filthy and infectious trade. Wherever you turn your eyes, what see you? Misery, loathsomeness, sin! Are you a man, and call you these nothing? And now lean forth still more; see afar off, by yonder lamp, the mansion of ill-gotten and griping wealth. He who owns those buildings, what did he that he should riot while we starve? He wrung from the negro's tears and bloody sweat the luxuries of a pampered and vitiated taste; he pandered to the excesses of the rich; he heaped their tables with the product of a nation's groans. Lo! — his reward! He is rich, prosperous, honoured! He sits in the legislative assembly; he declaims against immorality; he contends for the safety of property and the equilibrium of ranks. Transport yourself from this spot for an instant; imagine that you survey the gorgeous homes of aristocracy and power, the palaces of the west. What see you there? — the few sucking, draining, exhausting the blood, the treasure, the very existence of the many. Are we, who are *of* the many, wise to suffer it?"

"Are we of the many?" said Glendower.

"We could be," said Wolfe, hastily.

"I doubt it," replied Glendower.

"Listen," said the republican, laying his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, "listen to me. There are in this country men whose spirits not years of delayed hope, wearisome persecution, and, bitterer than all, misrepresentation from some and contempt from others, have yet quelled and tamed. We watch our opportunity; the growing distress of the country, the

increasing severity and misrule of the administration, will soon afford it us. Your talents, your benevolence, render you worthy to join us. Do so, and —”

“Hush!” interrupted the student; “you know not what you say: you weigh not the folly, the madness of your design! I am a man more fallen, more sunken, more disappointed than you. I, too, have had at my heart the burning and lonely hope which, through years of misfortune and want, has comforted me with the thought of serving and enlightening mankind, — I, too, have devoted to the fulfilment of that hope, days and nights, in which the brain grew dizzy and the heart heavy and clogged with the intensity of my pursuits. Were the dungeon and the scaffold my reward Heaven knows that I would not flinch eye or hand or abate a jot of heart and hope in the thankless prosecution of my toils. Know me, then, as one of fortunes more desperate than your own; of an ambition more unquenchable; of a philanthropy no less ardent; and, I *will* add, of a courage no less firm: and behold the utter hopelessness of your projects with others, when to me they only appear the visions of an enthusiast.”

Wolfe sank down in the chair.

“Is it even so?” said he, slowly and musingly. “Are my hopes but delusions? Has my life been but one idle, though convulsive dream? Is the goddess of our religion banished from this great and populous earth to the seared and barren hearts of a few solitary worshippers, whom all else despise as madmen or persecute as idolaters? And if so, shall we adore her the less? — No! though we perish in her cause, it is around her altar that our corpses shall be found!”

“My friend,” said Glendower, kindly, for he was touched by the sincerity though opposed to the opinions of the republican, “the night is yet early: we will sit down to discuss our several doctrines calmly and in the spirit of truth and investigation.”

“Away!” cried Wolfe, rising and slouching his hat over his bent and lowering brows; “away! I will not listen to you: I dread your reasonings; I would not have a particle of my faith snaken. If I err, I have erred from my birth, — erred with Brutus and Tell, Hampden and Milton, and all whom the thou-

sand tribes and parties of earth consecrate with their common gratitude and eternal reverence. In that error I will die! If our party can struggle not with hosts, there may yet arise some minister with the ambition of Cæsar, if not his genius, — of whom a single dagger can rid the earth!”

“And if not?” said Glendower.

“I have the same dagger for myself!” replied Wolfe, as he closed the door.

CHAPTER XLI.

BOLINGBROKE has said that “Man is his own sharper and his own bubble;” and certainly he who is acutest in duping others is ever the most ingenious in outwitting himself. The criminal is always a sophist; and finds in his own reason a special pleader to twist laws human and divine into a sanction of his crime. The rogue is so much in the habit of cheating, that he packs the cards even when playing at Patience with himself. — STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE only two acquaintances in this populous city whom Glendower possessed who were aware that in a former time he had known a better fortune were Wolfe and a person of far higher worldly estimation, of the name of Crauford. With the former the student had become acquainted by the favour of chance, which had for a short time made them lodgers in the same house. Of the particulars of Glendower’s earliest history Wolfe was utterly ignorant; but the addresses upon some old letters, which he had accidentally seen, had informed him that Glendower had formerly borne another name; and it was easy to glean from the student’s conversation that something of greater distinction and prosperity than he now enjoyed was coupled with the appellation he had renounced. Proud, melancholy, austere, — brooding upon thoughts whose very loftiness received somewhat of additional grandeur from the gloom which encircled it, — Glendower found, in the ruined hopes and the solitary lot of the republican, that congeniality which neither Wolfe’s habits nor the excess of his political fervour

might have afforded to a nature which philosophy had rendered moderate and early circumstances refined. Crauford was far better acquainted than Wolfe with the reverses Glendower had undergone. Many years ago he had known and indeed travelled with him upon the Continent; since then they had not met till about six months prior to the time in which Glendower is presented to the reader. It was in an obscure street of the city that Crauford had then encountered Glendower, whose haunts were so little frequented by the higher orders of society that Crauford was the first, and the only one of his former acquaintance with whom for years he had been brought into contact. That person recognized him at once, accosted him, followed him home, and three days afterwards surprised him with a visit. Of manners which, in their dissimulation, extended far beyond the ordinary ease and breeding of the world, Crauford readily appeared not to notice the altered circumstances of his old acquaintance; and, by a tone of conversation artfully respectful, he endeavoured to remove from Glendower's mind that soreness which his knowledge of human nature told him his visit was calculated to create.

There is a certain species of pride which contradicts the ordinary symptoms of the feeling, and appears most elevated when it would be reasonable to expect it should be most depressed. Of this sort was Glendower's. When he received the guest who had known him in his former prosperity, some natural sentiment of emotion called, it is true, to his pale cheek a momentary flush, as he looked round his humble apartment, and the evident signs of poverty it contained; but his address was calm and self-possessed, and whatever mortification he might have felt, no intonation of his voice, no tell-tale embarrassment of manner, revealed it. Encouraged by this air, even while he was secretly vexed by it, and perfectly unable to do justice to the dignity of mind which gave something of majesty rather than humiliation to misfortune, Crauford resolved to repeat his visit, and by intervals, gradually lessening, renewed it, till acquaintance seemed, though little tinctured, at least on Glendower's side, by *friendship*, to assume the semblance of *intimacy*. It was true, however, that he had something to

struggle against in Glendower's manner, which certainly grew colder in proportion to the repetition of the visits; and at length Glendower said, with an ease and quiet which abashed for a moment an effrontery of mind and manner which was almost parallel, "Believe me, Mr. Crauford, I feel fully sensible of your attentions; but as circumstances at present are such as to render an intercourse between us little congenial to the habits and sentiments of either, you will probably understand and forgive my motives in wishing no longer to receive civilities which, however I may feel them, I am unable to return."

Crauford coloured and hesitated before he replied. "Forgive me then," said he, "for my fault. I did venture to hope that no circumstances would break off an acquaintance to me so valuable. Forgive me if I did imagine that an intercourse between mind and mind could be equally carried on, whether the mere body were lodged in a palace or a hovel;" and then suddenly changing his tone into that of affectionate warmth, Crauford continued, "My dear Glendower, my dear friend, I would say, if I durst, is not your pride rather to blame here? Believe me, in my turn, I fully comprehend and bow to it; but it wounds me beyond expression. Were you in your proper station, a station much higher than my own, I would come to you at once, and proffer my friendship: as it is, I cannot; but your pride wrongs me, Glendower, — indeed it does."

And Crauford turned away, apparently in the bitterness of wounded feeling.

Glendower was touched: and his nature, as kind as it was proud, immediately smote him for conduct certainly ungracious and perhaps ungrateful. He held out his hand to Crauford; with the most respectful warmth that personage seized and pressed it: and from that time Crauford's visits appeared to receive a license which, if not perfectly welcome, was at least never again questioned.

"I shall have this man now," muttered Crauford, between his ground teeth, as he left the house, and took his way to his counting-house. There, cool, bland, fawning, and weaving in his close and dark mind various speculations of guilt and craft.

he sat among his bills and gold, like the very gnome and personification of that Mammon of gain to which he was the most supple though concealed adherent.

Richard Crauford was of a new but not unimportant family. His father had entered into commerce, and left a flourishing firm and a name of great respectability in his profession to his son. That son was a man whom many and opposite qualities rendered a character of very singular and uncommon stamp. Fond of the laborious acquisition of money, he was equally attached to the ostentatious pageantries of expense. Profoundly skilled in the calculating business of his profession, he was devoted equally to the luxuries of pleasure; but the pleasure was suited well to the mind which pursued it. The divine intoxication of that love where the delicacies and purities of affection consecrate the humanity of passion was to him a thing of which not even his youngest imagination had ever dreamed. The social concomitants of the wine-cup (which have for the lenient an excuse, for the austere a temptation), the generous expanding of the heart, the increased yearning to kindly affection, the lavish spirit throwing off its exuberance in the thousand lights and emanations of wit, — these, which have rendered the molten grape, despite of its excesses, not unworthy of the praises of immortal hymns, and taken harshness from the judgment of those averse to its enjoyment, — these never presented an inducement to the stony temperament and dormant heart of Richard Crauford.

He looked upon the essences of things internal as the common eye upon outward nature, and loved the many shapes of evil as the latter does the varieties of earth, not for their graces, but their utility. His loves, coarse and low, fed their rank fires from an unmingled and gross depravity. His devotion to wine was either solitary and unseen — for he loved safety better than mirth — or in company with those whose station flattered his vanity, not whose fellowship ripened his crude and nipped affections. Even the recklessness of vice in him had the character of prudence; and in the most rapid and turbulent stream of his excesses, one might detect the rocky and unmoved heart of the calculator at the bottom.

Cool, sagacious, profound in dissimulation, and not only observant of, but deducing sage consequences from, those human inconsistencies and frailties by which it was his aim to profit, he cloaked his deeper vices with a masterly hypocrisy; and for those too dear to forego and too difficult to conceal he obtained pardon by the intercession of virtues it cost him nothing to assume. Regular in his attendance at worship; professing rigidity of faith beyond the tenets of the orthodox church; subscribing to the public charities, where the common eye knoweth what the private hand giveth; methodically constant to the forms of business; primitively scrupulous in the proprieties of speech; hospitable, at least to his superiors, and, being naturally smooth, both of temper and address, popular with his inferiors, — it was no marvel that one part of the world forgave to a man rich and young the irregularities of dissipation, that another forgot real immorality in favour of affected religion, or that the remainder allowed the most unexceptionable excellence of words to atone for the unobtrusive errors of a conduct which did not prejudice *them*.

“It is true,” said his friends, “that he loves women too much: but he is young; he will marry and amend.”

Mr. Crauford did *marry*; and, strange as it may seem, for love, — at least for that brute-like love, of which alone he was capable. After a few years of ill-usage on his side, and endurance on his wife's, they parted. Tired of her person, and profiting by her gentleness of temper, he sent her to an obscure corner of the country, to starve upon the miserable pittance which was all he allowed her from his superfluities. Even then — such is the effect of the showy proprieties of form and word — Mr. Crauford sank not in the estimation of the world.

“It was easy to see,” said the spectators of his domestic drama, “that a man in temper so mild, in his business so honourable, so civil of speech, so attentive to the stocks and the sermon, could not have been the party to blame. One never knew the rights of matrimonial disagreements, nor could sufficiently estimate the provoking disparities of temper. Cer-

tainly Mrs. Crauford never did look in good humour, and had not the open countenance of her husband; and certainly the very excesses of Mr. Crauford betokened a generous warmth of heart, which the sullenness of his conjugal partner might easily chill and revolt."

And thus, unquestioned and unblamed, Mr. Crauford walked onward in his beaten way; and, secretly laughing at the toleration of the crowd, continued at his luxurious villa the orgies of a passionless yet brutal sensuality.

So far might the character of Richard Crauford find parallels in hypocrisy and its success. Dive we now deeper into his soul. Possessed of talents which, though of a secondary rank, were in that rank consummate, Mr. Crauford could not be a villain by intuition or the irregular bias of his nature: he was a villain upon a grander scale; he was a villain upon system. Having little learning and less knowledge, out of his profession his reflection expended itself upon apparently obvious deductions from the great and mysterious book of life. He saw vice prosperous in externals, and from this sight his conclusion was drawn. "Vice," said he, "is not an obstacle to success; and if so, it is at least a pleasanter road to it than your narrow and thorny ways of virtue." But there are certain vices which require the mask of virtue, and Crauford thought it easier to wear the mask than to school his soul to the reality. So to the villain he added the hypocrite. He found the success equalled his hopes, for he had both craft and genius; nor was he naturally without the minor amiabilities, which to the ignorance of the herd seem more valuable than coin of a more important amount. Blinded as we are by prejudice, we not only *mistake* but *prefer* decencies to moralities; and, like the inhabitants of Cos, when offered the choice of two statues of the same goddess, we choose, not that which is the most beautiful, but that which is the most dressed.

Accustomed easily to dupe mankind, Crauford soon grew to despise them; and from justifying roguery by his own interest, he now justified it by the folly of others; and as no wretch is so unredeemed as to be without excuse to himself, Crauford actually persuaded his reason that he was vicious upon prin-

ciple, and a rascal on a system of morality. But why the desire of this man, so consummately worldly and heartless, for an intimacy with the impoverished and powerless student? This question is easily answered. In the first place, during Crauford's acquaintance with Glendower abroad, the latter had often, though innocently, galled the vanity and self-pride of the *parvenu* affecting the aristocrat, and in poverty the *parvenu* was anxious to retaliate. But this desire would probably have passed away after he had satisfied his curiosity, or gloated his spite, by one or two insights into Glendower's home, — for Crauford, though at times a malicious, was not a vindictive, man, — had it not been for a much more powerful object which afterwards occurred to him. In an extensive scheme of fraud, which for many years this man had carried on and which for secrecy and boldness was almost unequalled, it had of late become necessary to his safety to have a partner, or rather tool. A man of education, talent, and courage was indispensable, and Crauford had resolved that Glendower should be that man. With the supreme confidence in his own powers which long success had given him; with a sovereign contempt for, or rather disbelief in, human integrity; and with a thorough conviction that the bribe to him was the bribe with all, and that none would on any account be poor if they had the offer to be rich, — Crauford did not bestow a moment's consideration upon the difficulty of his task, or conceive that in the nature and mind of Glendower there could exist any obstacle to his design.

Men addicted to calculation are accustomed to suppose those employed in the same mental pursuit arrive, or ought to arrive, at the same final conclusion. Now, looking upon Glendower as a philosopher, Crauford looked upon him as a man who, however he might conceal his real opinions, secretly laughed, like Crauford's self, not only at the established customs, but at the established moralities of the world. Ill-acquainted with books, the worthy Richard was, like all men similarly situated, somewhat infected by the very prejudices he affected to despise; and he shared the vulgar disposition to doubt the hearts of those who cultivate the head. Glendower himself had con-

firmed this opinion by lauding, though he did not entirely subscribe to, those moralists who have made an enlightened self-interest the proper measure of all human conduct; and Crauford, utterly unable to comprehend this system in its grand, naturally interpreted it in a partial, sense. Espousing self-interest as his own code, he deemed that in reality Glendower's principles did not differ greatly from his; and, as there is no pleasure to a hypocrite like that of finding a fit opportunity to unburden some of his real sentiments, Crauford was occasionally wont to hold some conference and argument with the student, in which his opinions were not utterly cloaked in their usual disguise; but cautious even in his candour, he always forbore stating such opinions as his own: he merely mentioned them as those which a man beholding the villanies and follies of his kind, might be tempted to form; and thus Glendower, though not greatly esteeming his acquaintance, looked upon him as one ignorant in his opinions, but not likely to err in his conduct.

These conversations did, however, it is true, increase Crauford's estimate of Glendower's integrity, but they by no means diminished his confidence of subduing it. Honour, a deep and pure sense of the divinity of good, the steady desire of rectitude, and the supporting aid of a sincere religion,—these he did not deny to his intended tool: he rather rejoiced that he possessed them. With the profound arrogance, the sense of immeasurable superiority, which men of no principle invariably feel for those who have it, Crauford said to himself, “Those very virtues will be my best dupes; they cannot resist the temptations I shall offer; but they can resist any offer to betray me afterwards; for no man can resist hunger: but your fine feelings, your nice honour, your precise religion,—he! he! he!—these can teach a man very well to resist a common inducement; they cannot make him submit to be his own executioner; but they can prevent his turning king's evidence and being executioner to another. No, no: it is not to your common rogues that I may dare trust my secret,—*my* secret, which is my life! It is precisely of such a fine, Athe-nian, moral rogue as I shall make my proud friend that I am

in want. But he has some silly scruples; we must beat them away: we must not be too rash; and above all, we must leave the best argument to poverty. Want is your finest orator; a starving wife, a famished brat, — he! he! — these are your true tempters, — your true fathers of crime, and fillers of jails and gibbets. Let me see: he has no money, I know, but what he gets from that bookseller. What bookseller, by the by? Ah, rare thought! I'll find out, and cut off that supply. My lady wife's cheek will look somewhat thinner next month, I fancy — he! he! But 't is a pity, for she is a glorious creature! Who knows but I may serve two purposes? However, one at present! business first, and pleasure afterwards; and, faith, the business is damnably like that of life and death."

Muttering such thoughts as these, Crauford took his way one evening to Glendower's house.

CHAPTER XLII.

Iago. — Virtue; a fig! — 't is in ourselves that we are thus and thus. — *Othello.*

"So, so, my little one, don't let me disturb you. Madam, dare I venture to hope your acceptance of this fruit? I chose it myself, and I am somewhat of a judge. Oh! Glendower, here is the pamphlet you wished to see."

With this salutation, Crauford drew his chair to the table by which Glendower sat, and entered into conversation with his purposed victim. A comely and a pleasing countenance had Richard Crauford! the lonely light of the room fell upon a face which, though forty years of guile had gone over it, was as fair and unwrinkled as a boy's. Small, well-cut features; a blooming complexion; eyes of the lightest blue; a forehead high, though narrow; and a mouth from which the smile was never absent, — these, joined to a manner at once soft and confident, and an elegant though unaffected study of

dress, gave to Crauford a personal appearance well suited to aid the effect of his hypocritical and dissembling mind.

“Well, my friend,” said he, “always at your books, eh? Ah! it is a happy taste; would that I had cultivated it more; but we who are condemned to business have little leisure to follow our own inclinations. It is only on Sundays that I have time to read; and then (to say truth I am an old-fashioned man, whom the gayer part of the world laughs at), and then I am too occupied with the Book of Books to think of any less important study.”

Not deeming that a peculiar reply was required to this pious speech, Glendower did not take that advantage of Crauford’s pause which it was evidently intended that he should. With a glance towards the student’s wife, our mercantile friend continued: “I did once — once in my young dreams — intend that whenever I married I would relinquish a profession for which, after all, I am but little calculated. I pictured to myself a country retreat, well stored with books; and having concentrated in one home all the attractions which would have tempted my thoughts abroad, I had designed to surrender myself solely to those studies which, I lament to say, were but ill attended to in my earlier education. But — but” (here Mr. Crauford sighed deeply, and averted his face) “fate willed it otherwise!”

Whatever reply of sympathetic admiration or condolence Glendower might have made was interrupted by one of those sudden and overpowering attacks of faintness which had of late seized the delicate and declining health of his wife. He rose, and leaned over her with a fondness and alarm which curled the lip of his visitor.

“Thus it is,” said Crauford to himself, “with weak minds, under the influence of habit. The love of lust becomes the love of custom, and the last is as strong as the first.”

When she had recovered, she rose, and (with her child) retired to rest, the only restorative she ever found effectual for her complaint. Glendower went with her, and, after having seen her eyes, which swam with tears of gratitude at his love, close in the seeming slumber she affected in order to release

him from his watch, he returned to Crauford. He found that gentleman leaning against the chimney-piece with folded arms, and apparently immersed in thought. A very good opportunity had Glendower's absence afforded to a man whose boast it was never to lose one. Looking over the papers on the table, he had seen and possessed himself of the address of the bookseller the student dealt with. "So much for business, now for philanthropy," said Mr. Crauford, in his favorite anti-thetical phrase, throwing himself in his attitude against the chimney-piece.

As Glendower entered, Crauford started from his revery, and with a melancholy air and pensive voice said, —

"Alas, my friend, when I look upon this humble apartment, the weak health of your unequalled wife, your obscurity, your misfortunes; when I look upon these, and contrast them with your mind, your talents, and all that you were born and fitted for, I cannot but feel tempted to believe with those who imagine the pursuit of virtue a chimera, and who justify their own worldly policy by the example of all their kind."

"Virtue," said Glendower, "would indeed be a chimera, did it require support from those whom you have cited."

"True, — most true," answered Crauford, somewhat disconcerted in reality, though not in appearance; "and yet, strange as it may seem, I have known some of those persons very good, admirably good men. They were extremely moral and religious: they only played the great game for worldly advantage upon the same terms as the other players; nay, they never made a move in it without most fervently and sincerely praying for divine assistance."

"I readily believe you," said Glendower, who always, if possible, avoided a controversy: "the easiest person to deceive is one's own self."

"Admirably said," answered Crauford, who thought it nevertheless one of the most foolish observations he had ever heard, "admirably said! and yet my heart does grieve bitterly for the trials and distresses it surveys. One must make excuses for poor human frailty; and one is often placed in such

circumstances as to render it scarcely possible without the grace of God" (here Crauford lifted up his eyes) "not to be urged, as it were, into the reasonings and actions of the world."

Not exactly comprehending this observation, and not very closely attending to it, Glendower merely bowed, as in assent, and Crauford continued, —

"I remember a remarkable instance of this truth. One of my partner's clerks had, through misfortune or imprudence, fallen into the greatest distress. His wife, his children (he had a numerous family), were on the literal and absolute verge of starvation. Another clerk, taking advantage of these circumstances, communicated to the distressed man a plan for defrauding his employer. The poor fellow yielded to the temptation, and was at last discovered. I spoke to him myself, for I was interested in his fate, and had always esteemed him. 'What,' said I, 'was your motive for this fraud?' 'My duty!' answered the man, fervently; 'my duty! Was I to suffer my wife, my children, to starve before my face, when I could save them at a little personal risk? No: my duty forbade it!' and in truth, Glendower, there was something very plausible in this manner of putting the question."

"You might, in answering it," said Glendower, "have put the point in a manner equally plausible and more true: was he to commit a great crime against the millions connected by social order, for the sake of serving a single family, and that his own?"

"Quite right," answered Crauford: "that was just the point of view in which I did put it; but the man, who was something of a reasoner, replied, 'Public law is instituted for public happiness. Now if *mine* and my children's happiness is infinitely and immeasurably more served by this comparatively petty fraud than my employer's is advanced by my abstaining from, or injured by my committing it, why, the origin of law itself allows me to do it.' What say you to that, Glendower? It is something in your Utilitarian, or, as you term it, Epi-

curean¹ principle; is it not?" and Crauford, shading his eyes, as if from the light, watched narrowly Glendower's countenance, while he concealed his own.

"Poor fool!" said Glendower; "the man was ignorant of the first lesson in his moral primer. Did he not know that no rule is to be applied to a peculiar instance, but extended to its most general bearings? Is it necessary even to observe that the particular consequence of fraud in this man might, it is true, be but the ridding his employer of superfluities, scarcely missed, for the relief of most urgent want in two or three individuals; but the general consequences of fraud and treachery would be the disorganization of all society? Do not think, therefore; that this man was a disciple of my, or of any, system of morality."

"It is very just, very," said Mr. Crauford, with a benevolent sigh; "but you will own that want seldom allows great nicety in moral distinctions, and that when those whom you love most in the world are starving, you may be pitied, if not forgiven, for losing sight of the after laws of Nature and recurring to her first ordinance, self-preservation."

"We should be harsh, indeed," answered Glendower, "if we did not pity; or, even while the law condemned, if the individual did not forgive."

"So I said, so I said," cried Crauford; "and in interceding for the poor fellow, whose pardon I am happy to say I procured, I could not help declaring that, if I were placed in the same circumstances, I am not sure that my crime would not have been the same."

"No man *could* feel sure!" said Glendower, dejectedly.

Delighted and surprised with this confession, Crauford continued: "I believe, — I fear not; thank God, *our* virtue can never be so tried: but even you, Glendower, even *you*, philosopher, moralist as you are, — just, good, wise, religious, — even you might be tempted, if you saw your angel wife dying for

¹ See the article on Mr. Moore's "Epicurean" in the "Westminster Review." Though the strictures on that work are harsh and unjust, yet the part relating to the real philosophy of Epicurus is one of the most masterly things in criticism.

want of the aid, the very sustenance, necessary to existence, and your innocent and beautiful daughter stretch her little hands to you and cry in the accents of famine for bread."

The student made no reply for a few moments, but averted his countenance, and then in a slow tone said, "Let us drop this subject: none know their strength till they are tried; self-confidence should accompany virtue, but not precede it."

A momentary flash broke from the usually calm, cold eye of Richard Crauford. "He is mine," thought he: "the very name of want abases his pride: what will the reality do? O human nature, how I know and mock thee!"

"You are right," said Crauford, aloud; "let us talk of the pamphlet."

And after a short conversation upon indifferent subjects, the visitor departed. Early the next morning was Mr. Crauford seen on foot, taking his way to the bookseller whose address he had learnt. The bookseller was known as a man of a strongly evangelical bias. "We must insinuate a lie or two," said Crauford, inly, "about Glendower's principles. He! he! it will be a fine stroke of genius to make the upright tradesman suffer Glendower to starve out of a principle of religion. But who would have thought my prey had been so easily snared? why, if I had proposed the matter last night, I verily think he would have agreed to it."

Amusing himself with these thoughts, Crauford arrived at the bookseller's. There he found Fate had saved him from one crime at least. The whole house was in confusion: the bookseller had that morning died of an apoplectic fit.

"Good God! how shocking!" said Crauford to the foreman; "but he was a most worthy man, and Providence could no longer spare him. The ways of Heaven are inscrutable! Oblige me with three copies of that precious tract termed the 'Divine Call.' I should like to be allowed permission to attend the funeral of so excellent a man. Good morning, sir. Alas! alas!" and, shaking his head piteously, Mr. Crauford left the shop.

"Hurra!" said he, almost audibly, when he was once more in the street, "hurra! my victim is made; my game is won:

death or the devil fights for me. But, hold: there are other booksellers in this monstrous city!—ay, but not above two or three in our philosopher's way. I must forestall him there, —so, so,—that is soon settled. Now, then, I must leave him a little while, undisturbed, to his fate. Perhaps my next visit may be to him in jail: your debtor's side of the Fleet is almost as good a pleader as an empty stomach, —he! he! he! but the stroke must be made soon, for time presses, and this d—d business spreads so fast that if I don't have a speedy help, it will be too much for my hands, griping as they are. However, if it holds on a year longer, I will change my seat in the Lower House for one in the Upper; twenty thousand pounds to the minister may make a merchant a very pretty peer. O brave Richard Crauford, wise Richard Crauford, fortunate Richard Crauford, *noble* Richard Crauford! Why, if thou art ever hanged, it will be by a jury of *peers*. 'Gad, the rope would then have a dignity in it, instead of disgrace. But stay, here comes the Dean of —; not orthodox, it is said, —rigid Calvinist! out with the 'Divine Call'!"

When Mr. Richard Crauford repaired next to Glendower, what was his astonishment and dismay at hearing he had left his home, none knew whither nor could give the inquirer the slightest clew.

"How long has he left?" said Crauford to the landlady.

"Five days, sir."

"And will he not return to settle any little debts he may have incurred?" said Crauford.

"Oh, no, sir: he paid them all before he went. Poor gentleman, — for though he was poor, he was the finest and most thorough gentleman I ever saw!—my heart bled for him. They parted with all their valuables to discharge their debts: the books and instruments and busts, — all went; and what I saw, though he spoke so indifferently about it, hurt him the most, — he sold even the lady's picture. 'Mrs. Croftson,' said he, 'Mr. —, the painter, will send for that picture the day after I leave you. See that he has it, and that the greatest care is taken of it in delivery.'"

"And you cannot even guess where he has gone to?"

“No, sir; a single porter was sufficient to convey his remaining goods, and he took him from some distant part of the town.”

“Ten thousand devils!” muttered Crauford, as he turned away; “I should have foreseen this! He is lost now. Of course he will again change his name; and in the d—d holes and corners of this gigantic puzzle of houses, how shall I ever find him out? and time presses too! Well, well, well! there is a fine prize for being cleverer, or, as fools would say, more rascally than others; but there is a world of trouble in winning it. But come; I will go home, lock myself up, and get drunk! I am as melancholy as a cat in love, and about as stupid; and, faith, one must get spirits in order to hit on a new invention. But if there be consistency in fortune, or success in perseverance, or wit in Richard Crauford, that man shall yet be my victim — and preserver!”

CHAPTER XLIII.

REVENGE is now the cud
That I do chew. — I'll challenge him.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

WE return to “the world of fashion,” as the admirers of the polite novel of — would say. The noon-day sun broke hot and sultry through half-closed curtains of roseate silk, playing in broken beams upon rare and fragrant exotics, which cast the perfumes of southern summers over a chamber, moderate, indeed, as to its dimensions, but decorated with a splendour rather gaudy than graceful, and indicating much more a passion for luxury than a refinement of taste.

At a small writing-table sat the beautiful La Meronville. She had just finished a note, written (how Jean Jacques would have been enchanted) upon paper *couleur de rose*, with a mother-of-pearl pen, formed as one of Cupid's darts, dipped into an ink-stand of the same material, which was shaped as

a quiver, and placed at the back of a little Love, exquisitely wrought. She was folding this billet when a page, fantastically dressed, entered, and, announcing Lord Borodaile, was immediately followed by that nobleman. Eagerly and almost blushing did La Meronville thrust the note into her bosom, and hasten to greet and to embrace her adorer. Lord Borodaile flung himself on one of the sofas with a listless and discontented air. The experienced Frenchwoman saw that there was a cloud on his brow.

"My dear friend," said she, in her own tongue, "you seem vexed: has anything annoyed you?"

"No, Cecile, no. By the by, who supped with you last night?"

"Oh! the Duke of Haverfield, your friend."

"My friend!" interrupted Borodaile, haughtily: "he's no friend of mine; a vulgar, talkative fellow; my friend, indeed!"

"Well, I beg your pardon: then there was Mademoiselle Caumartin, and the Prince Pietro del Orbino, and Mr. Trevanion, and Mr. Lin — Lin — Linten, or Linden."

"And pray, will you allow me to ask how you became acquainted with Mr. Lin — Lin — Linten, or Linden?"

"Assuredly; through the Duke of Haverfield."

"Humph! Cecile, my love, that young man is not fit to be the acquaintance of my friend: allow me to strike him from your list."

"Certainly, certainly!" said La Meronville, hastily; and stooping as if to pick up a fallen glove, though, in reality, to hide her face from Lord Borodaile's searching eye, the letter she had written fell from her bosom. Lord Borodaile's glance detected the superscription, and before La Meronville could regain the note he had possessed himself of it.

"À Monsieur, Monsieur Linden!" said he, coldly, reading the address; "and, pray, how long have you corresponded with that gentleman?"

Now La Meronville's situation at that moment was by no means agreeable. She saw at one glance that no falsehood or artifice could avail her; for Lord Borodaile might deem himself fully justified in reading the note, which would contradict

any glossing statement she might make. She saw this. She was a woman of independence; cared not a straw for Lord Borodaile at present, though she *had* had a caprice for him; knew that she might choose her *bon ami* out of all London, and replied, —

“That is the first letter I ever wrote to him; but I own that it will not be the last.”

Lord Borodaile turned pale.

“And will you suffer me to read it?” said he; for even in these cases he was punctiliously honourable.

La Meronville hesitated. She did not know him. “If I do not consent,” thought she, “he will do it without the consent: better submit with a good grace. — Certainly!” she answered, with an air of indifference.

Borodaile opened and read the note; it was as follows: —

You have inspired me with a feeling for you which astonishes myself. Ah, why should that love be the strongest which is the swiftest in its growth? I used to love Lord Borodaile: I now only esteem him; the love has flown to you. If I judge rightly from your words and your eyes, this avowal will not be unwelcome to you. Come and assure me, in person, of a persuasion so dear to my heart.

C. L. M.

“A very pretty effusion!” said Lord Borodaile, sarcastically, and only showing his inward rage by the increasing paleness of his complexion and a slight compression of his lip. “I thank you for your confidence in me. All I ask is that you will not send this note till to-morrow. Allow me to take my leave of you first, and to find in Mr. Linden a successor rather than a rival.”

“Your request, my friend,” said La Meronville, adjusting her hair, “is but reasonable. I see that you understand these arrangements; and, for my part, I think that the end of love should always be the beginning of friendship: let it be so with us!”

“You do me too much honour,” said Borodaile, bowing profoundly. “Meanwhile I depend upon your promise, and bid you, as a lover, farewell forever.”

With his usual slow step Lord Borodaile descended the stairs, and walked towards the central *quartier* of town. His meditations were of no soothing nature. "To be seen by that man in a ridiculous and degrading situation; to be pestered with his d—d civility; to be rivalled by him with Lady Flora; to be duped and outdone by him with my mistress! Ay, all this have I been; but vengeance shall come yet. As for La Meronville, the loss is a gain; and, thank Heaven, I did not betray myself by venting my passion and making a scene. But it was I who ought to have discarded her, not the reverse; and—death and confusion—for that upstart, above all men! And she talked in her letter about his eyes and words. Insolent coxcomb, to dare to have eyes and words for one who belonged to me. Well, well, he shall smart for this. But let me consider: I must not play the jealous fool, must not fight for a —, must not show the world that a man, nobody knows who, could really outwit and outdo *me*, — me, — Francis Borodaile! No, no: I must throw the insult upon him, must myself be the aggressor and the challenged; then, too, I shall have the choice of weapons, — pistols of course. Where shall I hit him, by the by? I wish I shot as well as I used to do at Naples. I was in full practice then. Cursed place, where there was nothing else to do but to practise!"

Immersed in these or somewhat similar reflections did Lord Borodaile enter Pall Mall.

"Ah, Borodaile!" said Lord St. George, suddenly emerging from a shop. "This is really fortunate: you are going my way exactly; allow me to join you."

Now Lord Borodaile, to say nothing of his happening at that time to be in a mood more than usually unsocial, could never at *any* time bear the thought of being made an instrument of convenience, pleasure, or good fortune to another. He therefore, with a little resentment at Lord St. George's familiarity, coldly replied, "I am sorry that I cannot avail myself of your offer. I am sure my way is *not* the same as yours."

"Then," replied Lord St. George, who was a good-natured, indolent man, who imagined everybody was as averse to walking alone as he was, "then I will make *mine* the same as yours."

Borodaile coloured: though always uncivil, he did not like to be excelled in good manners; and therefore replied, that nothing but extreme business at White's could have induced him to prefer his own way to that of Lord St. George.

The good-natured peer took Lord Borodaile's arm. It was a natural incident, but it vexed the punctilious viscount that any man should *take*, not *offer*, the support.

"So, they say," observed Lord St. George, "that young Linden is to marry Lady Flora Ardenne."

"Les on-dits font la gazette des fous," rejoined Borodaile with a sneer. "I believe that Lady Flora is little likely to contract such a *mésalliance*."

"*Mésalliance!*" replied Lord St. George. "I thought Linden was of a very old family, which you know the Westboroughs are not, and he has great expectations —"

"Which are never to be realized," interrupted Borodaile, laughing scornfully.

"Ah, indeed!" said Lord St. George, seriously. "Well, at all events he is a very agreeable, unaffected young man: and, by the by, Borodaile, you will meet him *chez moi* to-day; you know you dine with me?"

"Meet Mr. Linden! I shall be proud to have that honour," said Borodaile, with sparkling eyes; "will Lady Westborough be also of the party?"

"No, poor Lady St. George is very ill, and I have taken the opportunity to ask only men."

"You have done wisely, my lord," said Borodaile, *secum multa revolvens*; "and I assure you I wanted no hint to remind me of your invitation."

Here the Duke of Haverfield joined them. The duke never bowed to any one of the male sex; he therefore *nodded* to Borodaile, who, with a very supercilious formality, took off his hat in returning the salutation. The viscount had at least this merit in his pride,—that if it was reserved to the humble, it was contemptuous to the high: his inferiors he wished to remain where they were; his equals he longed to lower.

"So I dine with you, Lord St. George, to-day," said the duke; "whom shall I meet?"

“Lorà Borodaile, for one,” answered St. George; “my brother, Aspeden, Findlater, Orbino, and Linden.”

“Linden!” cried the duke; “I’m very glad to hear it, *c’est un homme fait exprès pour moi*. He is very clever, and not above playing the fool; has humour without setting up for a wit, and is a good fellow without being a bad man. I like him excessively.”

“Lord St. George,” said Borodaile, who seemed that day to be the very martyr of the unconscious Clarence, “I wish you good morning. I have only just remembered an engagement which I *must* keep before I go to White’s.”

And with a bow to the duke, and a remonstrance from Lord St. George, Borodaile effected his escape. His complexion was, insensibly to himself, more raised than usual, his step more stately; his mind, for the first time for years, was fully excited and engrossed. Ah, what a delightful thing it is for an idle man, who has been dying of *ennui*, to find an enemy!

CHAPTER XLIV.

You must challenge him :
There’s no avoiding ; one or both must drop.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

“HA! ha! ha! bravo, Linden!” cried Lord St. George, from the head of his splendid board, in approbation of some witticism of Clarence’s; and ha! ha! ha! or he! he! he! according to the cachinnatory intonations of the guests rang around.

“Your lordship seems unwell,” said Lord Aspeden to Borodaile; “allow me to take wine with you.”

Lord Borodaile bowed his assent.

“Pray,” said Mr. St. George to Clarence, “have you seen my friend Talbot lately?”

“This very morning,” replied Linden: “indeed, I generally visit him three or four times a week; he often asks after you.”

“Indeed!” said Mr. St. George, rather flattered; “he does me much honour; but he is a distant connection of mine, and I suppose I must attribute his recollection of me to that cause. He is a near relation of yours, too, I think: is he not?”

“I *am* related to him,” answered Clarence, colouring.

Lord Borodaile leaned forward, and his lip curled. Though, in some respects, a very unamiable man, he had, as we have said, his good points. He hated a lie as much as Achilles did; and he believed in his heart of hearts that Clarence had just uttered one.

“Why,” observed Lord Aspeden, “why, Lord Borodaile, the Talbots of Scarsdale are branches of *your* genealogical tree; therefore your lordship must be related to Linden; “you are ‘two cherries on one stalk’!”

“We are by no means related,” said Lord Borodaile, with a distinct and clear voice, intended expressly for Clarence; “that is an honour which I must beg leave most positively to disclaim.”

There was a dead silence; the eyes of all who heard a remark so intentionally rude were turned immediately towards Clarence. His cheek burned like fire; he hesitated a moment, and then said, in the same key, though with a little trembling in his intonation, —

“Lord Borodaile cannot be more anxious to disclaim it than I am.”

“And yet,” returned the viscount, stung to the soul, “they who advance false pretensions ought at least to support them!”

“I do not understand you, my lord,” said Clarence.

“Possibly not,” answered Borodaile, carelessly: “there is a maxim which says that people not accustomed to speak truth cannot comprehend it in others.”

Unlike the generality of modern heroes, who are always in a passion, — off-hand, dashing fellows, in whom irascibility is a virtue, — Clarence was peculiarly sweet-tempered by nature, and had, by habit, acquired a command over all his passions to a degree very uncommon in so young a man. He made no

reply to the inexcusable affront he had received. His lip quivered a little, and the flush of his countenance was succeeded by an extreme paleness; this was all: he did not even leave the room immediately, but waited till the silence was broken by some well-bred member of the party; and then, pleading an early engagement as an excuse for his retiring so soon, he rose and departed.

There was throughout the room a universal feeling of sympathy with the affront and indignation against the offender; for, to say nothing of Clarence's popularity and the extreme dislike in which Lord Borodaile was held, there could be no doubt as to the wantonness of the outrage or the moderation of the aggrieved party. Lord Borodaile already felt the punishment of his offence: his very pride, while it rendered him indifferent to the spirit, had hitherto kept him scrupulous as to the formalities of social politeness; and he could not but see the grossness with which he had suffered himself to violate them and the light in which his conduct was regarded. However, this internal discomfort only rendered him the more embittered against Clarence and the more confirmed in his revenge. Resuming, by a strong effort, all the external indifference habitual to his manner, he attempted to enter into a conversation with those of the party who were next to him: but his remarks produced answers brief and cold; even Lord Aspeden forgot his diplomacy and his smile; Lord St. George replied to his observations by a monosyllable; and the Duke of Haverfield, for the first time in his life, asserted the prerogative which his rank gave him of setting the example,—his grace did not reply to Lord Borodaile at all. In truth, every one present was seriously displeased. All civilized societies have a paramount interest in repressing the rude. Nevertheless, Lord Borodaile bore the brunt of his unpopularity with a steadiness and unembarrassed composure worthy of a better cause; and finding, at last, a companion disposed to be loquacious in the person of Sir Christopher Findlater (whose good heart, though its first impulse resented more violently than that of any heart present the discourtesy of the viscount, yet soon warmed to the *désagremens* of his situation, and hastened

to adopt its favourite maxim of forgive and forget), Lord Boro-daile sat the meeting out; and if he did not leave the latest, he was at least not the first to follow Clarence: "L'orgueil ou donne le courage, ou il y supplée."¹

Meanwhile Linden had returned to his solitary home. He hastened to his room, locked the door, flung himself on his sofa, and burst into a violent and almost feminine paroxysm of tears. This fit lasted for more than an hour; and when Clarence at length stilled the indignant swellings of his heart, and rose from his supine position, he started, as his eye fell upon the opposite mirror, so haggard and exhausted seemed the forced and fearful calmness of his countenance. With a hurried step; with arms now folded on his bosom, now wildly tossed from him; and the hand so firmly clenched that the very bones seemed working through the skin; with a brow now fierce, now only dejected; and a complexion which one while burnt as with the crimson flush of a fever, and at another was wan and colourless, like his whose cheek a spectre has blanched, — Clarence paced his apartment, the victim not only of shame, — the bitterest of tortures to a young and high mind, — but of other contending feelings, which alternately exasperated and palsied his wrath, and gave to his resolves at one moment an almost savage ferocity and at the next an almost cowardly vacillation.

The clock had just struck the hour of twelve when a knock at the door announced a visitor. Steps were heard on the stairs and presently a tap at Clarence's room-door. He unlocked it and the Duke of Haverfield entered.

"I am charmed to find you at home," cried the duke, with his usual half kind, half careless address. "I was determined to call upon you, and be the first to offer my services in this unpleasant affair."

Clarence pressed the duke's hand, but made no answer.

"Nothing could be so unhandsome as Lord Boro-daile's conduct," continued the duke. "I hope you both fence and shoot well. I shall never forgive you, if you do not put an end to that piece of rigidity."

¹ "Pride either gives courage or supplies the place of it."

Clarence continued to walk about the room in great agitation; the duke looked at him with some surprise. At last Linden paused by the window, and said, half unconsciously, "It must be so: I cannot avoid fighting!"

"Avoid fighting!" cried his grace, in undisguised astonishment. "No, indeed: but that is the least part of the matter; you must kill as well as fight him."

"Kill *him!*" cried Clarence, wildly, "whom?" and then sinking into a chair, he covered his face with his hands for a few moments, and seemed to struggle with his emotions.

"Well," thought the duke, "I never was more mistaken in my life. I could have bet my black horse against Trevanion's Julia, which is certainly the most worthless thing I know, that Linden had been a brave fellow: but these English heroes almost go into fits at a duel; one manages such things, as Sterne says, better in France."

Clarence now rose, calm and collected. He sat down; wrote a brief note to Borodaile, demanding the fullest apology, or the earliest meeting; put it into the duke's hands, and said with a faint smile, "My dear duke, dare I ask you to be a second to a man who has been so grievously affronted and whose genealogy has been so disputed?"

"My dear Linden," said the duke, warmly, "I have always been grateful to my station in life for this advantage, — the freedom with which it has enabled me to select my own acquaintance and to follow my own pursuits. I am now more grateful to it than ever, because it has given me a better opportunity than I should otherwise have had of serving one whom I have always esteemed. In entering into your quarrel I shall at least show the world that there are some men not inferior in pretensions to Lord Borodaile who despise arrogance and resent overbearance even to others. Your cause I consider the common cause of society; but I shall take it up, if you will allow me, with the distinguishing zeal of a friend."

Clarence, who was much affected by the kindness of this speech, replied in a similar vein; and the duke, having read and approved the letter, rose. "There is, in my opinion," said he, "no time to be lost. I will go to Borodaile this very even-

ing: adieu, *mon cher!* you shall kill the Argus, and then carry off the Io. I feel in a double passion with that ambulating poker, who is only malleable when he is red-hot, when I think how honourably scrupulous you were with La Meronville last night, notwithstanding all her advances; but I go to bury Cæsar, not to scold him. *Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER XLV.

Conon. — You're well met, Crates.

Crates. — If we part so, Conon. — *Queen of Corinth.*

It was as might be expected from the character of the aggressor. Lord Borodaile refused all apology, and agreed with avidity to a speedy rendezvous. He chose pistols (choice, then, was not merely nominal), and selected Mr. Percy Bobus for his second, a gentleman who was much fonder of acting in that capacity than in the more honourable one of a principal. The author of "Lacon" says "that if all seconds were as averse to duels as their principals, there would be very little blood spilt in that way;" and it was certainly astonishing to compare the zeal with which Mr. Bobus busied himself about this "affair" with that testified by him on another occasion when he himself was more immediately concerned.

The morning came. Mr. Bobus breakfasted with his friend. "Damn it, Borodaile," said he, as the latter was receiving the ultimate polish of the hairdresser, "I never saw you look better in my life. It will be a great pity if that fellow shoots you."

"Shoots *me!*" said Lord Borodaile, very quietly, — "*me!* no! that is *quite* out of the question; but joking apart, Bobus, I will not kill the young man. Where shall I hit him?"

"In the cap of the knee," said Mr. Percy, breaking an egg.

"Nay, that will lame him for life," said Lord Borodaile, putting on his cravat with peculiar exactitude.

"Serve him right," said Mr. Bobus. "Hang him, I never got up so early in my life: it is quite impossible to eat at this hour. Oh!—à propos, Borodaile, have you left any little memoranda for me to execute?"

"Memoranda!—for what?" said Borodaile, who had now just finished his toilet.

"Oh!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, "in case of accident, you know: the man may shoot well, though I never saw him in the gallery."

"Pray," said Lord Borodaile, in a great though suppressed passion, "pray, Mr. Bobus, how often have I to tell you that it is not by Mr. Linden that my days are to terminate: you are sure that Carabine saw to that trigger?"

"Certain," said Mr. Percy, with his mouth full, "certain. Bless me, here's the carriage, and breakfast not half done yet."

"Come, come," cried Borodaile, impatiently, "we must breakfast afterwards. Here, Roberts, see that we have fresh chocolate and some more cutlets when we return."

"I would rather have them now," said Mr. Bobus, foreseeing the possibility of the return being single: "Ibis! redibis?" etc.

"Come, we have not a moment to lose," exclaimed Borodaile, hastening down the stairs; and Mr. Percy Bobus followed, with a strange mixture of various regrets, partly for the breakfast that *was* lost and partly for the friend that *might* be.

When they arrived at the ground, Clarence and the duke were already there: the latter, who was a dead shot, had fully persuaded himself that Clarence was equally adroit, and had, in his providence for Borodaile, brought a surgeon. This was a circumstance of which the viscount, in the plenitude of his confidence for himself and indifference for his opponent, had never once dreamed.

The ground was measured; the parties were about to take the ground. All Linden's former agitation had vanished; his mien was firm, grave, and determined: but he showed none of

the careless and fierce hardihood which characterized his adversary; on the contrary, a close observer might have remarked something sad and dejected amidst all the tranquillity and steadiness of his brow and air.

“For Heaven’s sake,” whispered the duke, as he withdrew from the spot, “square your body a little more to your left and remember your exact level. Borodaile is much shorter than you.”

There was a brief, dread pause: the signal was given; Borodaile fired; his ball pierced Clarence’s side; the wounded man staggered one step, but fell not. He raised his pistol; the duke bent eagerly forward; an expression of disappointment and surprise passed his lips; Clarence had fired in the air. The next moment Linden felt a deadly sickness come over him; he fell into the arms of the surgeon. Borodaile, touched by a forbearance which he had so little right to expect, hastened to the spot. He leaned over his adversary in greater remorse and pity than he would have readily confessed to himself. Clarence unclosed his eyes; they dwelt for one moment upon the subdued and earnest countenance of Borodaile.

“Thank God,” he said faintly, “that *you* were not the victim,” and with those words he fell back insensible. They carried him to his lodgings. His wound was accurately examined. Though not mortal, it was of a dangerous nature; and the surgeons ended a very painful operation by promising a very lingering recovery.

What a charming satisfaction for being insulted!

CHAPTER XLVI.

JE me contente de ce qui peut s'écrire, et je rêve tout ce qui peut se rêver.¹ — DE SÉVIGNÉ.

ABOUT a week after his wound, and the second morning of his return to sense and consciousness, when Clarence opened his eyes, they fell upon a female form seated watchfully and anxiously by his bedside. He raised himself in mute surprise, and the figure, startled by the motion, rose, drew the curtain, and vanished. With great difficulty he rang his bell. His valet, Harrison, on whose mind, though it was of no very exalted order, the kindness and suavity of his master had made a great impression, instantly appeared.

"Who was that lady?" asked Linden. "How came she here?"

Harrison smiled: "Oh, sir, pray please to lie down, and make yourself easy: the lady knows you very well and *would* come here; she insists upon staying in the house, so we made up a bed in the drawing-room and she has watched by you night and day. She speaks very little English to be sure, but your honour knows, begging your pardon, how well I speak French."

"French?" said Clarence, faintly, — "French? In Heaven's name, who is she?"

"A Madame — Madame — La Melonveal, or some such name, sir," said the valet.

Clarence fell back. At that moment his hand was pressed. He turned, and saw Talbot by his side. The kind old man had not suffered La Meronville to be Linden's only nurse: notwithstanding his age and peculiarity of habits, he had fixed his abode all the day in Clarence's house, and at night, instead of returning to his own home, had taken up his lodgings at the nearest hotel.

¹ "I content myself with writing what I am able, and I dream all I possibly can dream."

With a jealous and anxious eye to the real interest and respectability of his adopted son, Talbot had exerted all his address, and even all his power, to induce La Meronville, who had made her settlement previous to Talbot's, to quit the house, but in vain. With that obstinacy which a Frenchwoman when she is sentimental mistakes for nobility of heart, the *ci-devant amante* of Lord Borodaile insisted upon watching and tending one of whose sufferings she said and believed she was the unhappy though innocent cause: and whenever more urgent means of removal were hinted at La Meronville flew to the chamber of her beloved, apostrophized him in a strain worthy of one of D'Arincourt's heroines, and in short was so unreasonably outrageous that the doctors, trembling for the safety of their patient, obtained from Talbot a forced and reluctant acquiescence in the settlement she had obtained.

Ah! what a terrible creature a Frenchwoman is, when, instead of coquetting with a *caprice*, she insists upon conceiving a *grande passion*. Little, however, did Clarence, despite his vexation when he learned of the *bienveillance* of La Meronville, foresee the whole extent of the consequences it would entail upon him: still less did Talbot, who in his seclusion knew not the celebrity of the handsome adventuress, calculate upon the notoriety of her motions or the ill effect her ostentatious attachment would have upon Clarence's prosperity as a lover to Lady Flora. In order to explain these consequences the more fully, let us, for the present, leave our hero to the care of the surgeon, his friends, and his would-be mistress; and while he is more rapidly recovering than the doctors either hoped or presaged, let us renew our acquaintance with a certain fair correspondent.

LETTER FROM THE LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS
ELEANOR TREVANION.

MY DEAREST ELEANOR, — I have been very ill, or you would sooner have received an answer to your kind, — too kind and consoling letter. Indeed I have only just left my bed: they say that I have been delirious, and I believe it; for you cannot conceive what terrible dreams I have had. But these are all over now, and every one is so kind to me, — my poor mother above all! It is a pleasant thing to be ill when we have those who love us to watch our recovery.

I have only been in bed a few days; yet it seems to me as if a long portion of my existence were past, — as if I had stepped into a new era. You remember that my last letter attempted to express my feelings at Mamma's speech about Clarence, and at my seeing him so suddenly. Now, dearest, I cannot but look on that day, on these sensations, as on a distant dream. Every one is so kind to me, Mamma caresses and soothes me so fondly, that I fancy I must have been under some illusion. I am sure they could not seriously have meant to forbid *his* addresses. No, no: I feel that all will yet be well, — so well, that even you, who are of so contented a temper, will own that if you were not Eleanor you would be Flora.

I wonder whether Clarence knows that I have been ill? I wish you knew him. Well, dearest, this letter — a very unhandsome return, I own, for yours — must content you at present, for they will not let me write more; though, so far as I am concerned, I am never so weak, in frame I mean, but what I could scribble to *you* about *him*.

Addio, carissima.

F. A.

I have prevailed on Mamma, who wished to sit by me and amuse me, to go to the Opera to-night, the only amusement of which she is particularly fond. Heaven forgive me for my insincerity, but *he* always comes into our box, and I long to hear some news of him.

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Eleanor, dearest Eleanor, I am again very ill, but not as I was before, ill from a foolish vexation of mind: no, I am now calm and even happy. It was from an increase of cold only that I have suffered a relapse. You may believe this, I assure you, in spite of your well meant but bitter jests upon my infatuation, as you very rightly call it, for Mr. Linden. You ask me what news from the Opera? Silly girl that I was, to lie awake hour after hour, and refuse even to take my draught, lest I should be surprised into sleep, till Mamma returned. I sent Jermyn down directly I heard her knock at the door (oh, how anxiously I had listened for it!) to say that I was still awake and longed to see her. So, of course, Mamma came up, and felt my pulse, and said it was very feverish, and wondered the draught had not composed me; with a great deal more to the same purpose, which I bore as patiently as I could, till it was my turn to talk; and then I admired her dress and her *coiffure*,

and asked if it was a full house, and whether the *prima donna* was in voice, etc. : till, at last, I won my way to the inquiry of who were her visitors. "Lord Borodaile," said she, "and the Duke of —, and Mr. St. George, and Captain Leslie, and Mr. De Retz, and many others." I felt so disappointed, Eleanor, but did not dare ask whether he was not of the list; till, at last, my mother observing me narrowly, said, "And by the by, Mr. Linden looked in for a few minutes. I am glad, my dearest Flora, that I spoke to you so decidedly about him the other day." "Why, Mamma?" said I, hiding my face under the clothes. "Because," said she, in rather a raised voice, "he is quite unworthy of you! but it is late now, and you should go to sleep; to-morrow I will tell you more." I would have given worlds to press the question then, but could not venture. Mamma kissed and left me. I tried to twist her words into a hundred meanings, but in each I only thought that they were dictated by some worldly information, — some new doubts as to his birth or fortune; and, though that supposition distressed me greatly, yet it could not alter my love or deprive me of hope; and so I cried and guessed, and guessed and cried, till at last I cried myself to sleep.

When I awoke, Mamma was already up, and sitting beside me: she talked to me for more than an hour upon ordinary subjects, till at last, perceiving how absent or rather impatient I appeared, she dismissed Jermyn, and spoke to me thus:—

"You know, Flora, that I have always loved you, more perhaps than I ought to have done, more certainly than I have loved your brothers and sisters; but you were my eldest child, my first-born, and all the earliest associations of a mother are blent and entwined with you. You may be sure therefore that I have ever had only your happiness in view, and that it is only with a regard to that end that I now speak to you."

I was a little frightened, Eleanor, by this opening, but I was much more touched, so I took Mamma's hand and kissed and wept silently over it; she continued: "I observed Mr. Linden's attention to you, at —; I knew nothing more of his rank and birth than I do at present: but his situation in the embassy and his personal appearance naturally induced me to suppose him a gentleman of family, and, therefore, if not a great at least not an inferior match for you, so far as worldly distinctions are concerned. Added to this, he was uncommonly handsome, and had that general reputation for talent which is often better than actual wealth or hereditary titles. I therefore did not check, though I would not encourage any attachment you might form for him; and nothing being declared or decisive on either side when we left —, I imagined that if your flirtation with him did even amount to a momen-

tary and girlish phantasy, absence and change of scene would easily and rapidly efface the impression. I believe that in a great measure it *was* effaced when Lord Aspeden returned to England, and with him Mr. Linden. You again met the latter in society almost as constantly as before; a caprice nearly conquered was once more renewed; and in my anxiety that you should marry, not for aggrandizement, but happiness, I own to my sorrow that I rather favoured than forbade his addresses. The young man — remember, Flora — appeared in society as the nephew and heir of a gentleman of ancient family and considerable property; he was rising in diplomacy, popular in the world, and, so far as we could see, of irreproachable character; this must plead my excuse for tolerating his visits, without instituting further inquiries respecting him, and allowing your attachment to proceed without ascertaining how far it had yet extended. I was awakened to a sense of my indiscretion by an inquiry which Mr. Linden's popularity rendered general; namely, if Mr. Talbot was his uncle, who was his father? who his more immediate relations? and at that time Lord Borodaile informed us of the falsehood he had either asserted or allowed to be spread in claiming Mr. Talbot as his relation. This you will observe entirely altered the situation of Mr. Linden with respect to you. Not only his rank in life became uncertain, but suspicious. Nor was this all: his very personal respectability was no longer unimpeachable. Was this dubious and intrusive person, without a name and with a sullied honour, to be your suitor? No, Flora; and it was from this indignant conviction that I spoke to you some days since. Forgive me, my child, if I was less cautious, less confidential than I am now. I did not imagine the wound was so deep, and thought that I should best cure you by seeming unconscious of your danger. The case is now changed; your illness has convinced me of my fault, and the extent of your unhappy attachment: but will my own dear child pardon me if I still continue, if I even confirm, my disapproval of her choice? Last night at the Opera Mr. Linden entered my box. I own that I was cooler to him than usual. He soon left us, and after the Opera I saw him with the Duke of Haverfield, one of the most incorrigible *roués* of the day, leading out a woman of notoriously bad character and of the most ostentatious profligacy. He might have had some propriety, some decency, some concealment at least, but he passed just before me, — before the mother of the woman to whom his vows of honourable attachment were due and who at that very instant was suffering from her infatuation for him. Now, Flora, for this man, an obscure and possibly a plebeian adventurer, whose only claim to notice has been founded on falsehood, whose only merit, a love of you, has been, if not utterly destroyed, at least polluted and debased, — for this

man, poor alike in fortune, character, and honour, can you any longer profess affection or esteem?"

"Never, never, never!" cried I, springing from the bed, and throwing myself upon my mother's neck. "Never: I am your own Flora once more. I will never suffer any one again to make me forget you," and then I sobbed so violently that Mamma was frightened, and bade me lie down and left me to sleep. Several hours have passed since then, and I could not sleep nor think, and I would not cry, for he is no longer worthy of my tears; so I have written to you.

Oh, how I despise and hate myself for having so utterly, in my vanity and folly, forgotten my mother, that dear, kind, constant friend, who never cost me a single tear, but for my own ingratitude! Think, Eleanor, what an affront to me, — to me, who, he so often said, had made all other women worthless in his eyes. Do I hate him? No, I cannot hate. Do I despise? No, I will not despise, but I will forget him, and keep my contempt and hatred for myself.

God bless you! I am worn out. Write soon, or rather come, if possible, to your affectionate but unworthy friend,

F. A.

Good Heavens! Eleanor, he is wounded. He has fought with Lord Borodaile. I have just heard it; Jermyn told me. Can it, can it be true? What, — what have I said against him? Hate? forget? No, no: I never loved him till now.

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[After an interval of several weeks.]

Time has flown, my Eleanor, since you left me, after your short but kind visit, with a heavy but healing wing. I do not think I shall ever again be the giddy girl I have been; but my head will change, not my heart; *that* was never giddy, and that shall still be as much yours as ever. You are wrong in thinking I have not forgotten, at least renounced all affection for, Mr. Linden. I have, though with a long and bitter effort. The woman for whom he fought went, you know, to his house, immediately on hearing of his wound. She has continued with him ever since. He had the audacity to write to me once; my mother brought me the note, and said nothing. She read my heart aright. I returned it unopened. He has even called since his convalescence. Mamma was not at home to him. I hear that he looks pale and altered,

I hope not, — at least I cannot resist praying for his recovery. I stay within entirely; the season is over now, and there are no parties: but I tremble at the thought of meeting him even in the Park or the Gardens. Papa talks of going into the country next week. I cannot tell you how eagerly I look forward to it: and you will then come and see me; will you not, dearest Eleanor?

Ah! what happy days we will have yet: we will read Italian together, as we used to do; you shall teach me your songs, and I will instruct you in mine; we will keep birds as we did, let me see, eight years ago. You will never talk to me of my folly: let that be as if it had never been; but I will wonder with you about your future choice, and grow happy in anticipating your happiness. Oh, how selfish I was some weeks ago! then I could only overwhelm you with my egotisms: now, Eleanor, it is your turn; and you shall see how patiently I will listen to yours. Never fear that you can be too prolix: the diffuser you are, the easier I shall forgive myself.

Are you fond of poetry, Eleanor? I used to say so, but I never felt that I was till lately. I will show you my favourite passages in my favourite poets when you come to see me. You shall see if yours correspond with mine. I am so impatient to leave this horrid town, where everything seems dull, yet feverish, — insipid, yet false. Shall we not be happy when we meet? If your dear aunt will come with you, she shall see how I (that is my mind) am improved.

Farewell.

Ever your most affectionate,

F. A.

CHAPTER XLVII.

BRAVE Talbot, we will follow thee. — *Henry the Sixth.*

“MY letter insultingly returned — myself refused admittance; not a single inquiry made during my illness; indifference joined to positive contempt. By Heaven, it is insupportable!”

“My dear Clarence,” said Talbot to his young friend, who, fretful from pain and writhing beneath his mortification, walked to and fro his chamber with an impatient stride;

“my dear Clarence, do sit down, and not irritate your wound by such violent exercise. I am as much enraged as yourself at the treatment you have received, and no less at a loss to account for it. Your duel, however unfortunate the event, must have done you credit, and obtained you a reputation both for generosity and spirit; so that it cannot be to that occurrence that you are to attribute the change. Let us rather suppose that Lady Flora’s attachment to you has become evident to her father and mother; that they naturally think it would be very undesirable to marry their daughter to a man whose family nobody knows, and whose respectability he is forced into fighting in order to support. Suffer me then to call upon Lady Westborough, whom I knew many years ago, and explain your origin, as well as your relationship to me.”

Linden paused irresolutely.

“Were I sure that Lady Flora was not utterly influenced by her mother’s worldly views, I would gladly consent to your proposal, but — ”

“Forgive me, Clarence,” cried Talbot; “but you really argue much more like a very young man than I ever heard you do before, — even four years ago. To be sure Lady Flora *is* influenced by her mother’s views. Would you have her otherwise? Would you have her, in defiance of all propriety, modesty, obedience to her parents, and right feeling for herself, encourage an attachment to a person not only unknown, but who does not even condescend to throw off the incognito to the woman he addresses? Come, Clarence, give me your instructions, and let me act as your ambassador to-morrow.”

Clarence was silent.

“I may consider it settled then,” replied Talbot: “meanwhile you shall come home and stay with me; the pure air of the country, even so near town, will do you more good than all the doctors in London; and, besides, you will thus be enabled to escape from that persecuting Frenchwoman.”

“In what manner?” said Clarence.

“Why, when you are in my house, she cannot well take up

her abode with you; and you shall, while I am forwarding your suit with Lady Flora, write a very flattering, very grateful letter of excuses to Madame la Meronville. But leave me alone to draw it up for you: meanwhile, let Harrison pack up your clothes and medicines; and we will effect our escape while Madame la Meronville yet sleeps."

Clarence rang the bell; the orders were given, executed, and in less than an hour he and his friends were on their road to Talbot's villa.

As they drove slowly through the grounds to the house, Clarence was sensibly struck with the quiet and stillness which breathed around. On either side of the road the honeysuckle and rose cast their sweet scents to the summer wind, which, though it was scarcely noon, stirred freshly among the trees, and waved as if it breathed a second youth over the wan cheek of the convalescent. The old servant's ear had caught the sound of wheels, and he came to the door, with an expression of quiet delight on his dry countenance, to welcome in his master. They had lived together for so many years that they were grown like one another. Indeed, the veteran valet prided himself on his happy adoption of his master's dress and manner. A proud man, we ween, was that domestic, whenever he had time and listeners for the indulgence of his honest loquacity; many an ancient tale of his master's former glories was then poured from his unburdening remembrance. With what a glow, with what a racy enjoyment, did he expand upon the triumphs of the past; how eloquently did he particularize the exact grace with which *young* Mr. Talbot was wont to enter the room, in which he instantly became the cynosure of ladies' eyes; how faithfully did he minute the courtly dress, the exquisite choice of colour, the costly splendour of material, which were the envy of gentles, and the despairing wonder of their valets; and then the zest with which the good old man would cry, "I dressed the boy!" Even still, this modern Scipio (Le Sage's Scipio, not Rome's) would not believe that his master's sun was utterly set: he was only in a temporary retirement, and would, one day or other, reappear and reastonish the London world. "I would give my

right arm," Jasper was wont to say, "to see Master at court. How fond the King would be of him! Ah! well, well; I wish he was not so melancholy-like with his books, but would go out like other people!"

Poor Jasper! Time is, in general, a harsh wizard in his transformations; but the change which thou didst lament so bitterly was happier for thy master than all his former "palmy state" of admiration and homage. "Nous avons recherché le plaisir," says Rousseau, in one of his own inimitable antitheses, "et le bonheur a fui loin de nous."¹ But in the pursuit of Pleasure we sometimes chance on Wisdom, and Wisdom leads us to the right track, which, if it take us not so far as Happiness, is sure at least of the shelter of Content.

Talbot leaned kindly upon Jasper's arm as he descended from the carriage, and inquired into his servant's rheumatism with the anxiety of a friend. The old housekeeper, waiting in the hall, next received his attention; and in entering the drawing-room, with that consideration, even to animals, which his worldly benevolence had taught him, he paused to notice and caress a large gray cat which rubbed herself against his legs. Doubtless there is some pleasure in making even a gray cat happy!

Clarence having patiently undergone all the shrugs, and sighs, and exclamations of compassion at his reduced and wan appearance, which are the especial prerogatives of ancient domestics, followed the old man into the room. Papers and books, though carefully dusted, were left scrupulously in the places in which Talbot had last deposited them (incomparable good fortune! what would we not give for such chamber handmaidens!); fresh flowers were in all the stands and vases; the large library chair was jealously set in its accustomed place, and all wore, to Talbot's eyes, that cheerful yet sober look of welcome and familiarity which makes a friend of our house.

The old man was in high spirits.

"I know not how it is," said he, "but I feel younger than ever! You have often expressed a wish to see my family seat at Scarsdale: it is certainly a great distance hence; but as you

¹ "We have pursued pleasure, and happiness has fled far from our reach."

will be my travelling companion, I think I will try and crawl there before the summer is over; or, what say you, Clarence, shall I lend it to you and Lady Flora for the honeymoon? You blush! A diplomatist blush! Ah, how the world has changed since my time! But come, Clarence, suppose you write to La Meronville?"

"Not to-day, sir, if you please," said Linden: "I feel so very weak."

"As you please, Clarence; but some years hence you will learn the value of the present. Youth is always a procrastinator, and, consequently, always a penitent." And thus Talbot ran on into a strain of conversation, half serious, half gay, which lasted till Clarence went upstairs to lie down and muse on Lady Flora Ardenne.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

*LA vie est un sommeil. Les vieillards sont ceux dont le sommeil a été plus long: ils ne commencent à se réveiller que quand il faut mourir.*¹—*LA BRUYÈRE.*

"YOU wonder why I have never turned author, with my constant love of literature and my former desire of fame," said Talbot, as he and Clarence sat alone after dinner, discussing many things: "the fact is, that I have often intended it, and as often been frightened from my design. Those terrible feuds; those vehement disputes; those recriminations of abuse, so inseparable from literary life,—appear to me too dreadful for a man not utterly hardened or malevolent voluntarily to encounter. Good Heavens! what acerbity sours the blood of an author! The manifestoes of opposing generals, advancing to pillage, to burn, to destroy, contain not a tithe of

¹ "Life is a sleep. The aged are those whose sleep has been the longest: they begin to awaken themselves just as they are obliged to die."

the ferocity which animates the pages of literary controversialists! No term of reproach is too severe, no vituperation too excessive! the blackest passions, the bitterest, the meanest malice, pour caustic and poison upon every page! It seems as if the greatest talents, the most elaborate knowledge, only sprang from the weakest and worst-regulated mind, as exotics from dung. The private records, the public works of men of letters, teem with an immitigable fury! Their histories might all be reduced into these sentences: they were born; they quarrelled; they died!"

"But," said Clarence, "it would matter little to the world if these quarrels were confined merely to poets and men of imaginative literature, in whom irritability is perhaps almost necessarily allied to the keen and quick susceptibilities which constitute their genius. These are more to be lamented and wondered at among philosophers, theologians, and men of science; the coolness, the patience, the benevolence, which ought to characterize their works, should at least moderate their jealousy and soften their disputes."

"Ah!" said Talbot, "but the vanity of discovery is no less acute than that of creation: the self-love of a philosopher is no less self-love than that of a poet. Besides, those sects the most sure of their opinions, whether in religion or science, are always the most bigoted and persecuting. Moreover, nearly all men deceive themselves in disputes, and imagine that they are intolerant, not through private jealousy, but public benevolence: they never declaim against the injustice done to themselves; no, it is the terrible injury *done to society* which grieves and inflames them. It is not the bitter expressions against *their* dogmas which give them pain; by no means: it is the atrocious doctrines (so prejudicial to the country, if in politics; so pernicious to the world, if in philosophy), which their duty, not their vanity, induces them to denounce and anathematize."

"There seems," said Clarence, "to be a sort of reaction in sophistry and hypocrisy: there has, perhaps, never been a deceiver who was not, by his own passions, himself the deceived."

"Very true," said Talbot; "and it is a pity that historians

have not kept that fact in view : we should then have had a better notion of the Cromwells and Mohammeds of the past than we have now, nor judged those as utter impostors who were probably half dupes. But to return to myself. I think you will already be able to answer your own question, why I did not turn author, now that we have given a momentary consideration to the penalties consequent on such a profession. But in truth, as I near the close of my life, I often regret that I had not more courage, for there is in us all a certain restlessness in the persuasion, whether true or false, of superior knowledge or intellect, and this urges us on to the proof ; or, if we resist its impulse, renders us discontented with our idleness and disappointed with the past. I have everything now in my possession which it has been the desire of my later years to enjoy : health, retirement, successful study, and the affection of one in whose breast, when I am gone, my memory will not utterly pass away. With these advantages, added to the gifts of fortune, and an habitual elasticity of spirit, I confess that my happiness is not free from a biting and frequent regret : I would fain have been a better citizen ; I would fain have died in the consciousness not only that I had improved my mind to the utmost, but that I had turned that improvement to the benefit of my fellow-creatures. As it is, in living wholly for myself, I feel that my philosophy has wanted generosity ; and my indifference to glory has proceeded from a weakness, not, as I once persuaded myself, from a virtue : but the fruitlessness of my existence has been the consequence of the arduous frivolities and the petty objects in which my early years were consumed ; and my mind, in losing the enjoyments which it formerly possessed, had no longer the vigour to create for itself a new soil, from which labour it could only hope for more valuable fruits. It is no contradiction to see those who most eagerly courted society in their youth shrink from it the most sensitively in their age ; for they who possess certain advantages, and are morbidly vain of them, will naturally be disposed to seek that sphere for which those advantages are best calculated : and when youth and its concomitants depart, the vanity so long fed still remains, and

perpetually mortifies them by recalling not so much the qualities they have lost, as the esteem which those qualities conferred; and by contrasting not so much their own present alteration, as the change they experience in the respect and consideration of others. What wonder, then, that they eagerly fly from the world, which has only mortification for their self-love, or that we find, in biography, how often the most assiduous votaries of pleasure have become the most rigid of recluses? For my part, I think that that love of solitude which the ancients so eminently possessed, and which, to this day, is considered by some as the sign of a great mind, nearly always arises from a tenderness of vanity, easily wounded in the commerce of the rough world; and that it is under the shadow of Disappointment that we must look for the hermitage. Diderot did well, even at the risk of offending Rousseau, to write against solitude. The more a moralist binds man to man, and forbids us to divorce our interests from our kind, the more effectually is the end of morality obtained. They only are justifiable in seclusion who, like the Greek philosophers, make that very seclusion the means of serving and enlightening their race; who from their retreats send forth their oracles of wisdom, and render the desert which surrounds them eloquent with the voice of truth. But remember, Clarence (and let my life, useless in itself, have at least this moral), that for him who in no wise cultivates his talent for the benefit of others; who is contented with being a good hermit at the expense of being a bad citizen; who looks from his retreat upon a life wasted in the *difficiles nugæ* of the most frivolous part of the world, nor redeems in the closet the time he has misspent in the saloon, — remember that for him seclusion loses its dignity, philosophy its comfort, benevolence its hope, and even religion its balm. Knowledge unemployed may preserve us from vice; but *knowledge beneficently employed is virtue*. Perfect happiness, in our present state, is impossible; for Hobbes says justly that our nature is inseparable from desires, and that the very word desire (the craving for something not possessed) implies that our present felicity is not complete. But there is one way of attaining what we may

term, if not utter, at least mortal, happiness; it is this, — a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others. In that one maxim is concentrated whatever is noble in morality, sublime in religion, or unanswerable in truth. In that pursuit we have *all* scope for whatever is excellent in our hearts, and *none* for the petty passions which our nature is heir to. Thus engaged, whatever be our errors, there will be nobility, not weakness, in our remorse; whatever our failure, virtue, not selfishness, in our regret; and, in success, vanity itself will become holy and triumph eternal. As astrologers were wont to receive upon metals ‘the benign aspect of the stars, so as to detain and fix, as it were, the felicity of that hour which would otherwise be volatile and fugitive,’¹ even so will that success leave imprinted upon our memory a blessing which cannot pass away; preserve forever upon our names, as on a signet, the hallowed influence of the hour in which our great end was effected, and treasure up ‘the relics of heaven’ in the sanctuary of a human fame.”

As the old man ceased, there was a faint and hectic flush over his face, an enthusiasm on his features, which age made almost holy, and which Clarence had never observed there before. In truth, his young listener was deeply affected, and the advice of his adopted parent was afterwards impressed with a more awful solemnity upon his remembrance. Already he had acquired much worldly lore from Talbot’s precepts and conversation. He had obtained even something better than worldly lore, — a kindly and indulgent disposition to his fellow-creatures; for he had seen that foibles were not inconsistent with generous and great qualities, and that we judge wrongly of human nature when we ridicule its littleness. The very circumstances which make the shallow misanthropical incline the wise to be benevolent. Fools discover that frailty is not incompatible with great men; they wonder and despise: but the discerning find that greatness is not incompatible with frailty; and they admire and indulge.

But a still greater benefit than this of toleration did Clarence derive from the commune of that night. He became strength

¹ Bacon.

ened in his honourable ambition and nerved to unremitting exertion. The recollection of Talbot's last words, on that night, occurred to him often and often, when sick at heart and languid with baffled hope, it roused him from that gloom and despondency which are always unfavourable to virtue, and incited him once more to that labour in the vineyard which, whether our hour be late or early, will if earnest obtain a blessing and reward.

The hour was now waxing late; and Talbot, mindful of his companion's health, rose to retire. As he pressed Clarence's hand and bade him farewell for the night, Linden thought there was something more than usually impressive in his manner and affectionate in his words. Perhaps this was the natural result of their conversation.

The next morning, Clarence was awakened by a noise. He listened, and heard distinctly an alarmed cry proceeding from the room in which Talbot slept, and which was opposite to his own. He rose hastily and hurried to the chamber. The door was open; the old servant was bending over the bed: Clarence approached, and saw that he supported his master in his arms. "Good God!" he cried, "what is the matter?" The faithful old man lifted up his face to Clarence, and the big tears rolled fast from eyes in which the sources of such emotion were well-nigh dried up.

"He loved you well, sir!" he said, and could say no more. He dropped the body gently, and throwing himself on the floor sobbed aloud. With a foreboding and chilled heart, Clarence bent forward; the face of his benefactor lay directly before him, and the hand of death was upon it. The soul had passed to its account hours since, in the hush of night,—passed, apparently, without a struggle or a pang, like the wind, which animates the harp one moment, and the next is gone.

Linden seized his hand; it was heavy and cold: his eye rested upon the miniature of the unfortunate Lady Merton, which, since the night of the attempted robbery, Talbot had worn constantly round his neck. Strange and powerful was the contrast of the pictured face—in which not a colour had yet faded, and where the hues and fulness and prime of youth

dwelt, unconscious of the lapse of years —with the aged and shrunken countenance of the deceased.

In that contrast was a sad and mighty moral: it wrought, as it were, a contract between youth and age, and conveyed a rapid but full history of our passions and our life.

The servant looked up once more on the countenance; he pointed towards it, and muttered, "See, see how awfully it is changed!"

"But there is a smile upon it!" said Clarence, as he flung himself beside the body and burst into tears.

CHAPTER XLIX.

VIRTUE is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue. — BACON.

It is somewhat remarkable that while Talbot was bequeathing to Clarence, as the most valuable of legacies, the doctrines of a philosophy he had acquired, perhaps too late to practise, Glendower was carrying those very doctrines, so far as his limited sphere would allow, into the rule and exercise of his life.

Since the death of the bookseller, which we have before recorded, Glendower had been left utterly without resource. The others to whom he applied were indisposed to avail themselves of an unknown ability. The trade of book-making was not then as it is now, and if it had been, it would not have suggested itself to the high-spirited and unworldly student. Some publishers offered, it is true, a reward tempting enough for an immoral tale; others spoke of the value of an attack upon the Americans; one suggested an ode to the minister, and another hinted that a pension might possibly be granted to one who would prove extortion not tyranny. But these insinuations fell upon a dull ear, and the tribe of Bar

abbas were astonished to find that an author could imagine interest and principle not synonymous.

Struggling with want, which hourly grew more imperious and urgent; wasting his life on studies which brought fever to his pulse and disappointment to his ambition; gnawed to the very soul by the mortifications which his poverty gave to his pride; and watching with tearless eyes, but a maddening brain, the slender form of his wife, now waxing weaker and fainter, as the canker of disease fastened upon the core of her young but blighted life, — there was yet a high, though, alas! not constant consolation within him, whenever, from the troubles of this dim spot his thoughts could escape, like birds released from their cage, and lose themselves in the lustre and freedom of their native heaven:

“If,” thought he, as he looked upon his secret and treasured work, “if the wind scatter or the rock receive these seeds, they were at least dispersed by a hand which asked no selfish return, and a heart which would have lavished the harvest of its labours upon those who know not the husbandman and trample his hopes into the dust.”

But by degrees this comfort of a noble and generous nature, these whispers of a vanity rather to be termed holy than excusable, began to grow unfrequent and low. The cravings of a more engrossing and heavy want than those of the mind came eagerly and rapidly upon him; the fair cheek of his infant became pinched and hollow; his wife conquered nature itself by love, and starved herself in silence, and set bread before him with a smile and bade him eat.

“But you, — you?” he would ask inquiringly, and then pause.

“I *have* dined, dearest: I want nothing; eat, love, eat.”

But he ate not. The food robbed from her seemed to him more deadly than poison; and he would rise, and dash his hand to his brow, and go forth alone, with nature unsatisfied, to look upon this luxurious world and learn *content*.

It was after such a scene that, one day, he wandered forth into the streets, desperate and confused in mind, and fainting with hunger, and half insane with fiery and wrong thoughts,

which dashed over his barren and gloomy soul, and desolated, but conquered not! It was evening: he stood (for he had strode on so rapidly, at first, that his strength was now exhausted, and he was forced to pause) leaning against the railed area of a house in a lone and unfrequented street. No passenger shared this dull and obscure thoroughfare. He stood, literally, in scene as in heart, solitary amidst the great city, and wherever he looked, lo, there were none!

“Two days,” said he, slowly and faintly, “two days, and bread has only once passed my lips; and that was snatched from her, — from those lips which I have fed with sweet and holy kisses, and whence my sole comfort in this weary life has been drawn. And she, — ay, she starves, — and my child too. They complain not; they murmur not: but they lift up their eyes to me and ask for — Merciful God! Thou *didst* make man in benevolence; Thou *dost* survey this world with a pitying and paternal eye: save, comfort, cherish them, and crush *me* if Thou wilt!”

At that moment a man darted suddenly from an obscure alley, and passed Glendower at full speed; presently came a cry, and a shout, and a rapid trampling of feet, and, in another moment, an eager and breathless crowd rushed upon the solitude of the street.

“Where is he?” cried a hundred voices to Glendower, — “where, — which road did the robber take?” But Glendower could not answer: his nerves were unstrung, and his dizzy brain swam and reeled; and the faces which peered upon him, and the voices which shrieked and yelled in his ear, were to him as the forms and sounds of a ghastly and phantasmal world. His head drooped upon his bosom; he clung to the area for support: the crowd passed on; they were in pursuit of guilt; they were thirsting after blood; they were going to fill the dungeon and feed the gibbet; what to them was the virtue they could have supported, or the famine they could have relieved? But they knew not his distress, nor the extent of his weakness, or some would have tarried and aided: for there is, after all, as much kindness as cruelty in our nature; perhaps they thought it was only some intoxicated and maudlin idler;

or, perhaps, in the heat of their pursuit, they thought not at all.

So they rolled on, and their voices died away, and their steps were hushed, and Glendower, insensible and cold as the iron he clung to, was once more alone. Slowly he revived; he opened his dim and glazing eyes, and saw the evening star break from its chamber, and, though sullied by the thick and foggy air, scatter its holy smiles upon the polluted city.

He looked quietly on the still night, and its first watcher among the hosts of heaven, and felt something of balm sink into his soul; not, indeed, that vague and delicious calm which, in his boyhood of poesy and romance, he had drunk in, by green solitudes, from the mellow twilight: but a quiet, sad and sober, circling gradually over his mind, and bringing it back from its confused and disordered visions and darkness to the recollection and reality of his bitter life.

By degrees the scene he had so imperfectly witnessed, the flight of the robber and the eager pursuit of the mob, grew over him: a dark and guilty thought burst upon his mind.

"I am a man like that criminal," said he, fiercely. "I have nerves, sinews, muscles, flesh; I feel hunger, thirst, pain, as acutely: why should I endure more than he can? Perhaps he had a wife, a child, and he saw them starving inch by inch, and he felt that he *ought* to be their protector; and so he sinned. And I — I — can I not sin too for mine? can I not dare what the wild beast, and the vulture, and the fierce hearts of my brethren dare for their mates and young? One gripe from this hand, one cry from this voice, and my board might be heaped with plenty, and my child fed, and *she* smile as she was wont to smile, — for one night at least."

And as these thoughts broke upon him, Glendower rose, and with a step firm, even in weakness, he strode unconsciously onward.

A figure appeared; Glendower's heart beat thick. He slouched his hat over his brows, and for one moment wrestled with his pride and his stern virtue: the virtue conquered, but not the pride; the virtue forbade him to be the robber; the

pride submitted to be the suppliant. He sprang forward, extended his hands towards the stranger, and cried in a sharp voice, the agony of which rang through the long dull street with a sudden and echoless sound, "Charity! food!"

The stranger paused; one of the boldest of men in his own line, he was as timid as a woman in any other. Mistaking the meaning of the petitioner, and terrified by the vehemence of his gesture, he said, in a trembling tone, as he hastily pulled out his purse, —

"There, there! do not hurt me; take it; take all!"

Glendower knew the voice, as a sound not unfamiliar to him; his pride returned in full force. "None," thought he, "who know me, shall know my full degradation also." And he turned away; but the stranger, mistaking this motion, extended his hand to him, saying, "Take this, my friend: you will have no need of violence!" and as he advanced nearer to his supposed assailant, he beheld, by the pale lamplight, and instantly recognized, his features.

"Ah!" cried he, in astonishment, but with internal rejoicing, "ah! is it you who are thus reduced?"

"You say right, Crauford," said Glendower, sullenly, and drawing himself up to his full height, "it is *I*: but you are mistaken; I am a beggar, not a ruffian!"

"Good heavens!" answered Crauford; "how fortunate that we should meet! Providence watches over us unceasingly! I have long sought you in vain. But" (and here the wayward malignity, sometimes, though not always, the characteristic of Crauford's nature, irresistibly broke out), "but that you, of all men, should suffer so, — you, proud, susceptible, virtuous beyond human virtue, — you, whose fibres are as acute as the naked eye, — that *you* should bear this and wince not!"

"You do my humanity wrong!" said Glendower, with a bitter and almost ghastly smile; "I do worse than wince!"

"Ay, is it so?" said Crauford; "have you awakened at last? Has your philosophy taken a more impassioned dye?"

"Mock me not!" cried Glendower; and his eye, usually soft in its deep thoughtfulness, glared wild and savage upon

the hypocrite, who stood trembling, yet half sneering, at the storm he had raised; "my passions are even now beyond my mastery; loose them not upon you!"

"Nay," said Crauford, gently, "I meant not to vex or wound you. I have sought you several times since the last night we met, but in vain; you had left your lodgings, and none knew whither. I would fain talk with you. I have a scheme to propose to you which will make you rich forever, — rich, — literally rich! not merely above poverty, but high in affluence!"

Glendower looked incredulously at the speaker, who continued, —

"The scheme has danger: *that* you can dare!"

Glendower was still silent; but his set and stern countenance was sufficient reply. "Some sacrifice of your pride," continued Crauford: "that also you can bear?" and the tempter almost grinned with pleasure as he asked the question.

"He who is poor," said Glendower, speaking at last, "has a right to pride. He who starves has it too; but he who sees those whom he loves famish, and cannot aid, has it not!"

"Come home with me, then," said Crauford; "you seem faint and weak: nature craves food; come and partake of mine; we will then talk over this scheme, and arrange its completion."

"I cannot," answered Glendower, quietly.

"And why?"

"Because *they* starve at home!"

"Heavens!" said Crauford, affected for a moment into sincerity; "it is indeed fortunate that business should have led me here: but meanwhile you will not refuse this trifle, — as a loan merely. By and by our scheme will make you so rich that I must be the borrower."

Glendower *did* hesitate for a moment; he did swallow a bitter rising of the heart: but he thought of those at home and the struggle was over.

"I thank you," said he; "I thank you for their sake: the *time may come*," — and the proud gentleman stopped short, for

his desolate fortunes rose before him and forbade all hope of the future.

"Yes!" cried Crauford, "the time may come when you will repay me this money a hundredfold. But where do you live? You are silent. Well, you will not inform me: I understand you. Meet me, then, here, on this very spot, three nights hence: you will not fail?"

"I will not," said Glendower; and pressing Crauford's hand with a generous and grateful warmth, which might have softened a heart less obdurate, he turned away.

Folding his arms, while a bitter yet joyous expression crossed his countenance, Crauford stood still, gazing upon the retreating form of the noble and unfortunate man whom he had marked for destruction.

"Now," said he, "this virtue is a fine thing, a very fine thing to talk so loftily about. A little craving of the gastric juices, a little pinching of this vile body, as your philosophers and saints call our better part, and, lo! virtue oozes out like water through a leaky vessel,—and the vessel sinks! No, no; virtue is a weak game, and a poor game, and a losing game. Why, there is that man, the very pink of integrity and rectitude, he is now only wanting temptation to fall; and he *will* fall, in a fine phrase, too, I'll be sworn! And then, having once fallen, there will be no medium: he will become utterly corrupt; while *I*, honest Dick Crauford, doing as other wise men do, cheat a trick or two, in playing with fortune, without being a whit the worse for it. Do I not subscribe to charities? am I not constant at church, ay, and meeting to boot? kind to my servants, obliging to my friends, loyal to my king? 'Gad, if I were less loving to myself, I should have been far less useful to my country! And now, now let me see what has brought me to these filthy suburbs. Ah, Madame H——. Woman, incomparable woman! On, Richard Crauford, thou hast made a good night's work of it hitherto!—business seasons pleasures!" and the villain upon system moved away.

Glendower hastened to his home; it was miserably changed, even from the humble abode in which we last saw him. The

unfortunate pair had chosen their present residence from a melancholy refinement in luxury; they had chosen it because none else shared it with them, and their famine and pride and struggles and despair were without witness or pity.

With a heavy step Glendower entered the chamber where his wife sat. When at a distance he had heard a faint moan, but as he had approached it ceased; for she from whom it came knew his step, and hushed her grief and pain that they might not add to his own. The peevishness, the querulous and stinging irritations of want, came not to that affectionate and kindly heart; nor could all those biting and bitter evils of fate which turn the love that is born of luxury into rancour and gall scathe the beautiful and holy passion which had knit into one those two unearthly natures. They rather clung the closer to each other, as all things in heaven and earth spoke in tempest or in gloom around them, and coined their sorrows into endearment, and their looks into smiles, and strove each from the depth of despair to pluck hope and comfort for the other.

This, it is true, was more striking and constant in her than in Glendower; for in love, man, be he ever so generous, is always outdone. Yet even when in moments of extreme passion and conflict the strife broke from his breast into words, never once was his discontent vented upon her, nor his reproaches lavished on any but fortune or himself, nor his murmurs mingled with a single breath wounding to her tenderness or detracting from his love.

He threw open the door; the wretched light cast its sickly beams over the squalid walls, foul with green damp, and the miserable yet clean bed, and the fireless hearth, and the empty board, and the pale cheek of the wife, as she rose and flung her arms round his neck, and murmured out her joy and welcome. "There," said he, as he extricated himself from her, and flung the money upon the table, "there, love, pine no more, feed yourself and our daughter, and then let us sleep and be happy in our dreams."

A writer, one of the most gifted of the present day, has told the narrator of this history that no interest of a high nature can be given to extreme poverty. I know not if this be true:

yet if I mistake not our human feelings, there is nothing so exalted, or so divine, as a great and brave spirit working out its end through every earthly obstacle and evil; watching through the utter darkness, and steadily defying the phantoms which crowd around it; wrestling with the mighty allurements, and rejecting the fearful voice of that WANT which is the deadliest and surest of human tempters; nursing through all calamity the love of species, and the warmer and closer affections of private ties; sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin; and amidst every horror and every humiliation, feeding the still and bright light of that genius which, like the lamp of the fabulist, though it may waste itself for years amidst the depths of solitude, and the silence of the tomb, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed, when all around it is rottenness and decay!

And yet I confess that it is a painful and bitter task to record the humiliations, the wearing, petty, stinging humiliations, of Poverty; to count the drops as they slowly fall, one by one, upon the fretted and indignant heart; to particularize, with the scrupulous and nice hand of indifference, the fractional and divided movements in the dial-plate of Misery; to behold the refinement of birth, the masculine pride of blood, the dignities of intellect, the wealth of knowledge, the delicacy and graces of womanhood, — all that ennoble and soften the stony mass of commonplaces which *is* our life frittered into atoms, trampled into the dust and mire of the meanest thoroughfares of distress; life and soul, the energies and aims of man, ground into one prostrating want, cramped into one levelling sympathy with the dregs and refuse of his kind, blistered into a single galling and festering sore: this is, I own, a painful and a bitter task; but it hath its redemption, — a pride even in debasement, a pleasure even in woe, — and it is therefore that, while I have abridged, I have not shunned it. There are some whom the lightning of fortune blasts, only to render holy. Amidst all that humbles and scathes; amidst all that shatters from their life its verdure, smites to the dust the pomp and summit of their pride, and in the very heart of existence writeth a sudden and “strange defeature,” — *they*

stand erect, — riven, not uprooted, — a monument less of pity than of awe! There are some who pass through the Lazar-House of Misery with a step more august than a Cæsar's in his hall. The very things which, seen alone, are despicable and vile, associated with them become almost venerable and divine; and one ray, however dim and feeble, of that intense holiness which, in the INFANT GOD, shed majesty over the manger and the straw, not denied to those who in the depth of affliction cherish His patient image, flings over the meanest localities of earth an emanation from the glory of Heaven!

CHAPTER I.

LETTERS from divers hands, which will absolve
Ourselves from long narration. — *Tanner of Tyburn.*

ONE morning about a fortnight after Talbot's death, Clarence was sitting alone, thoughtful and melancholy, when the three following letters were put into his hand:

LETTER I.

FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

Let me, my dear Linden, be the first to congratulate you upon your accession of fortune: five thousand a year, Scarsdale, and £80,000 in the Funds, are very pretty foes to starvation! Ah, my dear fellow, if you had but shot that frosty Caucasus of humanity, that pillar of the state, made not to bend, that — but you know already whom I mean, and so I will spare you more of my lamentable metaphors: had you shot Lord Borodaile, your happiness would now be complete! Everybody talks of your luck. La Meronville tending on you with her white hands, the prettiest hands in the world: who would not be wounded even by Lord Borodaile, for such a nurse? And then Talbot's — yet, I will not speak of *that*, for you are very unlike the present generation; and who knows but you may have some gratitude, some affection, some natural feeling in you? I had once; but that was be-

fore I went to France: those Parisians, with their fine sentiments, and witty philosophy, play the devil with one's good old-fashioned feelings. So Lord Aspeden is to have an Italian ministry. By the by, shall you go with him, or will you not rather stay at home, and enjoy your new fortunes, — hunt, race, dine out, dance, vote in the House of Commons, and, in short, do all that an Englishman and a gentleman should do? *Ornamento e splendor del secolo nostro*. Write me a line whenever you have nothing better to do.

And believe me,

Most truly yours,

Haverfield.

Will you sell your black mare, or will you buy my brown one? *Utrum horum mavis accipe*, the only piece of Latin I remember.

LETTER FROM LORD ASPEDEN.

MY DEAR LINDEN, — Suffer me to enter most fully into your feeling. Death, my friend, is common to all: we must submit to its dispensations. I heard accidentally of the great fortune left you by Mr. Talbot (your father, I suppose I may venture to call him). Indeed, though there is a silly prejudice against illegitimacy, yet as our immortal bard says, —

“Wherefore base?

When thy dimensions are as well compact,
Thy mind as generous and thy shape as true
As honest madam's issue!”

For my part, my dear Linden, I say, on your behalf, that it is very likely that you *are* a natural son, for such are always the luckiest and the best.

You have probably heard of the honour his Majesty has conferred on me, in appointing to my administration the city of —. As the choice of a secretary has been left to me, I need not say how happy I shall be to keep my promise to you. Indeed, as I told Lord — yesterday morning, I do not know anywhere a young man who has more talent, or who plays better on the flute.

Adieu, my dear young friend, and believe me,

Very truly yours,

Aspeden.

LETTER FROM MADAME DE LA MERONVILLE.

(Translated.)

You have done me wrong, — great wrong. I loved you, — I waited on you, tended you, nursed you, gave all up for you; and you forsook

me, — forsook me without a word. True, that you have been engaged in a melancholy duty, but, at least, you had time to write a line, to cast a thought, to one who had shown for you the love that I have done. But we will pass over all this: I will not reproach you; it is beneath me. The vicious upbraid: *the virtuous forgive!* I have for several days left your house. I should never have come to it, had you not been wounded, and, as I fondly imagined, for my sake. Return when you will, I shall no longer be there to persecute and torment you.

Pardon this letter. I have said too much for myself, — a hundred times too much to you; but I shall not sin again. This intrusion is my last.

CECILE DE LA MERONVILLE

These letters will probably suffice to clear up that part of Clarence's history which had not hitherto been touched upon; they will show that Talbot's will (after several legacies to his old servants, his nearest connections, and two charitable institutions, which he had founded, and for some years supported) had bequeathed the bulk of his property to Clarence. The words in which the bequest was made were kind, and somewhat remarkable. "To my relation and friend, commonly known by the name of Clarence Linden, to whom I am bound alike by blood and affection," etc. These expressions, joined to the magnitude of the bequest, the apparently unaccountable attachment of the old man to his heir, and the mystery which wrapped the origin of the latter, all concurred to give rise to an opinion, easily received, and soon universally accredited, that Clarence was a natural son of the deceased; and so strong in England is the aristocratic aversion to an unknown lineage, that this belief, unflattering as it was, procured for Linden a much higher consideration, on the score of birth, than he might otherwise have enjoyed. Furthermore will the above correspondence testify the general *éclat* of Madame la Meronville's attachment, and the construction naturally put upon it. Nor do we see much left for us to explain, with regard to the Frenchwoman herself, which cannot equally well be gleaned by any judicious and intelligent reader, from the epistle last honoured by his perusal. Clarence's sense of gallantry did,

indeed, smite him severely, for his negligence and ill requital to one who, whatever her faults or follies, had at least done nothing with which *he* had a right to reproach her. It must, however, be considered in his defence that the fatal event which had so lately occurred, the relapse which Clarence had suffered in consequence, and the melancholy confusion and bustle in which the last week or ten days had been passed, were quite sufficient to banish her from his remembrance. Still she was a woman, and had loved, or seemed to love; and Clarence, as he wrote to her a long, kind, and almost brotherly letter, in return for her own, felt that, in giving pain to another, one often suffers almost as much for avoiding as for committing a sin.

We have said his letter was kind; it was also frank, and yet prudent. In it he said that he had long loved another, which love alone could have rendered him insensible to her attachment; that he, nevertheless, should always recall her memory with equal interest and admiration; and then, with a tact of flattery which the nature of the correspondence and the sex of the person addressed rendered excusable, he endeavoured, as far as he was able, to soothe and please the vanity which the candour of his avowal was calculated to wound.

When he had finished this letter he despatched another to Lord Aspeden, claiming a reprieve of some days before he answered the proposal of the diplomatist. After these epistolary efforts, he summoned his valet, and told him, apparently in a careless tone, to find out if Lady Westborough was still in town. Then throwing himself on the couch, he wrestled with the grief and melancholy which the death of a friend, and more than a father, might well cause in a mind less susceptible than his, and counted the dull hours crawl onward till his servant returned. Lady Westborough and all the family had been gone a week to their seat in —.

“Well,” thought Clarence, “had *he* been alive, I could have intrusted my cause to a mediator; as it is, I will plead, or rather assert it, myself. Harrison,” said he aloud, “see that my black mare is ready by sunrise to-morrow: I shall leave town for some days.”

“Not in your present state of health, sir, surely?” said Harrison, with the license of one who had been a nurse.

“My health requires it: no more words, my good Harrison, see that I am obeyed.” And Harrison, shaking his head doubtfully, left the room.

“Rich, independent, free to aspire to the heights which in England are only accessible to those who join wealth to ambition, I have at least,” said Clarence, proudly, “no unworthy pretensions even to the hand of Lady Flora Ardenne. If she can love me for myself, if she can trust to my honour, rely on my love, feel proud in my pride, and aspiring in my ambition, then, indeed, this wealth will be welcome to me, and the disguised name which has cost me so many mortifications become grateful, since she will not disdain to share it.”

CHAPTER LI.

A LITTLE druid wight
Of withered aspect; but his eye was keen
With sweetness mixed, — a russet brown bedight.

THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence*.

Thus holding high discourse, they came to where
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade,
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said. — *Ibid*.

It was a fine, joyous summer morning when Clarence set out, alone and on horseback, upon his enterprise of love and adventure. If there be anything on earth more reviving and inspiriting than another, it is, to my taste, a bright day, a free horse, a journey of excitement before one, and loneliness! Rousseau — in his own way, a great though rather a morbid epicure of this world's enjoyments — talks with rapture of his pedestrian rambles when in his first youth. But what are your foot-ploddings to the joy which lifts you into air with the bound of your mettled steed?

But there are times when an iron and stern sadness locks, as it were, within itself our capacities of enjoyment; and the song of the birds, and the green freshness of the summer morning, and the glad motion of the eager horse, brought neither relief nor change to the musings of the young adventurer.

He rode on for several miles without noticing anything on his road, and only now and then testifying the nature of his thoughts and his consciousness of solitude by brief and abrupt exclamations and sentences, which proclaimed the melancholy yet exciting subjects of his meditations. During the heat of the noon, he rested at a small public-house about — miles from town; and resolving to take his horse at least ten miles farther before his day's journey ceased, he remounted towards the evening and slowly resumed his way.

He was now entering the same county in which he first made his appearance in this history. Although several miles from the spot on which the memorable night with the gypsies had been passed, his thoughts reverted to its remembrance, and he sighed as he recalled the ardent hopes which then fed and animated his heart. While thus musing, he heard the sound of hoofs behind him, and presently came by a sober-looking man, on a rough, strong pony, laden (besides its master's weight) with saddle-bags of uncommon size, and to all appearance substantially and artfully filled.

Clarence looked, and, after a second survey, recognized the person of his old acquaintance, Mr. Morris Brown.

Not equally reminiscent was the worshipful itinerant, who, in the great variety of forms and faces which it was his professional lot to encounter, could not be expected to preserve a very nice or distinguishing recollection of each.

"Your servant, sir, your servant," said Mr. Brown, as he rode his pony alongside of our traveller. "Are you going as far as W — this evening?"

"I hardly know yet," answered Clarence; "the length of my ride depends upon my horse rather than myself."

"Oh, well, very well," said Mr. Brown; "but you will allow me, perhaps, sir, the honour of riding with you as far as you go."

"You give me much gratification by your proposal, Mr. Brown!" said Clarence.

The broker looked in surprise at his companion. "So you know me, sir?"

"I do," replied Clarence. "I am surprised that you have forgotten *me*."

Slowly Mr. Brown gazed, till at last his memory began to give itself the rousing shake. "God bless me, sir, I beg you a thousand pardons: I now remember you perfectly; Mr. Linden, the nephew of my old patroness, Mrs. Minden. Dear, dear, how could I be so forgetful! I hope, by the by, sir, that the shirts wore well? I am thinking you will want some more. I have some capital cambric of curiously fine quality and texture, from the wardrobe of the late Lady Waddilove."

"What, Lady Waddilove still!" cried Clarence. "Why, my good friend, you will offer next to furnish me with pantaloons from her ladyship's wardrobe."

"Why, really, sir, I see you preserve your fine spirits; but I do think I have one or two pair of plum-coloured velvet inexpressibles, that passed into my possession when her ladyship's husband died, which might, perhaps, with a *leetle* alteration, fit you, and, at all events, would be a very elegant present from a gentleman to his valet."

"Well, Mr. Brown, whenever I or my valet wear plum-coloured velvet breeches, I will certainly purchase those in your possession; but to change the subject, can you inform me what has become of my old host and hostess, the Copperases, of Copperas Bower?"

"Oh, sir, they are the same as ever; nice, genteel people they are, too. Master Adolphus has grown into a fine young gentleman, very nearly as tall as *you* and *I* are. His worthy father preserves his jovial vein, and is very merry whenever I call there. Indeed it was but last week that he made an admirable witticism. 'Bob,' said he (Tom, — you remember Tom, or De Warens, as Mrs. Copperas was pleased to call him, — Tom is gone), 'Bob, have you stopped the coach?' 'Yes, sir,' said Bob. 'And what coach is it?' asked Mr. Copperas.

‘It be the Swallow, sir,’ said the boy. ‘The Swallow! oh, very well,’ cried Mr. Copperas; ‘then, now, having swallowed in the roll, I will e’en roll in the swallow!’ Ha! ha! ha! sir, very facetious, was it not?”

“Very, indeed,” said Clarence; “and so Mr. de Warens has gone; how came that?”

“Why, sir, you see, the boy was always of a *gay turn*, and he took to frisking about, as he called it, of a night, and so he was taken up for thrashing a watchman, and appeared before Sir John, the magistrate, the next morning.”

“Caractacus before Cæsar!” observed Linden; “and what said Cæsar?”

“Sir?” said Mr. Brown.

“I mean, what said Sir John?”

“Oh! he asked him his name, and Tom, whose head Mrs. Copperas (poor good woman!) had crammed with pride enough for fifty foot-boys, replied, ‘De Warens,’ with all the air of a man of independence. ‘De Warens!’ cried Sir John, amazed, ‘we’ll have no De’s here: take him to Bridewell!’ and so, Mrs. Copperas, being without a foot-boy, sent for me, and I supplied her — with *Bob!*”

“Out of the late Lady Waddilove’s wardrobe too?” said Clarence.

“Ha, ha! that’s well, very well, sir. No, *not exactly*; but he was a son of her late ladyship’s coachman. Mr. Copperas has had two other servants of the name of Bob before, but this is the biggest of all, so he humorously calls him ‘Triple Bob Major!’ You observe that road to the right, sir: it leads to the mansion of an old customer of mine, General Cornelius St. Leger; many a good bargain have I sold to his sister. Heaven rest her! when she died I lost a good friend, though she was a little hot or so, to be sure. But she had a relation, a young lady; such a lovely, noble-looking creature: it did one’s heart, ay, and one’s eyes also, good to look at her; and she’s gone too; well, well, one loses one’s customers sadly; it makes me feel old and comfortless to think of it. Now, yonder, as far as you can see among those distant woods, lived another friend of mine, to whom I offered to make some

very valuable presents upon his marriage with the young lady I spoke of just now, but, poor gentleman, he had not time to accept them; he lost his property by a lawsuit, a few months after he was married, and a very different person now has Mordaunt Court."

"Mordaunt Court!" cried Clarence; "do you mean to say that Mr. Mordaunt has lost that property?"

"Why, sir, one Mr. Mordaunt has lost it, and another has gained it: but the real Mr. Mordaunt has not an acre in this county or elsewhere, I fear, poor gentleman. He is universally regretted, for he was very good and very generous, though they say he was also mighty proud and reserved; but for my part I never perceived it. If one is not proud one's self, Mr. Linden, one is very little apt to be hurt by pride in other people."

"And where is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt?" asked Clarence, as he recalled his interview with that person, and the interest with which Algernon then inspired him.

"That, sir, is more than any of us can say. He has disappeared altogether. Some declare that he has gone abroad, others that he is living in Wales in the greatest poverty. However, wherever he is, I am sure that he cannot be rich; for the lawsuit quite ruined him, and the young lady he married had not a farthing."

"Poor Mordaunt!" said Clarence, musingly.

"I think, sir, that the squire would not be best pleased if he heard you pity him. I don't know why, but he certainly looked, walked, and moved like one whom you felt it very hard to pity. But I am thinking that it is a great shame that the general should not do anything for Mr. Mordaunt's wife, for she was his own flesh and blood; and I am sure *he* had no cause to be angry at her marrying a gentleman of such old family as Mr. Mordaunt. I am a great stickler for birth, sir; I learned that from the late Lady W. 'Brown,' she said, and I shall never forget her ladyship's air when she did say it, 'Brown, respect your superiors, and never fall into the hands of the republicans and atheists'!"

"And why," said Clarence, who was much interested in

Mordaunt's fate, "did General St. Leger withhold his consent?"

"That we don't exactly know, sir; but some say that Mr. Mordaunt was very high and proud with the general, and the general was to the full as fond of his purse as Mr. Mordaunt could be of his pedigree; and so, I suppose, one pride clashed against the other, and made a quarrel between them."

"Would not the general, then, relent after the marriage?"

"Oh! no, sir; for it was a runaway affair. Miss Diana St. Leger, his sister, was as hot as ginger upon it, and fretted and worried the poor general, who was never of the mildest, about the match, till at last he forbade the poor young lady's very name to be mentioned. And when Miss Diana died about two years ago, he suddenly introduced a tawny sort of *cretur*, whom they call a mulatto or creole, or some such thing, into the house; and it seems that he has had several children by her, whom he never durst own during Miss Diana's life, but whom he now declares to be his heirs. Well, they rule him with a rod of iron, and suck him as dry as an orange. They are a bad, griping set, all of them; and, I am sure, I don't say so from any selfish feeling, Mr. Linden, though they have forbid me the house, and called me, to my very face, an old cheating Jew. Think of *that*, sir! — I, whom the late Lady W. in her exceeding friendship used to call 'honest Brown,' — I whom your worthy —"

"And who," uncourteously interrupted Clarence, "has Mordaunt Court now?"

"Why, a distant relation of the last squire's, an elderly gentleman who calls himself Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt. I am going there to-morrow morning, for I still keep up a connection with the family. Indeed the old gentleman bought a lovely little ape of me, which I did intend as a present to the late (as I may call him) Mr. Mordaunt; so, though I will not say I exactly like him, — he is a hard hand at a bargain, — yet at least I will not deny him his due."

"What sort of a person is he? What character does he bear?" asked Clarence.

"I really find it hard to answer that question," said the

gossiping Mr. Brown. "In great things he is very lavish and ostentatious, but in small things he is very penurious and saving, and miser-like; and all for one son, who is deformed and very sickly. He seems to dote on that boy; and now I have got two or three little presents in these bags for Mr. Henry. Heaven forgive me, but when I look at the poor creature, with his face all drawn up, and his sour, ill-tempered voice, and his limbs crippled, I almost think it would be better if he were in his grave, and the rightful Mr. Mordaunt, who would then be the next of kin, in his place."

"So then, there is only this unhappy cripple between Mr. Mordaunt and the property?" said Clarence.

"Exactly so, sir. But will you let me ask where you shall put up at W——? I will wait upon you, if you will give me leave, with some very curious and valuable articles, highly desirable either for yourself or for little presents to your friends."

"I thank you," said Clarence, "I shall make no stay at W——, but I shall be glad to see you in town next week. Favour me, meanwhile, by accepting this trifle."

"Nay, nay, sir," said Mr. Brown, pocketing the money, "I really cannot accept this; anything in the way of exchange, — a ring, or a seal, or —"

"No, no, not at present," said Clarence; "the night is coming on, and I shall make the best of my way. Good-by, Mr. Brown;" and Clarence trotted off: but he had scarce got sixty yards before he heard the itinerant merchant cry out, "Mr. Linden, Mr. Linden!" and looking back, he beheld the honest Brown putting his shaggy pony at full speed, in order to overtake him; so he pulled up.

"Well, Mr. Brown, what do you want?"

"Why, you see, sir, you gave me no exact answer about the plum-colored velvet inexpressibles," said Mr. Brown.

CHAPTER LII.

ARE we contemned? — *The Double Marriage.*

IT was dusk when Clarence arrived at the very same inn at which, more than five years ago, he had assumed his present name. As he recalled the note addressed to him, and the sum (his whole fortune) which it contained, he could not help smiling at the change his lot had since then undergone; but the smile soon withered when he thought of the kind and paternal hand from which that change had proceeded, and knew that his gratitude was no longer availing, and that that hand, in pouring its last favours upon him, had become cold. He was ushered into No. 4, and left to his meditations till bed-time.

The next day he recommenced his journey. Westborough Park, was, though in another county, within a short ride of W—; but, as he approached it, the character of the scenery became essentially changed. Bare, bold, and meagre, the features of the country bore somewhat of a Scottish character. On the right side of the road was a precipitous and perilous descent, and some workmen were placing posts along a path for foot-passengers on that side nearest the carriage-road, probably with a view to preserve unwary coachmen or equestrians from the dangerous vicinity of the descent, which a dark night might cause them to incur. As Clarence looked idly on the workmen, and painfully on the crumbling and fearful descent I have described, he little thought that that spot would, a few years after, become the scene of a catastrophe affecting in the most powerful degree the interests of his future life. Our young traveller put up his horse at a small inn, bearing the Westborough arms, and situated at a short distance from the park gates. Now that he was so near his mistress — now that less than an hour, nay, than the fourth part of an hour, might

place him before her, and decide his fate — his heart, which had hitherto sustained him, grew faint, and presented, first fear, then anxiety, and, at last, despondency to his imagination and forebodings.

“At all events,” said he, “I will see her alone before I will confer with her artful and proud mother or her cipher of a father. I will then tell her all my history, and open to her all my secrets: I will only conceal from her my present fortunes; for even if rumour should have informed her of them, it will be easy to give the report no sanction; I have a right to that trial. When she is convinced that, at least, neither my birth nor character can disgrace her, I shall see if her love can enable her to overlook my supposed poverty and to share my uncertain lot. If so, there will be some triumph in undeceiving her error and rewarding her generosity; if not, I shall be saved from involving my happiness with that of one who looks only to my worldly possessions. I owe it to her, it is true, to show her that I am no low-born pretender: but I owe it also to myself to ascertain if my own individual qualities are sufficient to gain her hand.”

Fraught with these ideas, which were natural enough to a man whose peculiar circumstances were well calculated to make him feel rather soured and suspicious, and whose pride had been severely wounded by the contempt with which his letter had been treated, Clarence walked into the park, and, hovering around the house, watched and waited that opportunity of addressing Lady Flora, which he trusted her habits of walking would afford him; but hours rolled away, the evening set in, and Lady Flora had not once quitted the house.

More disappointed and sick at heart than he liked to confess, Clarence returned to his inn, took his solitary meal, and strolling once more into the park, watched beneath the windows till midnight, endeavouring to guess which were the casements of her apartments, and feeling his heart beat high at every light which flashed forth and disappeared, and every form which flitted across the windows of the great staircase. Little did Lady Flora, as she sat in her room alone, and, in

tears, mused over Clarence's fancied worthlessness and infidelity, and told her heart again and again that she loved no more, — little did she know whose eye kept vigils without, or whose feet brushed away the rank dews beneath her windows, or whose thoughts, though not altogether unmingled with reproach, were riveted with all the ardour of a young and first love upon her.

It was unfortunate for Linden that he had no opportunity of personally pleading his suit; his altered form and faded countenance would at least have insured a hearing and an interest for his honest though somewhat haughty sincerity: but though that day, and the next, and the next, were passed in the most anxious and unremitting vigilance, Clarence only once caught a glimpse of Lady Flora, and then she was one amidst a large party; and Clarence, fearful of a premature and untimely discovery, was forced to retire into the thicknesses of the park, and lose the solitary reward of his watches almost as soon as he had won it.

Wearied and racked by his suspense, and despairing of obtaining any favourable opportunity for an interview without such a request, Clarence at last resolved to write to Lady Flora, entreating her assent to a meeting, in which he pledged himself to clear up all that had hitherto seemed doubtful in his conduct or mysterious in his character. Though respectful, urgent, and bearing the impress of truth and feeling, the tone of the letter was certainly that of a man who conceived he had a right to a little resentment for the past and a little confidence for the future. It was what might well be written by one who imagined his affection had once been returned, but would as certainly have been deemed very presumptuous by a lady who thought that the affection itself was a liberty.

Having penned this epistle, the next care was how to convey it. After much deliberation it was at last committed to the care of a little girl, the daughter of the lodge-keeper, whom Lady Flora thrice a week personally instructed in the mysteries of spelling, reading, and calligraphy. With many injunctions to deliver the letter only to the hands of the beautiful teacher, Clarence trusted his despatches to the little scholar, and, with

a trembling frame and wistful eye, watched Susan take her road, with her green satchel and her shining cheeks, to the great house.

One hour, two hours, three hours, passed, and the messenger had not returned. Restless and impatient, Clarence walked back to his inn, and had not been there many minutes before a servant, in the Westborough livery, appeared at the door of the humble hostelry, and left the following letter for his perusal and gratification : —

WESTBOROUGH PARK.

SIR, — The letter intended for my daughter has just been given to me by Lady Westborough. I know not what gave rise to the language, or the very extraordinary request for a clandestine meeting, which you have thought proper to address to Lady Flora Ardenne; but you will allow me to observe that, if you intend to confer upon my daughter the honour of a matrimonial proposal, she fully concurs with me and her mother in the negative which I feel necessitated to put upon your obliging offer.

I need not add that all correspondence with my daughter must close here. I have the honour to be, sir,

Your very obedient servant,

WESTBOROUGH.

TO CLARENCE LINDEN, Esq.

Had Clarence's blood been turned to fire, his veins could not have swelled and burned with a fiercer heat than they did, as he read the above letter, — a masterpiece, perhaps, in the line of what may be termed the "d—d civil" of epistolary favours. "Insufferable arrogance!" he muttered within his teeth. "I will live to repay it. Perfidious, unfeeling woman: what an escape I have had of her! Now, now, I am on the world, and alone, thank Heaven. I will accept Aspeden's offer, and leave this country; when I return, it shall not be as a humble suitor to Lady Flora Ardenne. Pish! how the name sickens me: but come, I have a father; at least a nominal one. He is old and weak, and may die before I return. I will see him once more, and then, hey for Italy! Oh! I am so happy, — so happy at my freedom and escape. What, ho! waiter! my horse instantly!"

CHAPTER LIII.

Lucr. — What has thy father done?

Beat. — What have I done?

Am I not innocent? — *The Cenci.*

THE twilight was darkening slowly over a room of noble dimensions and costly fashion. Although it was the height of summer, a low fire burned in the grate; and, stretching his hands over the feeble flame, an old man of about sixty sat in an armchair curiously carved with armorial bearings. The dim yet fitful flame cast its upward light upon a countenance, stern, haughty, and repellent, where the passions of youth and manhood had dug themselves graves in many an iron line and deep furrow: the forehead, though high, was narrow and compressed; the brows sullenly overhung the eyes; and the nose, which was singularly prominent and decided, age had sharpened, and brought out, as it were, till it gave a stubborn and very forbidding expression to the more sunken features over which it rose with exaggerated dignity. Two bottles of wine, a few dried preserves, and a water glass, richly chased, and ornamented with gold, showed that the inmate of the apartment had passed the hour of the principal repast, and his loneliness at a time usually social seemed to indicate that few olive branches were accustomed to overshadow his table.

The windows of the dining-room reached to the ground, and without the closing light just enabled one to see a thick copse of wood, which, at a very brief interval of turf, darkened immediately opposite the house. While the old man was thus bending over the fire and conning his evening contemplations, a figure stole from the copse I have mentioned, and, approaching the window, looked pryingly into the apartment; then with a noiseless hand it opened the spring of the casement, which was framed on a peculiar and old-fashioned construction, that

required a practised and familiar touch, entered the apartment, and crept on, silent and unperceived by the inhabitant of the room, till it paused and stood motionless, with folded arms, scarce three steps behind the high back of the old man's chair.

In a few minutes the latter moved from his position, and slowly rose; the abruptness with which he turned, brought the dark figure of the intruder full and suddenly before him: he started back, and cried in an alarmed tone, "Who is there?"

The stranger made no reply.

The old man, in a voice in which anger and pride mingled with fear, repeated the question. The figure advanced, dropped the cloak in which it was wrapped, and presenting the features of Clarence Linden, said, in a low but clear tone, —

"Your son."

The old man dropped his hold of the bell-rope, which he had just before seized, and leaned as if for support against the oak wainscot; Clarence approached.

"Yes!" said he, mournfully, "your unfortunate, your offending, but your guiltless son. More than five years I have been banished from your house; I have been thrown, while yet a boy, without friends, without guidance, without name, upon the wide world, and to the mercy of chance. I come now to you as a man, claiming no assistance, and uttering no reproach, but to tell you that him whom an earthly father rejected God has preserved; that without one unworthy or debasing act I have won for myself the friends who support and the wealth which dignifies life, — since it renders it independent. Through all the disadvantages I have struggled against I have preserved unimpaired my honour, and unsullied my conscience; you have disowned, but you might have claimed me without shame. Father, these hands are clean!"

A strong and evident emotion shook the old man's frame. He raised himself to his full height, which was still tall and commanding, and in a voice, the natural harshness of which was rendered yet more repellent by passion, replied, "Boy! your presumption is insufferable. What to me is your



THE RETURN OF CLARENCE LINDEN.

wretched fate? Go, go, go to your miserable mother: find her out; claim kindred there; live together, toil together, rot together, but come not to me! disgrace to my house, ask not admittance to my affections; the law may give you my name, but sooner would I be torn piecemeal than own your right to it. If you want money, name the sum, take it: cut up my fortune to shreds, seize my property, revel on it; but come not *here*. This house is sacred; pollute it not: I disown you; I discard you; I, — ay, I detest, — I loathe you!”

And with these words, which came forth as if heaved from the inmost heart of the speaker, who shook with the fury he endeavoured to stifle, he fell back into his chair, and fixed his eyes, which glared fearfully through the increasing darkness upon Linden, who stood high, erect, and sorrowfully before him.

“Alas, my lord!” said Clarence, with mournful bitterness, “have not the years which have seared your form and whitened your locks brought some meekness to your rancour, some mercy to your injustice, for one whose only crime against you seems to have been his birth. But I said I came not to reproach, nor do I. Many a bitter hour, many a pang of shame and mortification and misery, which have made scars in my heart that will never wear away, my wrongs have cost me; but let them pass. Let them not swell your future and last account whenever it be required. I am about to leave this country, with a heavy and foreboding heart; we may never meet again on earth. I have no longer any wish, any chance, of resuming the name you have deprived me of. I shall never thrust myself on your relationship or cross your view. Lavish your wealth upon him whom you have placed so immeasurably above me in your affections. But I have not deserved your curse, Father; give me your blessing, and let me depart in peace.”

“Peace! and what peace have I had? what respite from gnawing shame, the foulness and leprosy of humiliation and reproach, since — since —? But this is not your fault, you say: no, no, — it is another’s; and you are only the mark of my stigma; my disgrace, not its perpetrator. Ha! a nice dis-

tionior, truly. My blessing you say! Come, kneel; kneel, boy, and have it!"

Clarence approached, and stood bending and bareheaded before his father, but he knelt not.

"Why do you not kneel?" cried the old man, vehemently.

"It is the attitude of the injurer, not of the injured!" said Clarence, firmly.

"Injured! insolent reprobate, is it not I who am injured? Do you not read it in my brow, — here, here?" and the old man struck his clenched hand violently against his temples. "Was I not injured?" he continued, sinking his voice into a key unnaturally low; "did I not trust implicitly? did I not give up my heart without suspicion? was I not duped deliciously? was I not kind enough, blind enough, fool enough? and was I not betrayed, — damnably, filthily betrayed? But that was *no* injury. Was not my old age turned into a sapless tree, a poisoned spring? Were not my days made a curse to me, and my nights a torture? Was I not, am I not, a mock and a by-word, and a miserable, impotent, unavenged old man? Injured! But this is no injury! Boy, boy, what are your wrongs to mine?"

"Father!" cried Clarence, deprecatingly, "I am not the cause of your wrongs: is it just that the innocent should suffer for the guilty?"

"Speak not in that voice!" cried the old man, "that voice! — fie, fie on it. Hence! away! away, boy! why tarry you? My son! and have that voice? Pooh, you are *not* my son. Ha! ha! — *my* son?"

"What am I, then?" said Clarence, soothingly: for he was shocked and grieved, rather than irritated by a wrath which partook so strongly of insanity.

"I will tell you," cried the father, "I will tell you what you are: you are my curse!"

"Farewell!" said Clarence, much agitated, and retiring to the window by which he had entered; "may your heart never smite you for your cruelty! Farewell! may the blessing you have withheld from me be with you!"

"Stop! stay!" cried the father; for his fury was checked

for one moment, and his nature, fierce as it was, relented: but Clarence was already gone, and the miserable old man was left alone to darkness, and solitude, and the passions which can make a hell of the human heart!

CHAPTER LIV.

SED quæ præclara et prospera tanti,
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum? ¹— JUVENAL.

WE are now transported to a father and a son of a very different stamp.

It was about the hour of one P. M., when the door of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt's study was thrown open, and the servant announced Mr. Brown.

"Your servant, sir; your servant, Mr. Henry," said the itinerant, bowing low to the two gentlemen thus addressed. The former, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, might be about the same age as Linden's father. A shrewd, sensible, ambitious man of the world, he had made his way from the state of a younger brother, with no fortune and very little interest, to considerable wealth, besides the property he had acquired by law, and to a degree of consideration for general influence and personal ability, which, considering he had no official or parliamentary rank, very few of his equals enjoyed. Persevering, steady, crafty, and possessing, to an eminent degree, that happy art of "canting" which opens the readiest way to character and consequence, the rise and reputation of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt appeared less to be wondered at than envied; yet, even envy was only for those who could not look beyond the surface of things. He was at heart an anxious and unhappy man. The evil we do in the world is often paid back in the bosom of home. Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt was, like Crauford, what might

¹ "But what excellence or prosperity so great that there should be an equal measure of evils for our joys?"

be termed a mistaken utilitarian : he had lived utterly and invariably for self ; but instead of uniting self-interest with the interest of others, he considered them as perfectly incompatible ends. But character was among the greatest of all objects to him ; so that, though he had rarely deviated into what might fairly be termed a virtue, he had never transgressed what might rigidly be called a propriety. He had not the aptitude, the wit, the moral audacity of Crauford : he could not have indulged in one offence with impunity, by a mingled courage and hypocrisy in veiling others ; he was the slave of the forms which Crauford subjugated to himself. He was only so far resembling Crauford as one man of the world resembles another in selfishness and dissimulation : he could be dishonest, not villanous, — much less a villain upon system. He was a *cant*, Crauford a *hypocrite*: his uttered opinions were, like Crauford's, different from his conduct ; but he *believed* the truth of the former even while sinning in the latter ; he canted so sincerely that the tears came into his eyes when he spoke. Never was there a man more exemplary in words : people who departed from him went away impressed with the idea of an excess of honour, a plethora of conscience. “It was almost a pity,” said they, “that Mr. Vavasour was so romantic ;” and thereupon they named him as executor to their wills and guardian to their sons. None but he could, in carrying the lawsuit against Mordaunt, have lost nothing in reputation by success. But there was something so specious, so ostensibly fair in his manner and words, while he was ruining Mordaunt, that it was impossible not to suppose he was actuated by the purest motives, the most holy desire for justice ; not for himself, he said, for he was old, and already rich enough, but for his son ! From that son came the punishment of all his offences, — the black drop at the bottom of a bowl seemingly so sparkling. To him, as the father grew old and desirous of quiet, Vavasour had transferred all his selfishness, as if to a securer and more durable firm. The child, when young, had been singularly handsome and intelligent ; and Vavasour, as he toiled and toiled at his ingenious and graceful cheateries, pleased himself with anticipating the importance and advan-

tages the heir to his labours would enjoy. For that son he certainly *had* persevered more arduously than otherwise he might have done in the lawsuit, of the justice of which he better satisfied the world than his own breast; for that son he rejoiced as he looked around the stately halls and noble domain from which the rightful possessor had been driven; for that son he extended economy into penuriousness, and hope into anxiety; and, too old to expect much more from the world himself, for that son he anticipated, with a wearing and feverish fancy, whatever wealth could purchase, beauty win, or intellect command.

But as if, like the Castle of Otranto, there was something in Mordaunt Court which contained a penalty and a doom for the usurper, no sooner had Vavasour possessed himself of his kinsman's estate, than the prosperity of his life dried and withered away, like Jonah's gourd, in a single night. His son, at the age of thirteen, fell from a scaffold, on which the workmen were making some extensive alterations in the old house, and became a cripple and a valetudinarian for life. But still Vavasour, always of a sanguine temperament, cherished a hope that surgical assistance might restore him: from place to place, from professor to professor, from quack to quack, he carried the unhappy boy, and as each remedy failed he was only the more impatient to devise a new one. But as it was the mind as well as person of his son in which the father had stored up his ambition; so, in despite of this fearful accident and the wretched health by which it was followed, Vavasour never suffered his son to rest from the tasks and tuitions and lectures of the various masters by whom he was surrounded. The poor boy, it is true, deprived of physical exertion and naturally of a serious disposition, required very little urging to second his father's wishes for his mental improvement; and as the tutors were all of the orthodox university calibre, who imagine that there is no knowledge (but vanity) in any other works than those in which their own education has consisted, so Henry Vavasour became at once the victor and victim of Bentleys and Scaligers, word-weighers and metre-scanners, till, utterly ignorant of everything which could have softened his temper,

dignified his misfortunes, and reconciled him to his lot, he was sinking fast into the grave, soured by incessant pain into moroseness, envy, and bitterness; exhausted by an unwholesome and useless application to unprofitable studies; an excellent scholar (as it is termed), with the worst regulated and worst informed mind of almost any of his contemporaries equal to himself in the advantages of ability, original goodness of disposition, and the costly and profuse expenditure of education.

But the vain father, as he heard, on all sides, of his son's talents, saw nothing sinister in their direction; and though the poor boy grew daily more contracted in mind and broken in frame, Vavasour yet hugged more and more closely to his breast the hope of ultimate cure for the latter and future glory for the former. So he went on heaping money and extending acres, and planting and improving and building and hoping and anticipating, for one at whose very feet the grave was already dug!

But we left Mr. Brown in the study, making his bow and professions of service to Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt and his son.

"Good day, *honest* Brown," said the former, a middle-sized and rather stout man, with a well-powdered head, and a sharp, shrewd, and very sallow countenance; "good day; have you brought any of the foreign *liqueurs* you spoke of, for Mr. Henry?"

"Yes, sir, I have some curiously fine *eau d'or* and *liqueur des îles*, besides the *marasquino* and *curaçoa*. The late Lady Waddilove honoured my taste in these matters with her especial approbation."

"My dear boy," said Vavasour, turning to his son, who lay extended on the couch, reading *not* the "Prometheus" (that most noble drama ever created), *but the notes upon it*,—"my dear boy, as you are fond of *liqueurs*, I desired Brown to get some peculiarly fine; perhaps—"

"Pish!" said the son, fretfully interrupting him, "do, I beseech you, take your hand off my shoulder. See now, you have made me lose my place. I really do wish you would leave me alone for one moment in the day."

"I beg your pardon, Henry," said the father, looking reverently on the Greek characters which his son preferred to the newspaper. "It is very vexatious, I own; but do taste these *liqueurs*. Dr. Lukewarm said you might have everything you liked—"

"But quiet!" muttered the cripple.

"I assure you, sir," said the wandering merchant, "that they are excellent; allow me, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, to ring for a corkscrew. I really do think, sir, that Mr. Henry looks much better. I declare he has quite a colour."

"No, indeed!" said Vavasour, eagerly. "Well, it seems to me, too, that he is getting better. I intend him to try Mr. E——'s patent collar in a day or two; but that will in some measure prevent his reading. A great pity; for I am very anxious that he should lose no time in his studies just at present. He goes to Cambridge in October."

"Indeed, sir! Well, he will set the town in a blaze, I guess, sir! Everybody says what a fine scholar Mr. Henry is, — even in the servants' hall!"

"Ay, ay," said Vavasour, gratified even by this praise, "he is clever enough, Brown; and, what is more" (and here Vavasour's look grew sanctified), "he is good enough. His principles do equal honour to his head and heart. He would be no son of mine if he were not as much the gentleman as the scholar."

The youth lifted his heavy and distorted face from his book, and a sneer raised his lip for a moment; but a sudden spasm of pain seizing him, the expression changed, and Vavasour, whose eyes were fixed upon him, hastened to his assistance.

"Throw open the window, Brown, ring the bell, call —"

"Pooh, Father," cried the boy, with a sharp, angry voice, "I am not going to die yet, nor faint either; but it is all your fault. If you *will* have those odious, vulgar people here for *your own* pleasure, at least suffer me, another day, to retire."

"My son, my son!" said the grieved father, in reproachful anger, "it was my anxiety to give you some trifling enjoyment that brought Brown here: you must be sensible of that."

“You tease me to death,” grumbled the peevish unfortunate.

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Brown, “shall I leave the bottles here? or do you please that I shall give them to the butler? I see that I am displeasing and troublesome to Mr. Henry; but as my worthy friend and patroness, the late Lady —”

“Go, go, honest Brown!” said Vavasour (who desired every man’s good word), “go, and give the *liqueurs* to Preston. Mr. Henry is extremely sorry that he is too unwell to see you now; and I — I have the heart of a father for his sufferings.”

Mr. Brown withdrew. “‘Odious and vulgar,’” said he to himself, in a little fury, — for Mr. Brown peculiarly valued himself on his gentility, — “‘odious and vulgar!’ To think of his little *lordship* uttering such shameful words! However, I will go into the steward’s room, and abuse him there. But, I suppose, I shall get no dinner in this house, — no, not so much as a crust of bread; for while the old gentleman is launching out into such prodigious expenses on a great scale, — making heathenish temples, and spoiling the fine old house with his new picture gallery and nonsense, — he is so close in small matters, that I warrant not a candle-end escapes him; griping and pinching and squeezing with one hand, and scattering money, as if it were dirt, with the other, — and all for that cross, ugly, deformed, little whippersnapper of a son. ‘Odious and vulgar,’ indeed! What shocking language! Mr. Algernon Mordaunt would never have made use of such words, I know. And, bless me, now I think of it, I wonder where that poor gentleman is. The young heir here is not long for this world, I can see; and who knows but what Mr. Algernon may be in great distress; and I am sure, as far as four hundred pounds, or even a thousand, go, I would not mind lending it him, only upon the post-obits of Squire Vavasour and his hopeful. I like doing a kind thing; and Mr. Algernon was always very good to me; and I am sure I don’t care about the security, though I think it will be as sure as sixpence; for the old gentleman must be past sixty, and the young one is the worse life of the two. And when he’s gone, what re-

lation so near as Mr. Algernon? We should help one another; it is but one's duty: and if he is in great distress he would not mind a handsome premium. Well, nobody can say Morris Brown is not as charitable as the best Christian breathing; and, as the late Lady Waddilove very justly observed, 'Brown, believe me, a prudent risk is the surest gain!' I will lose no time in finding the late squire out."

Muttering over these reflections, Mr. Brown took his way to the steward's room.

CHAPTER LV.

Clar. — How, two letters? — The Lover's Progress.

LETTER FROM CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF
HAVERFIELD.

HOTEL —, CALAIS.

MY DEAR DUKE, — After your kind letter, you will forgive me for not having called upon you before I left England, for you have led me to hope that I may dispense with ceremony towards you; and, in sad and sober earnest, I was in no mood to visit even you during the few days I was in London, previous to my departure. Some French philosopher has said that, 'the best compliment we can pay our friends, when in sickness or misfortune, is to avoid them.' I will not say how far I disagree with this sentiment, but I know that a French philosopher will be an unanswerable authority with you; and so I will take shelter even under the battery of an enemy.

I am waiting here for some days in expectation of Lord Aspeden's arrival. Sick as I was of England and all that has lately occurred to me there, I was glad to have an opportunity of leaving it sooner than my chief could do; and I amuse myself very indifferently in this dull town, with reading all the morning, plays all the evening, and dreams of my happier friends all the night.

And so you are sorry that I did not destroy Lord Borodaile. My dear duke, you would have been much more sorry if I had! What could you then have done for a living Pasquin for your stray lampoons and vagrant sarcasms? Had an unfortunate bullet carried away —

"That peer of England, pillar of the state,"

as you term him, pray *on* whom could 'Duke Humphrey unfold his griefs'? — Ah, Duke, better as it is, believe me; and, whenever you are at a loss for a subject for wit, you will find cause to bless my forbearance, and congratulate yourself upon the existence of its object.

Dare I hope that, amidst all the gayeties which court you, you will find time to write to me? If so, you shall have in return the earliest intelligence of every new soprano, and the most elaborate criticisms on every budding *figurante* of our court.

Have you met Trollop lately, and in what new pursuit are his intellectual energies engaged? There, you see, I have fairly entrapped your Grace into a question which common courtesy will oblige you to answer.

Adieu, ever, my dear Duke,

Most truly yours, etc.

LETTER FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD TO CLARENCE
LINDEN, ESQ.

A thousand thanks, *mon cher*, for your letter, though it was certainly less amusing and animated than I could have wished it for your sake, as well as my own; yet it could not have been more welcome received, had it been as witty as your conversation itself. I heard that you had accepted the place of secretary to Lord Aspeden, and that you had passed through London on your way to the Continent, looking (the amiable Callythorpe, 'who never flatters,' is my authority) more like a ghost than yourself. So you may be sure, my dear Linden, that I was very anxious to be convinced under your own hand of your carnal existence.

Take care of yourself, my good fellow, and don't imagine, as I am apt to do, that youth is like my hunter, Fearnought, and will carry you over everything. In return for your philosophical maxim, I will give you another. "In age we should remember that we *have been* young, and in youth that we are *to be* old." Ehem! — am I not profound as a moralist? I think a few such sentences would become my long face well; and, to say truth, I am tired of being witty; every one thinks he can be that: so I will borrow Trollop's philosophy, — take snuff, wear a wig out of curl, and grow wise instead of merry.

À propos of Trollop; let me not forget that you honour him with your inquiries. I saw him three days since, and he asked me if I had been impressed lately with the idea vulgarly called Clarence Linden; and he then proceeded to inform me that he had heard the atoms which composed your frame were about to be resolved into a new form. While

I was knitting my brows very wisely at this intelligence, he passed on to apprise me that I had neither length, breadth, nor extension, nor anything but mind. Flattered by so delicate a compliment to my understanding, I yielded my assent: and he then shifted his ground, and told me that there was no such thing as mind; that we were but modifications of matter; and that, in a word, I was all body. I took advantage of this doctrine, and forthwith removed my modification of matter from his.

Findlater has just lost his younger brother in a duel. You have no idea how shocking it was. Sir Christopher one day heard his brother, who had just entered the — Dragoons, ridiculed for his want of spirit, by Major Elton, who professed to be the youth's best friend. The honest heart of our worthy baronet was shocked beyond measure at this perfidy, and the next time his brother mentioned Elton's name with praise, out came the story. You may guess the rest: young Findlater called out Elton, who shot him through the lungs! "I did it for the best," cried Sir Christopher.

La pauvre petite Meronville! What an Ariadne! Just as I was thinking to play the Bacchus to your Thesens, up steps an old gentleman from Yorkshire, who hears it is fashionable to marry *bonas robas*, proposes honourable matrimony, and deprives me and the world of La Meronville! The wedding took place on Monday last, and the happy pair set out to their seat in the North. Verily, we shall have quite a new race in the next generation; I expect all the babes will skip into the world with a *pas de zephyr*, singing in sweet trebles, —

"Little dancing loves we are!
Who the deuce is our papa?"

I think you will be surprised to hear that Lord Borodaile is beginning to thaw; I saw him smile the other day! Certainly, we are not so near the North Pole as we were! He is going, and so am I, in the course of the autumn, to your old friends the Westboroughs. Report says that he is *un peu épris de la belle Flore*; but, then, Report is such a liar! For my own part I always contradict her.

I eagerly embrace your offer of correspondence, and assure you that there are few people by whose friendship I conceive myself so much honoured as by yours. You will believe this; for you know that, like Callythorpe, I never flatter. Farewell for the present.

Sincerely yours,

HAVERFIELD.

CHAPTER LVI.

Q. Eliz. — Shall I be tempted of the devil thus ?

K. Rich. — Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

Q. Eliz. — Shall I forget myself to be myself ? — SHAKSPEARE.

It wanted one hour to midnight, as Crauford walked slowly to the lonely and humble street where he had appointed his meeting with Glendower. It was a stormy and fearful night. The day had been uncommonly sultry, and, as it died away, thick masses of cloud came labouring along the air, which lay heavy and breathless, as if under a spell,—as if in those dense and haggard vapours the rider of the storm sat, like an incubus, upon the atmosphere beneath, and paralyzed the motion and wholesomeness of the sleeping winds. And about the hour of twilight, or rather when twilight should have been, instead of its quiet star, from one obscure corner of the heavens flashed a solitary gleam of lightning, lingered a moment, —

“ And ere a man had power to say, Behold !
The jaws of darkness did devour it up.”

But then, as if awakened from a torpor by a signal universally acknowledged, from the courts and quarters of heaven, came, blaze after blaze, and peal upon peal, the light and voices of the Elements when they walk abroad. The rain fell not : all was dry and arid ; the mood of Nature seemed not gentle enough for tears ; and the lightning, livid and forked, flashed from the sullen clouds with a deadly fierceness, made trebly perilous by the panting drought and stagnation of the air. The streets were empty and silent, as if the huge city had been doomed and delivered to the wrath of the tempest ; and ever and anon the lightnings paused upon the housetops, shook and quivered as if meditating their stroke, and then, baffled

as it were, by some superior and guardian agency, vanished into their gloomy tents, and made their next descent from some opposite corner of the skies.

It was a remarkable instance of the force with which a cherished object occupies the thoughts, and of the all-sufficiency of the human mind to itself, the slowness and unconsciousness of danger with which Crauford, a man luxurious as well as naturally timid, moved amidst the angry fires of heaven and brooded, undisturbed and sullenly serene, over the project at his heart.

“A rare night for our meeting,” thought he; “I suppose he will not fail me. Now let me con over my task. I must not tell him all yet. Such babes must be led into error before they can walk: just a little inkling will suffice, a glimpse into the arcana of my scheme. Well, it is indeed fortunate that I met him, for verily I am surrounded with danger, and a very little delay in the assistance I am forced to seek might exalt me to a higher elevation than the peerage.”

Such was the meditation of this man, as with a slow, shuffling walk, characteristic of his mind, he proceeded to the appointed spot.

A cessation of unusual length in the series of the lightnings, and the consequent darkness, against which the dull and scanty lamps vainly struggled, prevented Crauford and another figure approaching from the opposite quarter seeing each other till they almost touched. Crauford stopped abruptly.

“Is it you?” said he.

“It is a man who has outlived fortune!” answered Glendower, in the exaggerated and metaphorical language which the thoughts of men who imagine warmly, and are excited powerfully, so often assume.

“Then,” rejoined Crauford, “you are the more suited for my purpose. A little urging of necessity behind is a marvellous whetter of the appetite to danger before, he! he!” And as he said this, his low chuckling laugh jarringly enough contrasted with the character of the night and his companion.

Glendower replied not: a pause ensued; and the lightning

which, spreading on a sudden from east to west, hung over the city a burning and ghastly canopy, showed the face of each to the other, working and almost haggard as it was with the conception of dark thoughts, and rendered wan and unearthly by the spectral light in which it was beheld. "It is an awful night," said Glendower.

"True," answered Crauford, "a very awful night; but we are all safe under the care of Providence. Jesus! what a flash! Think you it is a favourable opportunity for our conversation?"

"Why not?" said Glendower; "what have the thunders and wrath of Heaven to do with us?"

"H—e—m! h—e—m! God sees all things," rejoined Crauford, "and avenges Himself on the guilty by His storms!"

"Ay; but those are the storms of the heart! I tell you that even the innocent may have that within to which the loudest tempests without are peace! But guilt, you say; what have *we* to do with guilt?"

Crauford hesitated, and, avoiding any reply to this question, drew Glendower's arm within his own, and in a low half-whispered tone said, —

"Glendower, survey mankind; look with a passionless and unprejudiced eye upon the scene which moves around us: what do you see anywhere but the same re-acted and eternal law of Nature, — all, all preying upon each other? Or if there be a solitary individual who refrains, he is as a man without a common badge, without a marriage garment, and the rest trample him under-foot! Glendower, *you* are such a man! Now hearken, I will deceive you not; I honour you too much to beguile you, even to your own good. I own to you, fairly and at once, that in the scheme I shall unfold to you, there may be something repugnant to the factitious and theoretical principles of education, — something hostile to the prejudices, though not to the reasonings, of the mind; but —"

"Hold!" said Glendower, abruptly, pausing and fixing his bold and searching eye upon the tempter; "hold! there will

be no need of argument or refinement in this case: tell me at once your scheme, and at once I will accept or reject it!"

"Gently," said Crauford; "to all deeds of contract there is a preamble. Listen to me yet further: when I have ceased, I will listen to you. It is in vain that you place man in cities; it is in vain that you fetter him with laws; it is in vain that you pour into his mind the light of an imperfect morality, of a glimmering wisdom, of an ineffectual religion: in all places he is the same, — the same savage and crafty being, who makes the passions which rule himself the tools of his conquest over others! There is in all creation but one evident law, — self-preservation! Split it as you like into hairbreadths and atoms, it is still fundamentally and essentially unaltered. Glendower, that self-preservation is our bond now. Of myself I do not at present speak; I refer only to you: self-preservation commands you to place implicit confidence in me; it impels you to abjure indigence, by accepting the proposal I am about to make to you."

"You, as yet, speak enigmas," said Glendower; "but they are sufficiently clear to tell me their sense is not such as I have heard you utter."

"You are right. Truth is not always safe, — safe either to others, or to ourselves! But I dare open to you now my real heart: look in it; I dare to say that you will behold charity, benevolence, piety to God, love and friendship at this moment to yourself; but I own, also, that you will behold there a determination — which to me seems courage — not to be the only idle being in the world, where all are busy; or, worse still, to be the only one engaged in a perilous and uncertain game, and yet shunning to employ all the arts of which he is master. I will own to you that, long since, had I been foolishly inert, I should have been, at this moment, more penniless and destitute than yourself. I live happy, respected, wealthy! I enjoy in their widest range the blessings of life. I dispense those blessings to others. Look round the world: whose name stands fairer than mine? whose hand relieves more of human distresses? whose tongue preaches purer doctrines? None, Glendower, none. I offer to you means

not dissimilar to those I have chosen, fortunes not unequal to those I possess. Nothing but the most unjustifiable fastidiousness will make you hesitate to accept my offer."

"You cannot expect that I have met you this night with a resolution to be unjustifiably fastidious," said Glendower, with a hollow and cold smile.

Crauford did not immediately answer, for he was considering whether it was yet the time for disclosing the important secret. While he was deliberating, the sullen clouds began to break from their suspense. A double darkness gathered around, and a few large drops fell on the ground in token of a more general discharge about to follow from the floodgates of heaven. The two men moved onward, and took shelter under an old arch. Crauford first broke silence. "Hist!" said he, "hist! do you hear anything?"

"Yes! I heard the winds and the rain, and the shaking houses, and the plashing pavements, and the reeking house-tops, — nothing more."

Looking long and anxiously around to certify himself that none was indeed the witness of their conference, Crauford approached close to Glendower and laid his hand heavily upon his arm. At that moment a vivid and lengthened flash of lightning shot through the ruined arch, and gave to Crauford's countenance a lustre which Glendower almost started to behold. The face, usually so smooth, calm, bright in complexion, and almost inexpressive from its extreme composure, now agitated by the excitement of the moment, and tinged by the ghastly light of the skies, became literally fearful. The cold blue eye glared out from its socket; the lips blanched, and, parting in act to speak, showed the white glistening teeth; and the corners of the mouth, drawn down in a half sneer, gave to the cheeks, rendered green and livid by the lightning, a lean and hollow appearance contrary to their natural shape.

"It is," said Crauford, in a whispered but distinct tone, "a perilous secret that I am about to disclose to you. I indeed have no concern in it, but my lords the judges have, and you will not therefore be surprised if I forestall the ceremonies of their court and require an oath."

Then, his manner and voice suddenly changing into an earnest and deep solemnity, as excitement gave him an eloquence more impressive, because unnatural to his ordinary moments, he continued: "By those lightnings and commotions above; by the heavens in which they revel in their terrible sports; by the earth, whose towers they crumble, and herbs they blight, and creatures they blast into cinders at their will; by Him whom, whatever be the name He bears, all men in the living world worship and tremble before; by whatever is sacred in this great and mysterious universe, and at the peril of whatever can wither and destroy and curse, — swear to preserve inviolable and forever the secret I shall whisper in your ear!"

The profound darkness which now, in the pause of the lightning, wrapped the scene, hid from Crauford all sight of the effect he had produced, and even the very outline of Glendower's figure; but the gloom made more distinct the voice which thrilled through it upon Crauford's ear.

"Promise me that there is not dishonour, nor crime, which is dishonour, in this confidence, and I swear."

Crauford ground his teeth. He was about to reply impetuously, but he checked himself. "I am not going," thought he, "to communicate my own share of this plot, but merely to state that a plot does exist, and then to point out in what manner he can profit by it; so far, therefore, there is no guilt in his concealment, and, consequently, no excuse for him to break his vow."

Rapidly running over this self-argument, he said aloud, "I promise!"

"And," rejoined Glendower, "I swear!"

At the close of this sentence another flash of lightning again made darkness visible, and Glendower, beholding the countenance of his companion, again recoiled: for its mingled haggardness and triumph seemed to his excited imagination the very expression of a fiend! "Now," said Crauford, relapsing into his usual careless tone, somewhat enlivened by his sneer, "now, then, you must not interrupt me in my disclosure by those starts and exclamations which break

from your philosophy like sparks from flint. Hear me throughout."

And, bending down, till his mouth reached Glendower's ear, he commenced his recital. Artfully hiding his own agency, the master-spring of the gigantic machinery of fraud, which, too mighty for a single hand, required an assistant, — throwing into obscurity the sin, while, knowing the undaunted courage and desperate fortunes of the man, he did not affect to conceal the danger; expatiating upon the advantages, the immense and almost inexhaustible resources of wealth which his scheme suddenly opened upon one in the deepest abyss of poverty, and slightly sketching, as if to excite vanity, the ingenuity and genius by which the scheme originated, and could only be sustained, — Crauford's detail of temptation, in its knowledge of human nature, in its adaptation of act to principles, in its web-like craft of self-concealment, and the speciousness of its lure, was indeed a splendid masterpiece of villanous invention.

But while Glendower listened, and his silence flattered Crauford's belief of victory, not for one single moment did a weak or yielding desire creep around his heart. Subtly as the scheme was varnished, and scarce a tithe of its comprehensive enormity unfolded, the strong and acute mind of one long accustomed to unravel sophistry and gaze on the loveliness of truth, saw at once that the scheme proposed was of the most unmingled treachery and baseness. Sick, chilled, withering at heart, Glendower leaned against the damp wall; as every word which the tempter fondly imagined was irresistibly confirming his purpose, tore away the last prop to which, in the credulity of hope, the student had clung, and mocked while it crushed the fondness of his belief.

Crauford ceased, and stretched forth his hand to grasp Glendower's. He felt it not. "You do not speak, my friend," said he; "do you deliberate, or have you not decided?" Still no answer came. Surprised, and half alarmed, he turned round, and perceived by a momentary flash of lightning, that Glendower had risen and was moving away towards the mouth of the arch.

“Good Heavens! Glendower,” cried Crauford, “where are you going?”

“Anywhere,” cried Glendower, in a sudden paroxysm of indignant passion, “anywhere in this great globe of suffering, so that the agonies of my human flesh and heart are not polluted by the accents of crime! And such crime! Why, I would rather go forth into the highways, and win bread by the sharp knife and the death-struggle, than sink my soul in such mire and filthiness of sin. Fraud! fraud! treachery! Merciful Father! what can be my state, when these are supposed to tempt me!”

Astonished and aghast, Crauford remained rooted to the spot.

“Oh!” continued Glendower, and his noble nature was wrung to the utmost; “Oh, MAN, MAN! that I should have devoted my best and freshest years to the dream of serving thee! In my boyish enthusiasm, in my brief day of pleasure and of power, in the intoxication of love, in the reverse of fortune, in the squalid and obscure chambers of degradation and poverty, that one hope animated, cheered, sustained me through all! In temptation did this hand belie, or in sickness did this brain forego, or in misery did this heart forget, thy great and advancing cause? In the wide world, is there one being whom I have injured, even in thought; one being who, in the fellowship of want, should not have drunk of my cup, or broken with me the last morsel of my bread?—and now, now, is it come to this?”

And, hiding his face with his hands, he gave way to a violence of feeling before which the weaker nature of Crauford stood trembling and abashed. It lasted not long; he raised his head from its drooping posture, and, as he stood at the entrance of the arch, a prolonged flash from the inconstant skies shone full upon his form. Tall, erect, still, the gloomy and ruined walls gave his colourless countenance and haughty stature in bold and distinct relief; all trace of the past passion had vanished: perfectly calm and set, his features borrowed even dignity from their marble paleness, and the marks of suffering which the last few months had writ in legible char-

acters on the cheek and brow. Seeking out, with an eye to which the intolerable lightnings seemed to have lent something of their fire, the cowering and bended form of his companion, he said, —

“Go home, miserable derider of the virtue you cannot understand; go to your luxurious and costly home; go and repine that human nature is not measured by your mangled and crippled laws: amidst men, yet more fallen than I am, hope to select your victim; amidst prisons, and hovels, and roofless sheds; amidst rags and destitution, and wretches made mad by hunger, hope that you may find a villain. I leave you to that hope, and — to remembrance!”

As Glendower moved away, Crauford recovered himself. Rendered desperate by the vital necessity of procuring some speedy aid in his designs, and not yet perfectly persuaded of the fallacy of his former judgment, he was resolved not to suffer Glendower thus easily to depart. Smothering his feelings by an effort violent even to his habitual hypocrisy, he sprang forward, and laid his hand upon Glendower’s shoulder.

“Stay, stay,” said he, in a soothing and soft voice; “you have wronged me greatly. I pardon your warmth, — nay, I honour it; but hereafter you will repent your judgment of me. At least, do justice to my intentions. Was I an actor in the scheme proposed to you? what was it to me? Was I in the smallest degree to be benefited by it? Could I have any other motive than affection for you? If I erred, it was from a different view of the question; but is it not the duty of a friend to find expedients for distress, and to leave to the distressed person the right of accepting or rejecting them? But let this drop forever: partake of my fortune; be my adopted brother. Here, I have hundreds about me at this moment; take them all, and own at least that I meant you well.”

Feeling that Glendower, who at first had vainly endeavoured to shake off his hand, now turned towards him, though at the moment it was too dark to see his countenance, the wily speaker continued, “Yes, Glendower, if by that name I must alone address you, take all I have: there is no one in this

world dearer to me than you are. I am a lonely and disappointed man, without children or ties. I sought out a friend who might be my brother in life and my heir in death. I found you: be that to me!"

"I am faint and weak," said Glendower, slowly, "and I believe my senses cannot be clear; but a minute since, and you spoke at length, and with a terrible distinctness, words which it polluted my very ear to catch, and *now* you speak as if you loved me. Will it please you to solve the riddle?"

"The truth is this," said Crauford: "I knew your pride; I feared you would not accept a permanent pecuniary aid, even from friendship. I was driven, therefore, to devise some plan of independence for you. I could think of no plan but that which I proposed. You speak of it as wicked: it may be so; but it seemed not wicked to me. I may have formed a wrong—I own it is a peculiar—system of morals; but it is, at least, sincere. Judging of my proposal by that system, I saw no sin in it. I saw, too, much less danger than, in the honesty of my heart, I spoke of. In a similar distress, I solemnly swear, I myself would have adopted a similar relief. Nor is this all; the plan proposed would have placed thousands in your power. Forgive me if I thought your life, and the lives of those most dear to you, of greater value than these sums to the persons defrauded, ay, defrauded, if you will: forgive me if I thought that with these thousands you would effect far more good to the community than their legitimate owners. Upon these grounds, and on some others, too tedious now to state, I justified my proposal to my conscience. Pardon me, I again beseech you: accept my last proposal; be my partner, my friend, my heir; and forget a scheme never proposed to you, if I had hoped (what I hope now) that you would accept the alternative which it is my pride to offer, and which you are not justified, even by pride, to refuse."

"Great Source of all knowledge!" ejaculated Glendower, scarce audibly, and to himself. "Supreme and unfathomable God! dost Thou most loathe or pity Thine abased creatures,

walking in their dim reason upon this little earth, and sanctioning fraud, treachery, crime, upon a principle borrowed from Thy laws? Oh! when, when will Thy full light of wisdom travel down to us, and guilt and sorrow, and this world's evil mysteries, roll away like vapours before the blaze?"

"I do not hear you, my friend," said Crauford. "Speak aloud; you will, I feel you will, accept my offer, and become my brother!"

"Away!" said Glendower; "I will not."

"He wanders; his brain is touched!" muttered Crauford, and then resumed aloud, "Glendower, we are both unfit for talk at present; both unstrung by our late jar. You will meet me again to-morrow, perhaps. I will accompany you now to your door."

"Not a step: our paths are different."

"Well, well, if you will have it so, be it as you please. I have offended: you have a right to punish me, and play the churl to-night; but your address?"

"Yonder," said Glendower, pointing to the heavens. "Come to me a month hence, and you will find me *there!*"

"Nay, nay, my friend, your brain is heated; but you leave me? Well, as I said, your will is mine: at least take some of these paltry notes in earnest of our bargain; remember when next we meet you will share all I have."

"You remind me," said Glendower, quietly, "that we have old debts to settle. When last I saw you, you lent me a certain sum: there it is; take it; count it; there is but one poor guinea gone. Fear not: even to the uttermost farthing you shall be repaid."

"Why, why, this is unkind, ungenerous. Stay, stay,—" but, waving his hand impatiently, Glendower darted away, and passing into another street, the darkness effectually closed upon his steps.

"Fool! fool! that I am," cried Crauford, stamping vehemently on the ground; "in what point did my wit fail me, that I could not win one whom very hunger had driven into my net? But I must yet find him; and I will; the police shall be set to work: these half confidences may ruin me.

And how deceitful he has proved : to talk more diffidently than a whining harlot upon virtue, and yet be so stubborn upon trial ! Dastard that I am, too, as well as fool : I felt sunk into the dust by his voice. But pooh, I must have him yet ; your worst villains make the most noise about the first step. True that I cannot storm, but I will undermine. But, wretch that I am, I must win him or another soon, or I perish on a gibbet. Out, base thought !”

CHAPTER LVII.

FORMAM quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem honesti vides : quæ, si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientia.¹ — TULLY.

IT was almost dawn when Glendower returned to his home. Fearful of disturbing his wife, he stole with mute steps to the damp and rugged chamber, where the last son of a princely line, and the legitimate owner of lands and halls which ducal rank might have envied, held his miserable asylum. The first faint streaks of coming light broke through the shutterless and shattered windows, and he saw that *she* reclined in a deep sleep upon the chair beside their child's couch. She would not go to bed herself till Glendower returned, and she had sat up, watching and praying, and listening for his footsteps, till, in the utter exhaustion of debility and sickness, sleep had fallen upon her. Glendower bent over her.

“Sleep,” said he, “sleep on ! The wicked do not come to thee now. Thou art in a world that has no fellowship with this, — a world from which even happiness is not banished ! Nor woe nor pain, nor memory of the past nor despair of all before thee, make the characters of thy present state ! Thou forestaltest the forgetfulness of the grave, and thy heart con-

¹ “Son Marcus, you see the form and as it were the face of Virtue : that Wisdom, which if it could be perceived by the eyes, would (as Plato saith) kindle absolute and marvellous affection.”

centrates all earth's comfort in one word, — 'Oblivion!' Beautiful, *how* beautiful thou art even yet! that smile, that momentary blush, years have not conquered *them*. They are as when, my young bride, thou didst lean first upon my bosom, and dream that sorrow was no more! And I have brought thee unto this! These green walls make thy bridal chamber, yon fragments of bread thy bridal board. Well! it is no matter! thou art on thy way to a land where all things, even a breaking heart, are at rest. I weep not; wherefore should I weep? Tears are not for the dead, but their survivors. I would rather see thee drop inch by inch into the grave, and smile as I beheld it, than save thee for an inheritance of sin. What is there in this little and sordid life that we should strive to hold it? What in this dreadful dream that we should fear to wake?"

And Glendower knelt beside his wife, and, despite his words, tears flowed fast and gushingly down his cheeks; and wearied as he was, he watched upon her slumbers, till they fell from the eyes to which his presence was more joyous than the day.

It was a beautiful thing, even in sorrow, to see that couple, whom want could not debase, nor misfortune, which makes even generosity selfish, divorce! All that Fate had stripped from the poetry and graces of life, had not shaken one leaf from the romance of their green and unwithered affections! They were the very type of love in its holiest and most enduring shape: their hearts had grown together; their being had flowed through caves and deserts, and reflected the storms of an angry Heaven; but its waters had indissolubly mingled into one! Young, gifted, noble, and devoted, they were worthy victims of this blighting and bitter world! Their garden was turned into a wilderness; but, like our first parents, it was hand in hand that they took their solitary way! Evil beset them, but they swerved not; the rains and the winds fell upon their unsheltered heads, but they were not bowed; and through the mazes and briers of this weary life, their bleeding footsteps strayed not, *for they had a clew!* The mind seemed, as it were, to become visible and *external* as the frame decayed, and to cover the body with something of its

own invulnerable power; so that whatever should have attacked the mortal and frail part, fell upon that which, imperishable and divine, resisted and subdued it!

It was unfortunate for Glendower that he never again met Wolfe: for neither fanaticism of political faith, nor sternness of natural temper, subdued in the republican the real benevolence and generosity which redeemed and elevated his character; nor could any impulse of party zeal have induced him, like Crauford, systematically to take advantage of poverty in order to tempt to participation in his schemes. From a more evil companion Glendower had not yet escaped: Crauford, by some means or other, found out his abode, and lost no time in availing himself of the discovery. In order fully to comprehend his unwearied persecution of Glendower, it must constantly be remembered that to this persecution he was bound by a necessity which, urgent, dark, and implicating life itself, rendered him callous to every obstacle and unsusceptible of all remorse. With the exquisite tact which he possessed, he never openly recurred to his former proposal of fraud: he contented himself with endeavouring to persuade Glendower to accept pecuniary assistance, but in vain. The veil once torn from his character no craft could restore. Through all his pretences and sevenfold hypocrisy Glendower penetrated at once into his real motives: he was not to be duped by assurances of friendship which he knew the very dissimilarities between their natures rendered impossible. He had seen at the first, despite all allegations to the contrary, that in the fraud Crauford had proposed, that person could by no means be an uninfluenced and cold adviser. In after conversations, Crauford, driven by the awful interest he had in success from his usual consummateness of duplicity, betrayed in various important minutiae how deeply he was implicated in the crime for which he had argued; and not even the visible and progressive decay of his wife and child could force the stern mind of Glendower into accepting those wages of iniquity which he knew well were only offered as an earnest or a snare.

There is a royalty in extreme suffering, when the mind falls not with the fortunes, which no hardihood of vice can violate

unabashed. Often and often, humble and defeated through all his dissimulation, was Crauford driven from the presence of the man whom it was his bitterest punishment to fear most when most he affected to despise; and *as* often, re-collecting his powers and fortifying himself in his experience of human frailty when sufficiently tried, did he return to his attempts. He waylaid the door and watched the paths of his intended prey. He knew that the mind which even best repels temptation first urged hath seldom power to resist the same suggestion, if daily—dropping, unwearied—presenting itself in every form, obtruded in every hour, losing its horror by custom, and finding in the rebellious bosom itself its smoothest vizard and most alluring excuse. And it was, indeed, a mighty and perilous trial to Glendower, when rushing from the presence of his wife and child, when fainting under accumulated evils, when almost delirious with sickening and heated thought, to hear at each prompting of the wrung and excited nature, each heave of the black fountain that in no mortal breast is utterly exhausted, one smooth, soft, persuasive voice forever whispering, “Relief!”—relief, certain, utter, instantaneous! the voice of one pledged never to relax an effort or spare a pang, by a danger to himself, a danger of shame and death,—the voice of one who never spoke but in friendship and compassion, profound in craft, and a very sage in the disguises with which language invests deeds. But VIRTUE has resources buried in itself, which we know not till the invading hour calls them from their retreats. Surrounded by hosts without, and when Nature itself, turned traitor, is its most deadly enemy within, it assumes a new and a superhuman power, which is greater than Nature itself. Whatever be its creed, whatever be its sect, from whatever segment of the globe its orisons arise, Virtue is God’s empire, and from His throne of thrones He will defend it. Though cast into the distant earth, and struggling on the dim arena of a human heart, all things above are spectators of its conflict or enlisted in its cause. The angels have their charge over it; the banners of archangels are on its side; and from sphere to sphere, through the illimitable ether, and round the impenetrable darkness at the feet

of God, its triumph is hymned by harps which are strung to the glories of the Creator!

One evening, when Crauford had joined Glendower in his solitary wanderings, the dissembler renewed his attacks.

"But why not," said he, "accept from my friendship what to my benevolence you would deny? I couple with my offers, my prayers rather, no conditions. How then *do you, can you*, reconcile it to your conscience, to suffer your wife and child to perish before your eyes?"

"Man, man," said Glendower, "tempt me no more: let them die! At present the worst is death: what you offer me is dishonour."

"Heavens, how uncharitable is this! Can you call the mere act of accepting money from one who loves you dishonour?"

"It is in vain that you varnish your designs," said Glendower, stopping and fixing his eyes upon him. "Do you not think that cunning ever betrays itself? In a thousand words, in a thousand looks which have escaped *you*, but not *me*, I know that, if there be one being on this earth whom you hate and would injure, that being is myself. Nay, start not: listen to me patiently. I have sworn that it is the last opportunity you shall have. I will not subject myself to farther temptation: I am now sane; but there are things which may drive me mad, and in madness you might conquer. You hate me: it is out of the nature of earthly things that you should not. But even were it otherwise, do you think that I could believe you would come from your voluptuous home to these miserable retreats; that, among the lairs of beggary and theft, you would lie in wait to allure me to forsake poverty, without a stronger motive than love for one who affects it not for you? I know you: I have read your heart; I have penetrated into that stronger motive; it is your own safety. In the system of atrocity you proposed to me, you are the principal. You have already bared to me enough of the extent to which that system reaches to convince me that a single miscreant, however ingenious, cannot, unassisted, support it with impunity. You want help: I am he in whom you have dared to

believe that you could find it. You are detected; now be undeceived!"

"Is it so?" said Crauford; and as he saw that it was no longer possible to feign, the poison of his heart broke forth in its full venom. The fiend rose from the reptile, and stood exposed in its natural shape. Returning Glendower's stern but lofty gaze with an eye to which all evil passions lent their unholy fire, he repeated, "Is it so? then you are more penetrating than I thought; but it is indifferent to me. It was for your sake, not mine, most righteous man, that I wished you might have a disguise to satisfy the modesty of your punctilios. It is all one to Richard Crauford whether you go blindfold or with open eyes into his snare. Go you must, and *shall*. Ay, frowns will not awe me. You have desired the truth: you shall have it. You are right: I hate you, — hate you with a soul whose force of hatred you cannot dream of. Your pride, your stubbornness, your coldness of heart, which things that would stir the blood of beggars cannot warm; your icy and passionless virtue, — I hate, I hate all! You are right also, most wise inquisitor, in supposing that in the scheme proposed to you, I am the principal: I am! You were to be the tool, and *shall*. I have offered you mild inducements, — pleas to soothe the technicalities of your conscience: you have rejected them; be it so. Now choose between my first offer and the gibbet. Ay, the gibbet! That night on which we made the appointment which shall not yet be in vain, — on that night you stopped me in the street; you demanded money; you robbed me; I will swear; I will prove it. Now, then, tremble, man of morality: dupe of your own strength, you are in my power; tremble! Yet in *my* safety is your escape: I am generous. I repeat my original offer, — wealth, as great as you will demand, or — the gibbet, the gibbet: do I speak loud enough? do you hear?"

"Poor fool!" said Glendower, laughing scornfully and moving away. But when Crauford, partly in mockery, partly in menace, placed his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, as if to stop him, the touch seemed to change his mood from scorn to fury; turning abruptly round, he seized the villain's throat;

with a giant's strength, and cried out, while his whole countenance worked beneath the tempestuous wrath within, "What if I squeeze out thy poisonous life from thee this moment!" and then once more bursting into a withering laughter, as he surveyed the terror which he had excited, he added, "No, no: thou art too vile!" and, dashing the hypocrite against the wall of a neighbouring house, he strode away.

Recovering himself slowly, and trembling with rage and fear, Crauford gazed round, expecting yet to find he had sported too far with the passions he had sought to control. When, however, he had fully satisfied himself that Glendower was gone, all his wrathful and angry feelings returned with redoubled force. But their most biting torture was the consciousness of their impotence. For after the first paroxysm of rage had subsided he saw, too clearly, that his threat could not be executed without incurring the most imminent danger of discovery. High as his character stood, it was possible that no charge against him might excite suspicion, but a word might cause inquiry, and inquiry would be ruin. Forced, therefore, to stomach his failure, his indignation, his shame, his hatred, and his vengeance, his own heart became a punishment almost adequate to his vices.

"But my foe will die," said he, clinching his fist so firmly that the nails almost brought blood from the palm; "he will starve, famish, and see them — his wife, his child — perish first! I shall have my triumph, though I shall not witness it. But now, away to my villa: there, at least, will be some one whom I can mock and beat and trample, if I will! *Would — would — would that I were that very man, destitute as he is!* His neck, at least, is safe: if he dies, it will not be upon the gallows, nor among the hootings of the mob! Oh, horror! horror! What are my villa, my wine, my women, with that black thought ever following me like a shadow? Who, who while an avalanche is sailing over him, who would sit down to feast?"

Leaving this man to shun or be overtaken by Fate, we return to Glendower. It is needless to say that Crauford visited him no more; and, indeed, shortly afterwards Glendower again changed his home. But every day and every hour

brought new strength to the disease which was creeping and burning through the veins of the devoted wife; and Glendower, who saw on earth nothing before them but a jail, from which as yet they had been miraculously delivered, repined not as he beheld her approach to a gentler and benigner home. Often he sat, as she was bending over their child, and gazed upon her cheek with an insane and fearful joy at the characters which consumption had there engraved; but when she turned towards him her fond eyes (those deep wells of love, in which truth lay hid, and which neither languor nor disease could exhaust), the unnatural hardness of his heart melted away, and he would rush from the house, to give vent to an agony against which fortitude and manhood were in vain.

There was no hope for their distress. His wife had, unknown to Glendower (for she dreaded his pride), written several times to a relation, who, though distant, was still the nearest in blood which fate had spared her, but ineffectually; the scions of a large and illegitimate family, which surrounded him, utterly prevented the success, and generally interrupted the application, of any claimant on his riches but themselves. Glendower, whose temper had ever kept him aloof from all but the commonest acquaintances, knew no human being to apply to. Utterly unable to avail himself of the mine which his knowledge and talents should have proved; sick, and despondent at heart, and debarred by the loftiness of honour, or rather principle that nothing could quell, from any unlawful means of earning bread, which to most minds would have been rendered excusable by the urgency of nature, — Glendower marked the days drag on in dull and protracted despair, and envied every corpse that he saw borne to the asylum in which all earth's hopes seemed centred and confined.

CHAPTER LVIII.

FOR ours was not like earthly love.

And must this parting be our very last ?

No! I shall love thee still when death itself is past.

Hush'd were his Gertrude's lips! but still their bland

And beautiful expression seem'd to melt

With love that could not die! and still his hand

She presses to the heart, no more that felt.

Ah, heart! where once each fond affection dwelt.

CAMPBELL.

“I WONDER,” said Mr. Brown to himself, as he spurred his shaggy pony to a speed very unusual to the steady habits of either party, “I wonder where I shall find him. I would not for the late Lady Waddilove's best diamond cross have anybody forestall me in the news. To think of my young master dying so soon after my last visit, or rather my last visit but one; and to think of the old gentleman taking on so, and raving about his injustice to the rightful possessor, and saying that he is justly punished, and asking me so eagerly if I could discover the retreat of the late squire, and believing me so implicitly when I undertook to do it, and giving me this letter!” And here Mr. Brown wistfully examined an epistle sealed with black wax, peeping into the corners, which irritated rather than satisfied his curiosity. “I wonder what the old gentleman says in it; I suppose he will, of course, give up the estate and house. Let me see; that long picture gallery, just built, will, at all events, want furnishing. That would be a famous opportunity to get rid of the Indian jars, and the sofas, and the great Turkey carpet. How lucky that I should just have come in time to get the letter. But let me consider how I shall find out? — an advertisement in the paper? Ah! that's the plan.

Algernon Mordaunt, Esq.: something greatly to his advantage; apply to Mr. Brown, etc.’ Ah! that will do well, very well. The Turkey carpet won't be quite long enough. I wish

I had discovered Mr. Mordaunt's address before, and lent him some money during the young gentleman's life: it would have seemed more generous. However, I can offer it now, before I show the letter. Bless me, it's getting dark. Come, Dobbin, ye-up!" Such were the meditations of the faithful friend of the late Lady Waddilove, as he hastened to London, charged with the task of discovering Mordaunt and with the delivery of the following epistle:—

You are now, sir, the heir to that property which, some years ago, passed from your hands into mine. My son, for whom alone wealth or I may say life was valuable to me, is no more. I only, an old, childless man, stand between you and the estates of Mordaunt. Do not wait for my death to enjoy them. I cannot live here, where everything reminds me of my great and irreparable loss. I shall remove next month into another home. Consider this, then, as once more yours. The house, I believe, you will not find disimproved by my alterations: the mortgages on the estate have been paid off; the former rental you will perhaps allow my steward to account to *you* for, and after my death the present one will be yours. I am informed that you are a proud man, and not likely to receive favours. Be it so, sir! it is no favour you will receive, but justice; there are circumstances connected with my treaty with your father which have of late vexed my conscience; and conscience, sir, must be satisfied at any loss. But we shall meet, perhaps, and talk over the past; at present I will not enlarge on it. If you have suffered by me, I am sufficiently punished, and my only hope is to repair your losses.

I am, etc.,

H. VAVASOUR MORDAUNT.

Such was the letter, so important to Mordaunt, with which our worthy friend was charged. Bowed to the dust as Vavasour was by the loss of his son, and open to conscience as affliction had made him, he had lived too long for effect, not to be susceptible to its influence, even to the last. Amidst all his grief, and it was intense, there were some whispers of self-exaltation at the thought of the *éclat* which his generosity and abdication would excite; and, with true worldly morality, the hoped-for plaudits of others gave a triumph rather than humiliation to his reconciliation with himself.

To say truth, there were indeed circumstances connected with his treaty with Mordaunt's father calculated to vex his

conscience. He knew that he had not only taken great advantage of Mr. Mordaunt's distress, but that at his instigation a paper which could forever have prevented Mr. Mordaunt's sale of the property, had been destroyed. These circumstances, during the life of his son, he had endeavoured to forget or to palliate. But grief is rarely deaf to remorse; and at the death of that idolized son the voice at his heart grew imperious, and he lost the power in losing the motive of reasoning it away.

Mr. Brown's advertisement was unanswered; and, with the zeal and patience of the Christian proselyte's tribe and calling, the good man commenced, in person, a most elaborate and painstaking research. For a long time, his endeavours were so ineffectual that Mr. Brown, in despair, disposed of the two Indian jars for half their value, and heaved a despondent sigh, whenever he saw the great Turkey carpet rolled up in his warehouse with as much obstinacy as if it never meant to unroll itself again.

At last, however, by dint of indefatigable and minute investigation, he ascertained that the object of his search had resided in London, under a feigned name; from lodging to lodging, and corner to corner, he tracked him, till at length he made himself master of Mordaunt's present retreat. A joyful look did Mr. Brown cast at the great Turkey carpet, as he passed by it, on his way to his street door, on the morning of his intended visit to Mordaunt. "It is a fine thing to have a good heart," said he, in the true style of Sir Christopher Findlater, and he again eyed the Turkey carpet. "I really feel quite happy at the thought of the pleasure I shall give."

After a walk through as many obscure and filthy *wynds* and lanes and alleys and courts as ever were threaded by some humble fugitive from justice, the patient Morris came to a sort of court, situated among the miserable hovels in the vicinity of the Tower. He paused wonderingly at a dwelling in which every window was broken, and where the tiles, torn from the roof, lay scattered in forlorn confusion beside the door; where the dingy bricks looked crumbling away,

from very age and rottenness, and the fabric, which was of great antiquity, seemed so rocking and infirm that the eye looked upon its distorted and overhanging position with a sensation of pain and dread; where the very rats had deserted their loathsome cells from the insecurity of their tenure, and the ragged mothers of the abject neighbourhood forbade their brawling children to wander under the threatening walls, lest they should keep the promise of their mouldering aspect, and, falling, bare to the obstructed and sickly day the secrets of their prison-house. Girt with the foul and reeking lairs of that extreme destitution which necessity urges irresistibly into guilt, and excluded, by filthy alleys and an eternal atmosphere of smoke and rank vapour, from the blessed sun and the pure air of heaven, the miserable mansion seemed set apart for every disease to couch within, — too perilous even for the hunted criminal; too dreary even for the beggar to prefer it to the bare hedge, or the inhospitable porch, beneath whose mockery of shelter the frost of winter had so often numbed him into sleep.

Thrice did the heavy and silver-headed cane of Mr. Brown resound upon the door, over which was a curious carving of a lion dormant, and a date, of which only the two numbers 15 were discernable. Roused by a note so unusual, and an apparition so unwontedly smug as the worthy Morris, a whole legion of dingy and smoke-dried brats, came trooping from the surrounding huts, and with many an elvish cry, and strange oath, and cabalistic word, which thrilled the respectable marrow of Mr. Brown, they collected in a gaping, and, to his alarmed eye, a menacing group, as near to the house as their fears and parents would permit them.

“It is very dangerous,” thought Mr. Brown, looking shiveringly up at the hanging and tottering roof, “and very appalling,” as he turned to the ragged crowd of infant reprobates which began with every moment to increase. At last he summoned courage, and inquired, in a tone half soothing and half dignified, if they could inform him how to obtain admittance or how to arouse the inhabitants.

An old crone, leaning out of an opposite window, with

matted hair hanging over a begrimed and shrivelled countenance, made answer. "No one," she said, in her peculiar dialect, which the worthy man scarcely comprehended, "lived there or had done so for years:" but Brown knew better; and while he was asserting the fact, a girl put her head out of another hovel, and said that she had sometimes seen, at the dusk of the evening, a man leave the house, but whether any one else lived in it she could not tell. Again Mr. Brown sounded an alarm, but no answer came forth, and in great fear and trembling he applied violent hands to the door: it required but little force; it gave way; he entered; and, jealous of the entrance of the mob without, reclosed and barred, as well as he was able, the shattered door. The house was *unnaturally* large for the neighbourhood, and Brown was in doubt whether first to ascend a broken and perilous staircase or search the rooms below: he decided on the latter; he found no one, and with a misgiving heart, which nothing but the recollection of the great Turkey carpet could have inspired, he ascended the quaking steps. All was silent. But a door was unclosed. He entered, and saw the object of his search before him.

Over a pallet bent a form, on which, though youth seemed withered and even pride broken, the unconquerable soul left somewhat of grace and of glory, that sustained the beholder's remembrance of better days; a child in its first infancy knelt on the nearer side of the bed with clasped hands, and vacant eyes that turned towards the intruder with a listless and lacklustre gaze. But Glendower, or rather Mordaunt, as he bent over the pallet, spoke not, moved not: his eyes were riveted on one object; his heart seemed turned into stone and his veins curdled into ice. Awed and chilled by the breathing desolation of the spot, Brown approached, and spoke he scarcely knew what. "You are," he concluded his address, "the master of Mordaunt Court;" and he placed the letter in the hands of the person he thus greeted.

"Awake, hear me!" cried Algernon to Isabel, as she lay extended on the couch; and the messenger of glad tidings, for the first time seeing her countenance, shuddered, and knew that he was in the chamber of death.

“Awake, my own, own love! Happy days are in store for us yet: our misery is past; you will live, live to bless me in riches, as you have done in want.”

Isabel raised her eyes to his, and a smile, sweet, comforting, and full of love, passed the lips which were about to close forever. “Thank Heaven,” she murmured, “for your dear sake. It is pleasant to die now, and *thus* ;” and she placed the hand that was clasped in her relaxing and wan fingers within the bosom which had been for anguished and hopeless years his asylum and refuge, and which now when fortune changed, as if it had only breathed in comfort to his afflictions, was for the first time and forever to be cold, — cold even to him!

“You will live, you will live,” cried Mordaunt, in wild and incredulous despair, “in mercy live! You, who have been my angel of hope, do not, — O God, O God! do not desert me now!”

But that faithful and loving heart was already deaf to his voice, and the film grew darkening and rapidly over the eye which still with undying fondness sought him out through the shade and agony of death. Sense and consciousness were gone, and dim and confused images whirled round her soul, struggling a little moment before they sank into the depth and silence where the past lies buried. But still mindful of *him*, and grasping, as it were, at his remembrance, she clasped, closer and closer, the icy hand which she held, to her breast. “Your hand is cold, dearest, it is cold,” said she, faintly, “but I will warm it *here*!” And so her spirit passed away, and Mordaunt felt afterwards, in a lone and surviving pilgrimage, that her last thought had been kindness to him, and that her last act had spoken forgetfulness even of death in the tenderness of love!

CHAPTER LIX.

CHANGE and time take together their flight. — *Golden Violet.*

ONE evening in autumn, about three years after the date of our last chapter, a stranger on horseback, in deep mourning, dismounted at the door of the Golden Fleece, in the memorable town of W ——. He walked into the taproom, and asked for a private apartment and accommodation for the night. The landlady, grown considerably plumper than when we first made her acquaintance, just lifted up her eyes to the stranger's face, and summoning a short stout man (formerly the waiter, now the second helpmate of the comely hostess), desired him, in a tone which partook somewhat more of the authority indicative of their former relative situations than of the obedience which should have characterized their present, "to show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. 4."

The stranger smiled as the sound greeted his ears, and he followed not so much the host as the hostess's spouse into the apartment thus designated. A young lady, who some eight years ago little thought that she should still be in a state of single blessedness, and who always honoured with an attentive eye the stray travellers who, from their youth, loneliness, or that ineffable air which usually designates the unmarried man, might be in the same solitary state of life, turned to the landlady and said, —

"Mother, did you observe what a handsome gentleman that was?"

"No," replied the landlady; "I only observed that he brought no servant."

"I wonder," said the daughter, "if he is in the army? he has a military air!"

"I suppose he has dined," muttered the landlady to herself, looking towards the larder.

“Have you seen Squire Mordaunt within a short period of time?” asked, somewhat abruptly, a little thick-set man, who was enjoying his pipe and negus in a sociable way at the window-seat. The characteristics of this personage were, a spruce wig, a bottle nose, an elevated eyebrow, a snuff-coloured skin and coat, and an air of that consequential self-respect which distinguishes the philosopher who agrees with the French sage, and sees “no reason in the world why a man should not esteem himself.”

“No, indeed, Mr. Bossolton,” returned the landlady; “but I suppose that, as he is now in the Parliament House, he will live less retired. It is a pity that the inside of that noble old Hall of his should not be more seen; and after all the old gentleman’s improvements too! They say that the estate now, since the mortgages were paid off, is above £10,000 a year, clear!”

“And if I am not induced into an error,” rejoined Mr. Bossolton, refilling his pipe, “old Vavasour left a great sum of ready money besides, which must have been an aid, and an assistance, and an advantage, mark me, Mistress Merrylack, to the owner of Mordaunt Hall, that has escaped the calculation of your faculty, — and the — and the — faculty of your calculation!”

“You mistake, Mr. Boss,” as, in the friendliness of diminutives, Mrs. Merrylack sometimes styled the grandiloquent practitioner, “you mistake: the old gentleman left all his ready money in two bequests, — the one to the College of — in the University of Cambridge, and the other to an hospital in London. I remember the very words of the will; they ran thus, Mr. Boss: ‘And whereas my beloved son, had he lived, would have been a member of the College of — in the University of Cambridge, which he would have adorned by his genius, learning, youthful virtue, and the various qualities which did equal honour to his head and heart, and would have rendered him alike distinguished as the scholar and the Christian, I do devise and bequeath the sum of thirty-seven thousand pounds sterling, now in the English Funds, etc; and then follows the manner in which he will have his charity vested

and bestowed, and all about the prize which shall be forever designated and termed 'The Vavasour Prize,' and what shall be the words of the Latin speech which shall be spoken when the said prize be delivered, and a great deal more to that effect: so, then, he passes to the other legacy, of exactly the same sum, to the hospital, usually called and styled —, in the city of London, and says, 'And whereas we are assured by the Holy Scriptures, which, in these days of blasphemy and sedition, it becomes every true Briton and member of the Established Church to support, that "charity doth cover a multitude of sins," so I do give and devise,' etc., 'to be forever termed in the deeds,' etc., 'of the said hospital, "The Vavasour Charity;"' and always provided that on the anniversary of the day of my death a sermon shall be preached in the chapel attached to the said hospital by a clergyman of the Established Church, on any text appropriate to the day and deed so commemorated.' But the conclusion is most beautiful, Mr. Bossolton: 'And now having discharged my duties, to the best of my humble ability, to my God, my king, and my country, and dying in the full belief of the Protestant Church, as by law established, I do set my hand and seal,' etc."

"A very pleasing and charitable and devout and virtuous testament or will, Mistress Merrylack," said Mr. Bossolton; "and in a time when anarchy with gigantic strides does devastate and devour and harm the good old customs of our ancestors and forefathers, and tramples with its poisonous breath the Magna Charta and the glorious revolution, it is beautiful, ay, and sweet, mark you, Mrs. Merrylack, to behold a gentleman of the aristocratic classes or grades supporting the institutions of his country with such remarkable energy of sentiments and with—and with, Mistress Merrylack, with sentiments of such remarkable energy."

"Pray," said the daughter, adjusting her ringlets by a little glass which hung over the tap, "how long has Mr. Mordaunt's lady been dead?"

"Oh! she died just before the squire came to the property," quoth the mother. "Poor thing! she was so pretty! I am

sure I cried for a whole hour when I heard it! I think it was three years last month when it happened. Old Mr. Vavasour died about two months afterwards."

"The afflicted husband" (said Mr. Bossolton, who was the victim of a most fiery Mrs. Boss at home) "went into foreign lands or parts, or, as it is vulgarly termed, the Continent, immediately after an event or occurrence so fatal to the cup of his prosperity and the sunshine of his enjoyment, did he not, Mrs. Merrylack?"

"He did. And you know, Mr. Boss, he only returned about six months ago."

"And of what borough or burgh or town or city is he the member and representative?" asked Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, putting another lump of sugar into his negus. "I have heard, it is true, but my memory is short; and, in the multitude and multifariousness of my professional engagements, I am often led into a forgetfulness of matters less important in their variety, and less — less various in their importance."

"Why," answered Mrs. Merrylack, "somehow or other, I quite forget too; but it is some distant borough. The gentleman wanted him to stand for the county, but he would not hear of it; perhaps he did not like the publicity of the thing, for he is mighty reserved."

"Proud, haughty, arrogant, and assumptious!" said Mr. Bossolton, with a puff of unusual length.

"Nay, nay," said the daughter (young people are always the first to defend), "I'm sure he's not proud: he does a mort of good, and has the sweetest smile possible! I wonder if he'll marry again! He is very young yet, not above two or three and thirty." (The kind damsel would not have thought two or three and thirty *very* young some years ago; but we grow wonderfully indulgent to the age of other people as we grow older ourselves!)

"And what an eye he has!" said the landlady. "Well, for my part, — but, bless me. Here, John, John, John, waiter, husband I mean, — here's a carriage and four at the door. Lizzy, dear, is my cap right?"

And mother, daughter, and husband all flocked, charged

with simper, courtesy, and bow, to receive their expected guests. With a disappointment which we who keep not inns can but very imperfectly conceive, the trio beheld a single personage, — a valet, descend from the box, open the carriage door, and take out — a desk! Of all things human, male or female, the said carriage was utterly empty.

The valet bustled up to the landlady: "My master 's here, ma'am, I think; rode on before!"

"And who is your master?" asked Mrs. Merrylack, a thrill of alarm, and the thought of No. 4, coming across her at the same time.

"Who!" said the valet, rubbing his hands; "who! — why, Clarence Talbot Linden, Esq., of Scarsdale Park, county of York, late Secretary of Legation at the court of —, now M.P., and one of his Majesty's Under Secretaries of State."

"Mercy upon us!" cried the astounded landlady, "and No. 4! only think of it. Run, John, — John, — run, light a fire (the night's cold, I think) in the Elephant, No. 16; beg the gentleman's pardon; say it was occupied till now; ask what he'll have for dinner, — fish, flesh, fowl, steaks, joints, chops, tarts; or, if it's too late (but it's quite early yet; you may put back the day an hour or so), ask what he'll have for supper; run, John, run: what's the oaf staying for? run, I tell you! Pray, sir, walk in (to the valet, our old friend Mr. Harrison) — you'll be hungry after your journey, I think; no ceremony, I beg."

"He's not so handsome as his master," said Miss Elizabeth, glancing at Harrison discontentedly; "but he does not look like a married man, somehow. I'll just step up stairs and change my cap: it would be but civil if the gentleman's gentleman sups with us."

Meanwhile Clarence, having been left alone in the quiet enjoyment of No. 4, had examined the little apartment with an interest not altogether unmingled with painful reflections. There are few persons, however fortunate, who can look back to eight years of their life, and not feel somewhat of disappointment in the retrospect; few persons, whose fortunes the world envy, to whom the token of past time sud-

denly obtruded on their remembrance does not awaken hopes destroyed and wishes deceived which that world has never known. We tell our triumphs to the crowd, but our own hearts are the sole confidants of our sorrows. "Twice," said Clarence to himself, "twice before have I been in this humble room; the first was when, at the age of eighteen, I was just launched into the world, — a vessel which had for its only hope the motto of the chivalrous Sidney, —

"Aut viam inveniam, aut — faciam;"¹

yet, humble and nameless as I was, how well I can recall the exaggerated ambition, nay, the *certainty* of success, as well as its *desire*, which then burned within me. I smile now at the overweening vanity of those hopes,— some, indeed, realized, but how many nipped and withered forever! seeds, of which a few fell upon rich ground and prospered, but of which how far the greater number were scattered: some upon the way-side, and were devoured by immediate cares; some on stony places, and when the sun of manhood was up they were scorched, and because they had no root withered away; and some among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. I am now rich, honoured, high in the favour of courts, and not altogether unknown or unesteemed *arbitrio popularis auræ*: and yet I almost think I was happier when, in that flush of youth and inexperience, I looked forth into the wide world, and imagined that from every corner would spring up a triumph for my vanity or an object for my affections. The next time I stood in this little spot, I was no longer the pendant of a precarious charity, or the idle adventurer who had no stepping-stone but his ambition. I was then just declared the heir of wealth, which I could not rationally have hoped for five years before, and which was in itself sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of ordinary men. But I was corroded with anxieties for the object of my love, and regret for the friend whom I had lost: perhaps the eagerness of my heart for the one rendered me, for the moment, too little mindful of the other; but, in after years, memory took ample atonement

¹ "I will either find my way, or — make it."

for that temporary suspension of her duties. How often have I recalled, in this world of cold ties and false hearts, that true and generous friend, from whose lessons my mind took improvement, and from whose warnings example; who was to me, living, a father, and from whose generosity whatever worldly advantages I have enjoyed or distinctions I have gained are derived! *Then* I was going, with a torn yet credulous heart, to pour forth my secret and my passion to *her*, and, within one little week thence, how shipwrecked of all hope, object, and future happiness I was! Perhaps, at that time, I did not sufficiently consider the excusable cautions of the world: I should not have taken such umbrage at her father's letter; I should have revealed to him my birth and accession of fortune; nor bartered the truth of certain happiness for the trials and manœuvres of romance. But it is too late to repent now. By this time my image must be wholly obliterated from her heart: she has seen me in the crowd, and passed me coldly by; her cheek is pale, but not for me; and in a little, little while, she will be another's, and lost to me forever! Yet have I never forgotten her through change or time, the hard and harsh projects of ambition, the labours of business, or the engrossing schemes of political intrigue. Never! but this is a vain and foolish subject of reflection now."

And not the *less* reflecting upon it for that sage and veracious recollection, Clarence turned from the window, against which he had been leaning, and drawing one of the four chairs to the solitary table, he sat down, moody and disconsolate, and leaning his face upon his hands, pursued the confused yet not disconnected thread of his meditations.

The door abruptly opened, and Mr. Merrylack appeared.

"Dear me, sir!" cried he, "a thousand pities you should have been put here, sir! Pray step upstairs, sir; the front drawing-room is just vacant, sir; what will you please to have for dinner, sir?" etc., according to the instructions of his wife. To Mr. Merrylack's great dismay, Clarence, however, resolutely refused all attempts at locomotion, and contenting himself with entrusting the dinner to the discretion of the landlady, desired to be left alone till it was prepared.

Now, when Mr. John Merrylack returned to the taproom, and communicated the stubborn adherence to No. 4 manifested by its occupier, our good hostess felt exceedingly discomposed. "You are *so* stupid, John," said she: "I'll go and expostulate like with him;" and she was rising for that purpose when Harrison, who was taking particularly good care of himself, drew her back; "I know my master's temper better than you do, ma'am," said he; "and when he is in the humour to be stubborn, the very devil himself could not get him out of it. I dare say he wants to be left to himself: he is very fond of being alone now and then; state affairs, you know" (added the valet, mysteriously touching his forehead), "and even I dare not disturb him for the world; so make yourself easy, and I'll go to him when *he* has dined, and *I* supped. There is time enough for No. 4 when we have taken care of number *one*. Miss, your health!"

The landlady, reluctantly overruled in her design, reseated herself.

"Mr. Clarence Linden, M. P., did you say, sir?" said the learned Jeremiah: "surely, I have had that name or appellation in my books, but I cannot, at this instant of time, recall to my recollection the exact date and circumstance of my professional services to the gentleman so designated, styled, or, I may say, termed."

"Can't say, I am sure, sir," said Harrison; "lived with my master many years; never had the pleasure of seeing you before, nor of travelling this road, — a very hilly road it is, sir. Miss, this negus is as bright as your eyes and as warm as my admiration."

"Oh, sir!"

"Pray," said Mr. Merrylack, who like most of his tribe was a bit of a politician; "is it the Mr. Linden who made that long speech in the House the other day?"

"Precisely, sir. He is a very eloquent gentleman, indeed: pity he speaks so little; never made but that one long speech since he has been in the House, and a capital one it was too. You saw how the prime minister complimented him upon it. 'A speech,' said his lordship, 'which had united the graces

of youthful genius with the sound calculations of matured experience.’”

“Did the prime minister really so speak?” said Jeremiah: “what a beautiful, and noble, and sensible compliment! I will examine my books when I go home,—‘the graces of youthful genius with the sound calculations of matured experience’!”

“If he is in the Parliament House,” quoth the landlady, “I suppose he will know our Mr. Mordaunt, when the squire takes his seat next—what do you call it—sessions?”

“Know Mr. Mordaunt!” said the valet. “It is to see him that *we* have come down here. We intended to have gone there to-night, but Master thought it too late, and I saw he was in a melancholy humour: we therefore resolved to come here; and so Master took one of the horses from the groom, whom we have left behind with the other, and came on alone. I take it, he must have been in this town before, for he described the inn so well.—Capital cheese this! as mild,—as mild as your sweet smile, miss.”

“Oh, sir!”

“Pray, *Mistress* Merrylack,” said Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, depositing his pipe on the table, and awakening from a profound revery, in which for the last five minutes his senses had been buried, “pray, *Mistress* Merrylack, do you not call to your mind or your reminiscence or your—your recollection, a young gentleman, equally comely in his aspect and blandiloquent (ehem!) in his address, who had the misfortune to have his arm severely contused and afflicted by a violent kick from Mr. Mordaunt’s horse, even in the yard in which your stables are situated, and who remained for two or three days in your house or tavern or hotel? I do remember that you were grievously perplexed because of his name, the initials of which only he gave or entrusted or communicated to you, until you did exam—”

“I remember,” interrupted Miss Elizabeth, “I remember well,—a very beautiful young gentleman, who had a letter directed to be left here, addressed to him by the letters C. L., and who was afterwards kicked, and who admired your cap, Mother,

and whose name *was* Clarence Linden. You remember it well enough, Mother, surely?"

"I *think* I do, Lizzy," said the landlady, slowly; for her memory, not so much occupied as her daughter's by beautiful young gentlemen, struggled slowly amidst dim ideas of the various travellers and visitors with whom her house had been honoured, before she came, at last, to the reminiscence of Clarence Linden, "I *think* I do; and Squire Mordaunt was very attentive to him; and he broke one of the panes of glass in No. 8 and gave me half a guinea to pay for it. I *do* remember perfectly, Lizzy. So that is the Mr. Linden now here? — only think!"

"I should not have known him, certainly," said Miss Elizabeth; "he is grown so much taller, and his hair looks quite dark now, and his face is much thinner than it was; but he's very handsome still; is he not, sir?" turning to the valet.

"Ah! ah! well enough," said Mr. Harrison, stretching out his right leg, and falling away a little to the left, in the manner adopted by the renowned Gil Blas, in his address to the fair Laura, "well enough; but he's a little too tall and thin, I think."

Mr. Harrison's faults in shape were certainly not those of being too tall and thin.

"Perhaps so!" said Miss Elizabeth, who scented the vanity by a kindred instinct, and had her own reasons for pampering it, "perhaps so!"

"But he is a great favourite with the ladies all the same; however, he only loves one lady. Ah, but I must not say who, though I know. However, she is so handsome: such eyes, they would go through you like a skewer; but not like yours, — yours, miss, which I vow and protest are as bright as a service of plate."

"Oh, sir!"

And amidst these graceful compliments the time slipped away, till Clarence's dinner and his valet's supper being fairly over, Mr. Harrison presented himself to his master, a perfectly different being in attendance to what he was in companionship: flippancy, impertinence, forwardness, all merged

in the steady, sober, serious demeanour which characterize the respectful and well-bred domestic.

Clarence's orders were soon given. They were limited to the appurtenances of writing; and as soon as Harrison re-appeared with his master's writing-desk, he was dismissed for the night.

Very slowly did Clarence settle himself to his task, and attempt to escape the *ennui* of his solitude, or the restlessness of thought feeding upon itself, by inditing the following epistle:—

TO THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

I was very unfortunate, my dear Duke, to miss seeing you, when I called in Arlington Street the evening before last, for I had a great deal to say to you, — something upon public and a little upon private affairs. I will reserve the latter, since I only am the person concerned, for a future opportunity. With respect to the former —

And now, having finished the political part of my letter, let me congratulate you most sincerely upon your approaching marriage with Miss Trevanion. I do not know her myself; but I remember that she was the bosom friend of Lady Flora Ardenne, whom I have often heard speak of her in the highest and most affectionate terms, so that I imagine her brother could not better atone to you for dishonestly carrying off the fair Julia some three years ago, than by giving you his sister in honourable and orthodox exchange, — the gold amour for the brazen.

As for my lot, though I ought not, at this moment, to dim yours by dwelling upon it, you know how long, how constantly, how ardently I have loved Lady Flora Ardenne; how, for her sake, I have refused opportunities of alliance which might have gratified to the utmost that worldliness of heart which so many who saw me only in the crowd have been pleased to impute to me. You know that neither pleasure, nor change, nor the insult I received from her parents, nor the sudden indifference which I so little deserved from herself, has been able to obliterate her image. You will therefore sympathize with me, when I inform you that there is no longer any doubt of her marriage with Borodaile (or rather Lord Ulswater, since his father's death), as soon as the sixth month of his mourning expires; to this period only two months remain.

Heavens! when one thinks over the past, how incredulous one could

become to the future : when I recall all the tokens of love I received from that woman, I cannot persuade myself that they are now all forgotten, or rather, all lavished upon another.

But I do not blame her : may she be happier with him than she could have been with me ! and that hope shall whisper peace to regrets which I have been foolish to indulge so long, and it is perhaps well for me that they are about to be rendered forever unavailing.

I am staying at an inn, without books, companions, or anything to beguile time and thought, but this pen, ink, and paper. You will see, therefore, a reason and an excuse for my scribbling on to you, till my two sheets are filled, and the hour of ten (one can't well go to bed earlier) arrived.

You remember having often heard me speak of a very extraordinary man whom I met in Italy, and with whom I became intimate. He returned to England some months ago ; and on hearing it my desire of renewing our acquaintance was so great that I wrote to invite myself to his house. He gave me what is termed a very obliging answer, and left the choice of time to myself. You see now, most noble Festus, the reason of my journey hitherwards.

His house, a fine old mansion, is situated about five or six miles from this town : and as I arrived here late in the evening, and knew that his habits were reserved and peculiar, I thought it better to take "mine ease in my inn" for this night, and defer my visit to Mordaunt Court till to-morrow morning. In truth, I was not averse to renewing an old acquaintance, — not, as you in your malice would suspect, with my hostess, but with her house. Some years ago, when I was eighteen, I first made a slight acquaintance with Mordaunt at this very inn, and now, at twenty-six, I am glad to have one evening to myself on the same spot, and retrace here all that has since happened to me.

Now do not be alarmed : I am not going to inflict upon you the unquiet retrospect with which I have just been vexing myself ; no, I will rather speak to you of my acquaintance and host to be. I have said that I first met Mordaunt some years since at this inn, — an accident, for which his horse was to blame, brought us acquainted, — I spent a day at his house, and was much interested in his conversation ; since then, we did not meet till about two years and a half ago, when we were in Italy together. During the intermediate interval Mordaunt had married ; lost his property by a lawsuit ; disappeared from the world (whither none knew) for some years ; recovered the estate he had lost by the death of his kinsman's heir, and shortly afterwards by that of the kinsman himself ; and had become a widower, with one only child, a beautiful little girl of about four years old. He lived in perfect

seclusion, avoided all intercourse with society, and seemed so perfectly unconscious of having ever seen me before, whenever in our rides or walks we met, that I could not venture to intrude myself on a reserve so rigid and unbroken as that which characterized his habits and life.

The gloom and loneliness, however, in which Mordaunt's days were spent, were far from partaking of that selfishness so common, almost so *necessarily* common, to recluses. Wherever he had gone in his travels through Italy, he had left light and rejoicing behind him. In his residence at —, while unknown to the great and gay, he was familiar with the outcast and the destitute. The prison, the hospital, the sordid cabins of want, the abodes (so frequent in Italy, that emporium of artists and poets) where genius struggled against poverty and its own improvidence, — all these were the spots to which his visits were paid, and in which "the very stones prated of his whereabouts." It was a strange and striking contrast to compare the sickly enthusiasm of those who flocked to Italy to lavish their sentiments on statues, and their wealth on the modern impositions palmed upon their taste as the masterpieces of ancient art, — it was a noble contrast, I say, to compare that audacious and idle enthusiasm with the quiet and wholesome energy of mind and heart which led Mordaunt, not to pour forth worship and homage to the unconscious monuments of the dead but to console, to relieve, and to sustain the woes, the wants, the feebleness of the living.

Yet while he was thus employed in reducing the miseries and enlarging the happiness of others, the most settled melancholy seemed to mark himself "as her own." Clad in the deepest mourning, a stern and unbroken gloom sat forever upon his countenance. I have observed, that if in his walks or rides any one, especially of the better classes, appeared to approach, he would strike into a new path. He could not bear even the scrutiny of a glance or the fellowship of a moment: and his mien, high and haughty, seemed not only to repel others, but to contradict the meekness and charity which his own actions so invariably and unequivocally displayed. It must, indeed, have been a powerful exertion of principle over feeling which induced him voluntarily to seek the abodes and intercourse of the rude beings he blessed and relieved.

We met at two or three places to which my weak and imperfect charity had led me, especially at the house of a sickly and distressed artist: for in former life I had intimately known one of that profession; and I have since attempted to transfer to his brethren that debt of kindness which an early death forbade me to discharge to himself. It was thus that I first became acquainted with Mordaunt's occupations and pursuits; for what ennobled his benevolence was the remarkable obscurity in which it was veiled. It was in disguise and in secret that his

generosity flowed ; and so studiously did he conceal his name, and hide even his features, during his brief visits to “the house of mourning,” that only one like myself, a close and minute investigator of whatever has once become an object of interest, could have traced his hand in the various works of happiness it had aided or created.

One day, among some old ruins, I met him with his young daughter. By great good-fortune I preserved the latter, who had wandered away from her father, from a fall of loose stones, which would inevitably have crushed her. I was myself much hurt by my effort, having received upon my shoulder a fragment of the falling stones ; and thus our old acquaintance was renewed, and gradually ripened into intimacy ; not, I must own, without great patience and constant endeavour on my part ; for his gloom and lonely habits rendered him utterly impracticable of access to any (as Lord Aspeden would say) but a diplomatist. I saw a great deal of him during the six months I remained in Italy, and — but you know already how warmly I admire his extraordinary powers and venerate his character — Lord Aspeden’s recall to England separated us.

A general election ensued. I was returned for ——. I entered eagerly into domestic politics ; your friendship, Lord Aspeden’s kindness, my own wealth and industry, made my success almost unprecedentedly rapid. Engaged heart and hand in those minute yet engrossing labours for which the aspirant in parliamentary and state intrigue must unhappily forego the more enlarged though abstruser speculations of general philosophy, and of that morality which may be termed *universal* politics, I have necessarily been employed in very different pursuits from those to which Mordaunt’s contemplations are devoted, yet have I often recalled his maxims, with admiration at their depth, and obtained applause for opinions which were only imperfectly filtered from the pure springs of his own.

It is about six months since he has returned to England, and he has very lately obtained a seat in Parliament : so that we may trust soon to see his talents displayed upon a more public and enlarged theatre than they hitherto have been ; and though I fear his politics will be opposed to ours, I anticipate his public *début* with that interest which genius, even when adverse to one’s self, always inspires. Yet I confess that I am desirous to see and converse with him once more in the familiarity and kindness of private intercourse. The rage of party, the narrowness of sectarian zeal, soon exclude from our friendship all those who differ from our opinions ; and it is like sailors holding commune for the last time with each other, before their several vessels are divided by the perilous and uncertain sea, to confer in peace and retirement for a little while with those who are about to be launched with us on that same

unquiet ocean where any momentary caprice of the winds may disjoin us forever, and where our very union is only a sympathy in toil and a fellowship in danger.

Adieu, my dear duke! it is fortunate for me that our public opinions are so closely allied, and that I may so reasonably calculate in private upon the happiness and honour of subscribing myself your affectionate friend,

C. L.

Such was the letter to which we shall leave the explanation of much that has taken place within the last three years of our tale, and which, in its tone, will serve to show the kindness and generosity of heart and feeling that mingled (rather increased than abated by the time which brought wisdom) with the hardy activity and resolute ambition that characterized the mind of our "Disowned." We now consign him to such repose as the best bedroom in the Golden Fleece can afford, and conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER LX.

THOUGH the wilds of enchantment all vernal and bright,
 In the days of delusion by fancy combined
 With the vanishing phantoms of love and delight,
 Abandon my soul, like a dream of the night,
 And leave but a desert behind,

Be hush'd my dark spirit, for Wisdom condemns
 When the faint and the feeble deplore;
 Be strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
 A thousand wild waves on the shore. — CAMPBELL.

"SHALL I order the carriage round, sir?" said Harrison; "it is past one."

"Yes; yet stay: the day is fine; I will ride; let the carriage come on in the evening; see that my horse is saddled; you looked to his mash last night?"

"I did, sir. He seems wonderfully fresh: would you please

to have me stay here with the carriage, sir, till the groom comes on with the other horse?"

"Ay, do: I don't know yet how far strange servants may be welcome where I am going."

"Now, that's lucky!" said Harrison to himself, as he shut the door: "I shall have a good five hours' opportunity of making my court here. Miss Elizabeth is really a very pretty girl, and might not be a bad match. I don't see any brothers; who knows but she may succeed to the inn — hem! A servant may be ambitious as well as his master, I suppose."

So meditating, Harrison sauntered to the stables; saw (for he was an admirable servant, and could, at a pinch, dress a horse as well as its master) that Clarence's beautiful steed received the utmost nicety of grooming which the ostler could bestow; led it himself to the door; held the stirrup for his master, with the mingled humility and grace of his profession, and then strutted away — "pride on his brow and glory in his eye" — to be the cynosure and oracle of the taproom.

Meanwhile Linden rode slowly onwards. As he passed that turn of the town by which he had for the first time entered it, the recollection of the eccentric and would-be gypsy flashed upon him. "I wonder," thought he, "where that singular man is now, whether he still preserves his itinerant and woodland tastes, —

"Si flumina sylvasque inglorius amet,"¹

or whether, as his family increased in age or number, he has turned from his wanderings, and at length found out 'the peaceful hermitage?' How glowingly the whole scene of that night comes across me, — the wild tents, their wilder inhabitants, the mingled bluntness, poetry, honest good-nature, and spirit of enterprise which constituted the chief's nature; the jovial meal and mirth round the wood fire, and beneath the quiet stars, and the eagerness and zest with which I then mingled in the merriment. Alas! how ill the fastidiousness and refinement of after days repay us for the elastic, buoyant, ready zeal with which our first youth enters into whatever is joyous,

¹ "If, unknown to fame, he love the streams and the woods."

without pausing to ask if its cause and nature be congenial to our habits or kindred to our tastes. After all, there really *was* something philosophical in the romance of the jovial gypsy, childish as it seemed; and I should like much to know if the philosophy has got the better of the romance, or the romance, growing into habit, become commonplace and lost both its philosophy and its enthusiasm. Well, after I leave Mordaunt, I will try and find out my old friend."

With this resolution Clarence's thoughts took a new channel, and he soon entered upon Mordaunt's domain. As he rode through the park where brake and tree were glowing in the yellow tints which Autumn, like Ambition, gilds ere it withers, he paused for a moment to recall the scene as he last beheld it. It was then spring — spring in its first and flushest glory — when not a blade of grass but sent a perfume to the air, the happy air, —

"Making sweet music while the young leaves danced:"

when every cluster of the brown fern, that now lay dull and motionless around him, and amidst which the melancholy deer stood afar off gazing upon the intruder, was vocal with the blithe melodies of the infant year, — the sharp, yet sweet, voices of birds, — and (heard at intervals) the chirp of the merry grasshopper or the hum of the awakened bee. He sighed, as he now looked around, and recalled the change both of time and season; and with that fondness of heart which causes man to knit his own little life to the varieties of time, the signs of heaven, or the revolutions of Nature, he recognized something kindred in the change of scene to the change of thought and feeling which years had wrought in the beholder.

Awaking from his revery, he hastened his horse's pace, and was soon within sight of the house. Vavasour, during the few years he had possessed the place, had conducted and carried through improvements and additions to the old mansion, upon a scale equally costly and judicious. The heavy and motley magnificence of the architecture in which the house had been built remained unaltered; but a wing on either

side, though exactly corresponding in style to the intermediate building, gave, by the long colonnade which ran across the one and the stately windows which adorned the other, an air not only of grander extent, but more cheerful lightness to the massy and antiquated pile. It was, assuredly, in the point of view by which Clarence now approached it, a structure which possessed few superiors in point of size and effect; and harmonized so well with the noble extent of the park, the ancient woods, and the venerable avenues, that a very slight effort of imagination might have poured from the massive portals the pageantries of old days, and the gay galliard of chivalric romance with which the scene was in such accordance, and which in a former age it had so often witnessed.

Ah, little could any one who looked upon that gorgeous pile, and the broad lands which, beyond the boundaries of the park, swelled on the hills of the distant landscape, studded at frequent intervals with the spires and villages, which adorned the wide baronies of Mordaunt, — little could he who thus gazed around have imagined that the owner of all he surveyed had passed the glory and verdure of his manhood in the bitterest struggles with gnawing want, rebellious pride, and urgent passion, without friend or aid but his own haughty and supporting virtue, sentenced to bear yet in his wasted and barren heart the sign of the storm he had resisted, and the scathed token of the lightning he had braved. None but Crauford, who had his own reasons for taciturnity, and the itinerant broker, easily bribed into silence, had ever known of the *extreme* poverty from which Mordaunt had passed to his rightful possessions. It was whispered, indeed, that he had been reduced to narrow and straitened circumstances; but the whisper had been only the breath of rumour, and the imagined poverty far short of the reality: for the pride of Mordaunt (the great, almost the sole, failing in his character) could not endure that all he had borne and baffled should be bared to the vulgar eye; and by a rare anomaly of mind, indifferent as he was to renown, he was morbidly susceptible of shame.

When Clarence rang at the ivy-covered porch, and made in-

quiry for Mordaunt, he was informed that the latter was in the park, by the river, where most of his hours during the day-time were spent.

"Shall I send to acquaint him that you are come, sir?" said the servant.

"No," answered Clarence, "I will leave my horse to one of the grooms, and stroll down to the river in search of your master."

Suiting the action to the word, he dismounted, consigned his steed to the groom, and following the direction indicated to him, bent his way to the "river."

As he descended the hill, the brook (for it did not deserve, though it received, a higher name) opened enchantingly upon his view. Amidst the fragrant reed and the wild-flower, still sweet though fading, and tufts of tedded grass, all of which, when crushed beneath the foot, sent a mingled tribute to its sparkling waves, the wild stream took its gladsome course, now contracted by gloomy firs, which, bending over the water, cast somewhat of their own sadness upon its surface; now glancing forth from the shade, as it "broke into dimples and laughed in the sun;" now washing the gnarled and spreading roots of some lonely ash, which, hanging over it still and droopingly, seemed — the hermit of the scene — to moralize on its noisy and various wanderings; now winding round the hill and losing itself at last amidst thick copses, where day did never more than wink and glimmer, and where, at night, its waters, brawling through their stony channel, seemed like a spirit's wail, and harmonized well with the scream of the gray owl wheeling from her dim retreat, or the moaning and rare sound of some solitary deer.

As Clarence's eye roved admiringly over the scene before him, it dwelt at last upon a small building situated on the wildest part of the opposite bank; it was entirely overgrown with ivy, and the outline only remained to show the Gothic antiquity of the architecture. It was a single square tower, built none knew when or wherefore, and, consequently, the spot of many vagrant guesses and wild legends among the surrounding gossips. On approaching yet nearer, he perceived, alone

and seated on a little mound beside the tower, the object of his search.

Mordaunt was gazing with vacant yet earnest eye upon the waters beneath; and so intent was either his mood or look that he was unaware of Clarence's approach. Tears fast and large were rolling from those haughty eyes, which men who shrank from their indifferent glance little deemed were capable of such weak and feminine emotion. Far, far through the aching void of time were the thoughts of the reft and solitary mourner; they were dwelling, in all the vivid and keen intensity of grief which dies not, upon the day when, about that hour and on that spot, he sat with Isabel's young cheek upon his bosom, and listened to a voice now only heard in dreams. He recalled the moment when the fatal letter, charged with change and poverty, was given to him, and the pang which had rent his heart as he looked around upon a scene over which spring had just then breathed, and which he was about to leave to a fresh summer and a new lord; and then that deep, fond, half-fearful gaze with which Isabel had met his eye, and the feeling, proud even in its melancholy, with which he had drawn towards his breast all that earth had left to him, and thanked God in his heart of hearts that *she* was spared.

"And I am once more master," thought he, "not only of all I then held, but of all which my wealthier forefathers possessed. But she who was the sharer of my sorrows and want, — oh, where is she? Rather, ah, rather a hundredfold that her hand was still clasped in mine, her spirit supporting me through poverty and trial, and her soft voice murmuring the comfort that steals away care, than to be thus heaped with wealth and honour, and *alone*, — alone, where never more can come love or hope, or the yearnings of affection or the sweet fulness of a heart that seems fathomless in its tenderness, yet overflows! Had my lot, when she left me, been still the steepings of bitterness, the stings of penury, the moody silence of hope, the damp and chill of sunless and aidless years, which rust the very iron of the soul away; had my lot been thus, as it had been, I could have borne her death, I

could have looked upon her grave, and wept not, — nay, I could have comforted my own struggles with the memory of her escape; but thus, at the very moment of prosperity, to leave the altered and promising earth, ‘to house with darkness and with death;’ no little gleam of sunshine, no brief recompense for the agonizing past, no momentary respite between tears and the tomb. Oh, Heaven! what — what avail is a wealth which comes too late, when she, who could alone have made wealth bliss, is dust; and the light that should have gilded many and happy days flings only a ghastly glare upon the tomb?”

Starting from these reflections, Mordaunt half-unconsciously rose, and dashing the tears from his eyes, was about to plunge into the neighbouring thicket, when, looking up, he beheld Clarence, now within a few paces of him. He started, and seemed for one moment irresolute whether to meet or shun his advance, but probably deeming it too late for the latter, he banished, by one of those violent efforts with which men of proud and strong minds vanquish emotion, all outward sign of the past agony; and hastening towards his guest, greeted him with a welcome which, though from ordinary hosts it might have seemed cold, appeared to Clarence, who knew his temper, more cordial than he had ventured to anticipate.

CHAPTER LXI.

My father urged me sair,
But my mither didna speak,
Though she looked into my face,
Till my heart was like to break. — *Auld Robin Gray.*

“It is rather singular,” said Lady Westborough to her daughter as they sat alone one afternoon in the music-room at Westborough Park, — “it is rather singular that Lord Uls-

water should not have come yet. He said he should certainly be here before three o'clock."

"You know, Mamma, that he has some military duties to detain him at W——," answered Lady Flora, bending over a drawing in which she appeared to be earnestly engaged.

"True, my dear, and it was very kind in Lord —— to quarter the troop he commands in his native county; and very fortunate that W——, being his head-quarters, should also be so near us. But I cannot conceive that any duty can be sufficiently strong to detain him from you," added Lady Westborough, who had been accustomed all her life to a devotion unparalleled in this age. "You seem very indulgent, Flora."

"Alas! she should rather say very indifferent," thought Lady Flora: but she did not give her thought utterance; she only looked up at her mother for a moment, and smiled faintly.

Whether there was something in that smile or in the pale cheek of her daughter that touched her we know not, but Lady Westborough *was* touched: she threw her arms round Lady Flora's neck, kissed her fondly, and said, "You do not seem well to-day, my love, are you?"

"Oh! — very — very well," answered Lady Flora, returning her mother's caress, and hiding her eyes, to which the tears had started.

"My child," said Lady Westborough, "you know that both myself and your father are very desirous to see you married to Lord Ulswater, — of high and ancient birth, of great wealth, young, unexceptionable in person and character, and warmly attached to you, it would be impossible even for the sanguine heart of a parent to ask for you a more eligible match. But if the thought really does make you wretched, — and yet, — how can it?"

"I have consented," said Flora, gently; "all I ask is, do not speak to me more of the — the event than you can avoid."

Lady Westborough pressed her hand, sighed, and replied not.

The door opened, and the marquis, who had within the last

year become a cripple, with the great man's malady, *dira podagra*, was wheeled in on his easy-chair; close behind him followed Lord Ulswater.

"I have brought you," said the marquis, who piqued himself on a vein of dry humour, — "I have brought you, young lady, a consolation for my ill humours. Few gouty old fathers make themselves as welcome as I do; eh, Ulswater?"

"Dare I apply to myself Lord Westborough's compliment?" said the young nobleman, advancing towards Lady Flora; and drawing his seat near her, he entered into that whispered conversation so significant of courtship. But there was little in Lady Flora's manner by which an experienced eye would have detected the bride elect: no sudden blush, no downcast, yet sidelong look, no trembling of the hand, no indistinct confusion of the voice, struggling with unanalyzed emotions. No: all was calm, cold, listless; her cheek changed not tint nor hue, and her words, clear and collected, seemed to contradict whatever the low murmurs of her betrothed might well be supposed to insinuate. But, even in *his* behaviour, there was something which, had Lady Westborough been less contented than she was with the externals and surface of manner, would have alarmed her for her daughter. A cloud, sullen and gloomy, sat upon his brow; and his lip alternately quivered with something like scorn, or was compressed with a kind of stifled passion. Even in the exultation that sparkled in his eye, when he alluded to their approaching marriage, there was an expression that almost might have been termed fierce, and certainly was as little like the true orthodox ardour of "gentle swain," as Lady Flora's sad and half unconscious coldness resembled the diffident passion of the "blushing maiden."

"You have considerably passed the time in which we expected you, my lord," said Lady Westborough, who, as a beauty herself, was a little jealous of the deference due to the beauty of her daughter.

"It is true," said Lord Ulswater, glancing towards the opposite glass, and smoothing his right eyebrow with his forefinger, "it is true, but I could not help it. I had a great deal of business to do with my troop: I have put them into a new

manœuvre. "Do you know, my lord [turning to the marquis], I think it very likely the soldiers may have some work on the — of this month?"

"Where, and wherefore?" asked Lord Westborough, whom a sudden twinge forced into the laconic.

"At W —. Some idle fellows hold a meeting there on that day; and if I may judge by bills and advertisements, chalkings on the walls, and, more than all, popular rumour, I have no doubt but what riot and sedition are intended: the magistrates are terribly frightened. I hope we shall have some cutting and hewing: I have no patience with the rebellious dogs."

"For shame! for shame!" cried Lady Westborough, who, though a worldly, was by no means an unfeeling, woman: "the poor people are misguided; they mean no harm."

Lord Ulswater smiled scornfully. "I never dispute upon politics, but at the head of my men," said he, and turned the conversation.

Shortly afterwards Lady Flora, complaining of indisposition, rose, left the apartment, and retired to her own room. There she sat motionless and white as death for more than an hour. A day or two afterwards Miss Trevanion received the following letter from her:—

Most heartily, most truly do I congratulate you, my dearest Eleanor, upon your approaching marriage. You may reasonably hope for all that happiness can afford; and though you do affect (for I do not think that you *feel*) a fear lest you should not be able to fix a character, volatile and light, like your lover's; yet when I recollect his warmth of heart and high sense, and your beauty, gentleness, charms of conversation, and purely disinterested love for one whose great worldly advantages might so easily bias or adulterate affection, I own that I have no dread for your future fate, no feeling that can at all darken the brightness of anticipation. Thank you, dearest, for the delicate kindness with which you allude to *my* destiny: me indeed you cannot congratulate as I can you. But do not grieve for me, my generous Eleanor: if not happy, I shall, I trust, be at least contented. My poor father implored me with tears in his eyes; my mother pressed my hand, but spoke not; and I, whose affections were withered and hopes strewn, should I not have been hard-hearted indeed if they had not wrung from

me a consent? And oh should I not be utterly lost, if in that consent which blessed them I did not find something of peace and consolation?

Yes, dearest, in two months, only two months, I shall be Lord Uls-water's wife; and when we meet, you shall look narrowly at me, and see if he or you have any right to complain of me.

Have you seen Mr. Linden lately? Yet do not answer the question: I ought not to cherish still that fatal clinging interest for one who has so utterly forgotten me. But I do rejoice in his prosperity; and when I hear his praises, and watch his career, I feel proud that I should once have loved him! Oh, how could he be so false, so cruel, in the very midst of his professions of undying, unswerving faith to me; at the very moment when I was ill, miserable, wasting my very heart, for anxiety on his account, — and such a woman too! And had he loved me, even though his letter was returned, would not his conscience have told him he deserved it, and would he not have sought me out in person, and endeavoured to win from my folly his forgiveness? But without attempting to see me, or speak to me, or soothe a displeasure so natural, to leave the country in silence, almost in disdain; and when we met again, to greet me with coldness and *hauteur*, and never betray, by word, sign, or look, that he had ever been to me more than the merest stranger! Fool! fool! that I am, to waste another thought upon him; but I will not, and ought not to do so. In two months I shall not even have the privilege of remembrance.

I wish, Eleanor, — for I assure you that I have tried and tried, — that I could find anything to like and esteem (since love is out of the question) in this man, who seems so great, and, to me, so unaccountable a favourite with my parents. His countenance and voice are so harsh and stern; his manner at once so self-complacent and gloomy; his very sentiments so narrow, even in their notions of honour; his very courage so savage, and his pride so constant and offensive, — that I in vain endeavour to persuade myself of his virtues, and recur, at least, to the unwearied affection for me which he professes. It is true that he has been three times refused; that I have told him I cannot love him; that I have even owned former love to another: he still continues his suit, and by dint of long hope has at length succeeded. But at times I could almost think that he married me from very hate, rather than love: there is such an artificial smoothness in his stern voice, such a latent meaning in his eye; and when he thinks I have not noticed him, I have, on suddenly turning towards him, perceived so dark and lowering an expression upon his countenance that my heart has died within me for very fear.

Had my mother been the least less kind, my father the least less urgent, I think, nay, I know, I could not have gained such a victory over

myself as I have done in consenting to the day. But enough of this. I did not think I should have run on so long and so foolishly ; but we, dearest, have been children and girls and women together : we have loved each other with such fondness and unreserve that opening my heart to you seems only another phrase for thinking aloud.

However, in two months I shall have no right even to thoughts ; perhaps I may not even love you : till then, dearest Eleanor, I am, as ever, your affectionate and faithful friend,

F. A.

Had Lord Westborough, indeed, been "less urgent," or her mother "less kind," nothing could ever have wrung from Lady Flora her consent to a marriage so ungenial and ill-omened.

Thrice had Lord Ulswater (then Lord Borodaile) been refused, before finally accepted ; and those who judge only from the ordinary effects of pride would be astonished that he should have still persevered. But his pride was that deep-rooted feeling which, so far from being repelled by a single blow, fights stubbornly and doggedly onward, till the battle is over and its object gained. From the moment he had resolved to address Lady Flora Ardenne he had also resolved to win her. For three years, despite of a refusal, first gently, then more peremptorily, urged, he fixed himself in her train. He gave out that he was her affianced. In all parties, in all places, he forced himself near her, unheeding alike of her frowns or indifference ; and his rank, his *hauteur*, his fierceness of mien, and acknowledged courage kept aloof all the less arrogant and hardy pretenders to Lady Flora's favour. For this, indeed, she rather thanked than blamed him ; and it was the only thing which in the least reconciled her modesty to his advances or her pride to his presumption.

He had been prudent as well as bold. The father he had served, and the mother he had won. Lord Westborough, addicted a little to politics, a good deal to show, and devotedly to gaming, was often greatly and seriously embarrassed. Lord Ulswater, even during the life of his father (who was lavishly generous to him), was provided with the means of relieving his intended father-in-law's necessities ; and caring little for money in comparison to a desired object, he was willing enough, we do not say to *bribe*, but to *influe*

ence, Lord Westborough's consent. These matters of arrangement were by no means concealed from the marchioness, who, herself ostentatious and profuse, was in no small degree benefited by them; and though they did not solely procure, yet they certainly contributed to conciliate, her favour.

Few people are designedly and systematically wicked: even the worst find good motives for bad deeds, and are as intent upon discovering glosses for conduct to deceive themselves as to delude others. What wonder, then, that poor Lady Westborough, never too rigidly addicted to self-examination, and viewing all things through a very worldly medium, saw only, in the alternate art and urgency employed against her daughter's real happiness, the various praiseworthy motives of permanently disentangling Lady Flora from an unworthy attachment, of procuring for her an establishment proportioned to her rank, and a husband whose attachment, already shown by such singular perseverance, was so likely to afford her everything which, in Lady Westborough's eyes, constituted felicity?

All our friends, perhaps, desire our happiness; but then it must invariably be in their own way. What a pity that they do not employ the same zeal in making us happy *in ours!*

CHAPTER LXII.

If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures:
 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of
 God. — *Proverbs* ii. 3, 4, 5.

WHILE Clarence was thus misjudged by one whose affections and conduct he, in turn, naturally misinterpreted; while Lady Flora was alternately struggling against and submitting to the fate which Lady Westborough saw approach with gladness, the father with indifference, and the bridegroom with a pride that

partook less of rapture than revenge, — our unfortunate lover was endeavouring to glean, from Mordaunt's conversation and example, somewhat of that philosophy so rare except in the theories of the civilized and the occasional practice of the barbarian, which, though it cannot give us a charm against misfortune, bestows, at least, upon us the energy to support it.

We have said already that when the first impression produced by Mordaunt's apparent pride and coldness wore away, it required little penetration to discover the benevolence and warmth of his mind. But none ignorant of his original disposition, or the misfortunes of his life, could ever have pierced the depth of his self-sacrificing nature, or measured the height of his lofty and devoted virtue. Many men may perhaps be found who will give up to duty a cherished wish or even a darling vice; but few will ever renounce to it their rooted *tastes*, or the indulgence of those habits which have almost become by long use their happiness itself. Naturally melancholy and thoughtful, feeding the sensibilities of his heart upon fiction, and though addicted to the cultivation of reason rather than fancy, having perhaps more of the deeper and acuter characteristics of the poet than those calm and half-callous properties of nature supposed to belong to the metaphysician and the calculating moralist, Mordaunt was above all men fondly addicted to solitude, and inclined to contemplations less useful than profound. The untimely death of Isabel, whom he had loved with that love which is the vent of hoarded and passionate musings long nourished upon romance, and lavishing the wealth of a soul that overflows with secreted tenderness upon the *first* object that can bring reality to fiction, — that event had not only darkened melancholy into gloom, but had made loneliness still more dear to his habits by all the ties of memory and all the consecrations of regret. The companionless wanderings; the midnight closet; the thoughts which, as Hume said of his own, could not exist in the world, but were all busy with life in seclusion, — these were rendered sweeter than ever to a mind for which the ordinary objects of the world were now utterly loveless; and the musings of solitude had become, as it were, a rightful homage and offering to the dead. We may

form, then, some idea of the extent to which, in Mordaunt's character, principle predominated over inclination, and regard for others over the love of self, when we see him tearing his spirit from its beloved retreats and abstracted contemplations, and devoting it to duties from which its fastidious and refined characteristics were particularly calculated to revolt. When we have considered his attachment to the hermitage, we can appreciate the virtue which made him among the most active citizens in the great world; when we have considered the natural selfishness of grief, the pride of philosophy, the indolence of meditation, the eloquence of wealth, which says, "Rest, and toil not," and the temptation within, which says, "Obey the voice,"—when we have considered these, we can perhaps do justice to the man who, sometimes on foot and in the coarsest attire, travelled from inn to inn and from hut to hut; who made human misery the object of his search and human happiness of his desire; who, breaking aside an aversion to rude contact, almost feminine in its extreme, voluntarily sought the meanest companions, and subjected himself to the coarsest intrusions; for whom the wail of affliction or the moan of hunger was as a summons which allowed neither hesitation nor appeal; who seemed possessed of a ubiquity for the purposes of good almost resembling that attributed to the wanderer in the magnificent fable of Melmoth for the temptations to evil; who, by a zeal and labour that brought to habit and inclination a thousand martyrdoms, made his life a very hour-glass, in which each sand was a good deed or a virtuous design.

Many plunge into public affairs, to which they have had a previous distaste, from the desire of losing the memory of a private affliction; but so far from wishing to heal the wounds of remembrance by the anodynes which society can afford, it was only in retirement that Mordaunt found the flowers from which balm could be distilled. Many are through vanity magnanimous, and benevolent from the selfishness of fame: but so far from seeking applause where he bestowed favour, Mordaunt had sedulously shrouded himself in darkness and disguise. And by that increasing propensity to quiet, so often

found among those addicted to lofty or abstruse contemplation, he had conquered the ambition of youth with the philosophy of a manhood that had forestalled the affections of age. Many, in short, have become great or good to the community by individual motives easily resolved into common and earthly elements of desire; but they who inquire diligently into human nature have not often the exalted happiness to record a character like Mordaunt's, actuated purely by a systematic principle of love, which covered mankind, as heaven does earth, with an atmosphere of light extending to the remotest corners and penetrating the darkest recesses.

It was one of those violent and gusty evenings which give to an English autumn something rude, rather than gentle, in its characteristics, that Mordaunt and Clarence sat together,

“And sowed the hours with various seeds of talk.”

The young Isabel, the only living relic of the departed one, sat by her father's side upon the floor; and though their discourse was far beyond the comprehension of her years, yet did she seem to listen with a quiet and absorbed attention. In truth, child as she was, she so loved, and almost worshipped, her father that the very tones of his voice had in them a charm which could always vibrate, as it were, to her heart, and hush her into silence; and that melancholy and deep though somewhat low voice, when it swelled or trembled with *thought*, — which in Mordaunt *was feeling*, — made her sad, she knew not why; and when she heard it, she would creep to his side, and put her little hand on his, and look up to him with eyes in whose tender and glistening blue the spirit of her mother seemed to float. She was serious and thoughtful and loving beyond the usual capacities of childhood; perhaps her solitary condition and habits of constant intercourse with one so grave as Mordaunt, and who always, when not absent on his excursions of charity, loved her to be with him, had given to her mind a precocity of feeling, and tintured the simplicity of infancy with what ought to have been the colours of after years. She was not inclined to the sports of her age; she loved, rather, and above all else, to sit by Mordaunt's side

and silently pore over some books or feminine task, and to steal her eyes every now and then away from her employment, in order to watch his motions or provide for whatever her vigilant kindness of heart imagined he desired. And often, when he saw her fairy and lithe form hovering about him and attending on his wants, or her beautiful countenance glow with pleasure, when she fancied she supplied them, he almost believed that Isabel yet lived, though in another form, and that a love so intense and holy as hers had been, might transmigrate, but could not perish.

The young Isabel had displayed a passion for music so early that it almost seemed innate; and as, from the mild and wise education she received, her ardour had never been repelled on the one hand or overstrained on the other, so, though she had but just passed her seventh year, she had attained to a singular proficiency in the art, — an art that suited well with her lovely face and fond feelings and innocent heart; and it was almost heavenly, in the literal acceptance of the word, to hear her sweet though childish voice swell along the still pure airs of summer, and to see her angelic countenance all rapt and brilliant with the enthusiasm which her own melodies created.

Never had she borne the bitter breath of unkindness, nor writhed beneath that customary injustice which punishes in others the sins of our own temper and the varied fretfulness of caprice; and so she had none of the fears and meannesses and *acted* untruths which so usually pollute and debase the innocence of childhood. But the promise of her ingenuous brow (over which the silken hair flowed, parted into two streams of gold), and of the fearless but tender eyes, and of the quiet smile which sat forever upon the rosy mouth, like Joy watching Love, was kept in its fullest extent by the mind, from which all thoughts, pure, kind, and guileless, flowed like waters from a well which a spirit has made holy for its own dwelling.

On this evening we have said that she sat by her father's side and listened, though she only in part drank in its sense, to his conversation with his guest.

The room was of great extent and surrounded with books, over which at close intervals the busts of the departed Great and the immortal Wise looked down. There was the sublime beauty of Plato, the harsher and more earthly countenance of Tully, the only Roman (except Lucretius) who might have been a Greek. There the mute marble gave the broad front of Bacon (itself a world), and there the features of Locke showed how the mind wears away the links of flesh with the file of thought. And over other departments of those works which remind us that man is made little lower than the angels, the stern face of the Florentine who sung of hell contrasted with the quiet grandeur enthroned on the fair brow of the English poet, — “blind but bold,” — and there the glorious but genial countenance of him who has found in all humanity a friend, conspicuous among sages and minstrels, claimed brotherhood with all.

The fire burned clear and high, casting a rich twilight (for there was no other light in the room) over that Gothic chamber, and shining cheerily upon the varying countenance of Clarence and the more contemplative features of his host. In the latter you might see that care and thought had been harsh but not unhallowed companions. In the lines which crossed his expanse of brow, time seemed to have buried many hopes; but his mien and air, if loftier, were gentler than in younger days; and though they had gained somewhat in dignity, had lost greatly in reserve.

There was in the old chamber, with its fretted roof and ancient “garniture,” the various books which surrounded it, walls that the learned built to survive themselves, and in the marble likenesses of those for whom thought had won eternity, joined to the hour, the breathing quiet, and the hearth-light, by whose solitary rays we love best in the eves of autumn to discourse on graver or subtler themes, — there was in all this a spell which seemed particularly to invite and to harmonize with that tone of conversation, some portions of which we are now about to relate.

“How loudly,” said Clarence, “that last gust swept by; you remember that beautiful couplet in Tibullus, —

“*Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem,
Et dominam tenero detinuisse sinu.*”¹

“Ay,” answered Mordaunt, with a scarcely audible sigh, “that is the feeling of the lover at the *immites ventos*, but *we* sages of the lamp make our mistress Wisdom, and when the winds rage without it is to *her* that we cling. See how, from the same object, different conclusions are drawn! The most common externals of nature, the wind and the wave, the stars and the heavens, the very earth on which we tread, never excite in different bosoms the same ideas; and it is from our own hearts, and not from an outward source, that we draw the hues which colour the web of our existence.”

“It is true,” answered Clarence. “You remember that in two specks of the moon the enamoured maiden perceived two unfortunate lovers, while the ambitious curate conjectured that they were the spires of a cathedral? But it is not only to our *feelings*, but also to our *reasonings*, that we give the colours which they wear. The moral, for instance, which to one man seems atrocious, to another is divine. On the tendency of the same work what three people will agree? And how shall the most sanguine moralist hope to benefit mankind when he finds that, by the multitude, his wisest endeavours to instruct are often considered but as instruments to pervert?”

“I believe,” answered Mordaunt, “that it is from our ignorance that our contentions flow: we debate with strife and with wrath, with bickering and with hatred; but of the thing debated *upon* we remain in the profoundest darkness. Like the labourers of Babel, while we endeavour in vain to express our meaning to each other, the fabric by which, for a common end, we would have ascended to heaven from the ills of earth remains forever unadvanced and incomplete. Let us hope that knowledge is the universal language which shall reunite us. As, in their sublime allegory, the Ancients signified that only through virtue we arrive at honour, so let us believe that only through knowledge can we arrive at virtue!”

“And yet,” said Clarence, “that seems a melancholy truth

¹ “Sweet on our couch to hear the winds above,
And cling with closer heart to her we love.”

for the mass of the people, who have no time for the researches of wisdom."

"Not so much so as at first we might imagine," answered Mordaunt: "the few smooth all paths for the many. The precepts of knowledge it is difficult to extricate from error: but, once discovered, they gradually pass into maxims; and thus what the sage's life was consumed in acquiring becomes the acquisition of a moment to posterity. Knowledge is like the atmosphere: in order to dispel the vapour and dislodge the frost, our ancestors felled the forest, drained the marsh, and cultivated the waste, and we now breathe without an effort, in the purified air and the chastened climate, the result of the labour of generations and the progress of ages! As to-day, the common mechanic may equal in science, however inferior in genius, the friar¹ whom his contemporaries feared as a magician, so the opinions which now startle as well as astonish may be received hereafter as acknowledged axioms, and pass into ordinary practice. We cannot even tell how far the sanguine² theories of certain philosophers deceive them when they anticipate, for future ages, a knowledge which shall bring perfection to the mind, baffle the diseases of the body, and even protract to a date now utterly unknown the final destination of life: for Wisdom is a palace of which only the vestibule has been entered; nor can we guess what treasures are hid in those chambers of which the experience of the past can afford us neither analogy nor clew."

"It was, then," said Clarence, who wished to draw his companion into speaking of himself, "it was, then, from your addiction to studies not ordinarily made the subject of acquisition that you date (pardon me) your generosity, your devotedness, your feeling for others, and your indifference to self?"

"You flatter me," said Mordaunt, modestly (and we may be

¹ Roger Bacon.

² See Condorcet "On the Progress of the Human Mind," written some years after the supposed date of this conversation, but in which there is a slight, but eloquent and affecting, view of the philosophy to which Mordaunt refers.

permitted to crave attention to his reply, since it unfolds the secret springs of a character so singularly good and pure), "you flatter me: but I will answer you as if you had put the question without the compliment; nor, perhaps, will it be wholly uninformative, as it will certainly be new, to sketch, without recurrence to events or what I may call exterior facts, a brief and progressive History of One Human Mind.

"Our first era of life is under the influence of the primitive feelings: we are pleased, and we laugh; hurt, and we weep: we vent our little passions the moment they are excited: and so much of novelty have we to *perceive*, that we have little leisure to *reflect*. By and by, fear teaches us to restrain our feelings: when displeased, we seek to revenge the displeasure, and are punished; we find the excess of our joy, our sorrow, our anger, alike considered criminal, and chidden into restraint. From harshness we become acquainted with deceit: the promise made is not fulfilled, the threat not executed, the fear falsely excited, and the hope wilfully disappointed; we are surrounded by systematized delusion, and we imbibe the contagion.

"From being forced into concealing thoughts which we do conceive, we begin to affect those which we do not: so early do we learn the two main tasks of life, To Suppress and To Feign, that our memory will not carry us beyond that period of artifice to a state of nature when the twin principles of veracity and belief were so strong as to lead the philosophers of a modern school into the error of terming them innate.¹

"It was with a mind restless and confused, feelings which were alternately chilled and counterfeited (the necessary results of my first tuition), that I was driven to mix with others of my age. They did not like me, nor do I blame them. 'Les manières que l'on néglige comme de petites choses, sont souvent ce qui fait que les hommes décident de vous en bien ou en mal.'² Manner is acquired so imperceptibly that we have given its origin to Nature, as we do the origin of all else

¹ Reid: On the Human Mind.

² "Those manners which one neglects as trifling are often the cause of the opinion, good or bad, formed of you by men."

for which our ignorance can find no other source. Mine was unprepossessing : I was disliked, and I returned the feeling ; I sought not, and I was shunned. Then I thought that all were unjust to me, and I grew bitter and sullen and morose : I cased myself in the stubbornness of pride ; I pored over the books which spoke of the worthlessness of man ; and I indulged the discontent of myself by brooding over the frailties of my kind.

“ My passions were strong : they told me to *suppress* them. The precept was old, and seemed wise : I attempted to enforce it. I had already begun, in earlier infancy, the lesson : I had now only to renew it. Fortunately I was diverted from this task, or my mind in conquering its passions would have conquered its powers. I learned in after lessons that the passions are not to be suppressed ; they are to be directed ; and, when directed, rather to be strengthened than subdued.

“ Observe how a word may influence a life : a man whose opinion I esteemed, made of me the casual and trite remark, that ‘ my nature was one of which it was impossible to augur evil or good : it might be extreme in either.’ This observation roused me into thought : could I indeed be all that was good or evil ? had I the choice, and could I hesitate which to choose ? But what was good and what was evil ? That seemed the most difficult inquiry.

“ I asked and received no satisfactory reply : in the words of Erasmus, ‘ Totius negotii caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes ;’¹ so I resolved myself to inquire and to decide. I subjected to my scrutiny the moralist and the philosopher. I saw that on all sides they disputed, but I saw that they *grew virtuous in the dispute* : they uttered much that was absurd about the origin of good, but much more that was exalted in its praise ; and I never rose from any work which treated ably upon morals, whatever were its peculiar opinions, but I felt my breast enlightened and my mind ennobled by my studies. The professor of one sect commanded me to avoid the dogmatist of another as the propagator of moral poison ;

¹ “ All ignore, guess, and rave about the head and fountain of the whole question at issue.”

and the dogmatist retaliated on the professor : but I avoided neither ; I read both, and turned all 'into honey and fine gold.' No inquiry into wisdom, however superficial, is undeserving attention. The vagaries of the idlest fancy will often chance, as it were, upon the most useful discoveries of truth, and serve as a guide to after and to slower disciples of wisdom ; even as the peckings of birds in an unknown country indicate to the adventurous seamen the best and the safest fruits.

"From the *works* of men I looked into their *lives* ; and I found that there was a vast difference (though I am not aware that it has before been remarked) between those who cultivated a *talent*, and those who cultivated *the mind* : I found that the mere men of genius were often erring or criminal in their lives ; but that vice or crime in the disciples of philosophy was strikingly unfrequent and rare. The extremest culture of reason had not, it is true, been yet carried far enough to preserve the labourer from follies of opinion, but a moderate culture had been sufficient to deter him from the vices of life. And only to the sons of Wisdom, as of old to the sages of the East, seemed given the unerring star, which, through the travail of Earth and the clouds of Heaven, led them at the last to their God !

"When I gleaned this fact from biography, I paused, and said, 'Then must there be something excellent in Wisdom, if it can even in its most imperfect disciples be thus beneficial to morality.' Pursuing this sentiment, I redoubled my researches, and, behold, the object of my quest was won ! I had before sought a satisfactory answer to the question, 'What is Virtue ?' from men of a thousand tenets, and my heart had rejected all I had received. 'Virtue,' said some, and my soul bowed reverently to the dictate, 'Virtue is Religion.' I heard and humbled myself before the Divine Book. Let me trust that I did not humble myself in vain ! But the dictate satisfied less than it awed ; for either it limited Virtue to the mere belief, or by extending it to the practice, of Religion, it extended also the inquiry to the method in which the practice should be applied. But with the first interpretation of the dictate who could rest contented ? — for while, in the perfect

enforcement of the tenets of our faith, all virtue may be found, so in the passive and the mere belief in its divinity, we find only an engine as applicable to evil as to good: the torch which should illumine the altar has also lighted the stake, and the zeal of the persecutor has been no less sincere than the heroism of the martyr. Rejecting, therefore, this interpretation, I accepted the other: I felt in my heart, and I rejoiced as I felt it, that in the practice of Religion the body of all virtue could be found. But, in that conviction, had I at once an answer to my inquiries? Could the mere desire of good be sufficient to attain it; and was the *attempt* at virtue synonymous with *success*? On the contrary, have not those most desirous of obeying the precepts of God often sinned the most against their spirit, and has not zeal been frequently the most ardent when crime was the most rife?¹ But what, if neither sincerity nor zeal was sufficient to constitute goodness; what if in the breasts of the best-intentioned crime had been fostered the more dangerously because the more disguised, — what ensued? That the religion which they professed, they believed, they adored, *they had also misunderstood*; and that the precepts to be drawn from the Holy Book they had darkened by their ignorance or perverted by their passions! Here then, at once, my enigma was solved; here then, at once, I was led to the goal of my inquiry! Ignorance and the perversion of passion are but the same thing, though under different names; for only by our ignorance are our passions perverted. Therefore, what followed? — that, if by ignorance the greatest of God's gifts had been turned to evil, Knowledge alone was the light by which even the pages of

¹ There can be no doubt that they who exterminated the Albigenses, established the Inquisition, lighted the fires at Smithfield, were actuated, not by a desire to do evil, but (monstrous as it may seem) to do good; not to counteract, but to enforce what they believed the wishes of the Almighty; so that a good intention, without the enlightenment to direct it to a fitting object, may be as pernicious to human happiness as one the most fiendish. We are told of a whole people who used to murder their guests, not from ferocity or interest, but from the pure and praiseworthy motive of *obtaining the good qualities*, which they believed, by the murder of the deceased, devolved upon them!

Religion should be read. It followed that the Providence that knew that the nature it had created should be constantly in exercise, and that only through labour comes improvement, had wisely ordained that we should toil even for the blessing of its holiest and clearest laws. It had given us in Religion, as in this magnificent world, treasures and harvests which might be called forth in incalculable abundance, but had decreed that through our exertions only *should* they be called forth: a palace more gorgeous than the palaces of enchantment was before us, but its chambers were a labyrinth which required a clew.

“What was that clew? Was it to be sought for in the corners of earth, or was it not beneficially centred in ourselves? Was it not the exercise of a power easy for us to use, if we would dare to do so? Was it not the simple exertion of the discernment granted to us for all else? Was it not the exercise of our reason? ‘Reason!’ cried the Zealot, ‘pernicious and hateful instrument, it is fraught with peril to yourself and to others: do not think for a moment of employing an engine so fallacious and so dangerous.’ But I listened not to the Zealot: could the steady and bright torch which, even where the Star of Bethlehem had withheld its diviner light, had guided some patient and unwearied steps to the very throne of Virtue, become but a deceitful meteor to him who kindled it *for the aid of Religion*, and in an eternal cause? Could it be perilous to task our reason, even to the utmost, in the investigation of the true utility and hidden wisdom of the works of God, when God himself had ordained that only through *some* exertion of our reason should we know either from Nature or Revelation that He himself existed? ‘But,’ cried the Zealot again, ‘but mere mortal wisdom teaches men presumption, and presumption doubt.’ ‘Pardon me,’ I answered; ‘it is not Wisdom, but Ignorance, which teaches men presumption: *Genius* may be sometimes arrogant, but nothing is so diffident as *Knowledge*.’ ‘But,’ resumed the Zealot, ‘those accustomed to subtle inquiries may dwell only on the minutiae of faith,—inexplicable, because useless to explain, and argue from those minutiae against the grand and universal truth.’ ‘Pardon me again: it

is the petty not the enlarged mind which prefers casuistry to conviction; it is the confined and short sight of Ignorance which, unable to comprehend the great bearings of truth, pries only into its narrow and obscure corners, occupying itself in scrutinizing the atoms of a part, while the eagle eye of Wisdom contemplates, in its widest scale, the luminous majesty of the whole. Survey our faults, our errors, our vices, — fearful and fertile field! Trace them to their causes: all those causes resolve themselves into *one*, — Ignorance! For as we have already seen that from this source flow the abuses of Religion, so also from this source flow the abuses of all other blessings, — of talents, of riches, of power; for we abuse things, either because we know not their real use, or because, with an equal blindness, we imagine the abuse more adapted to our happiness. But as ignorance, then, is the sole spring of evil, so, as the antidote to ignorance is knowledge, *it necessarily* follows that, were we *consummate* in knowledge, we should be perfect in good. He, therefore, who retards the progress of intellect countenances crime, — nay, to a State, is the greatest of criminals; while he who circulates that mental light more precious than the visual is the holiest improver and the surest benefactor of his race. Nor let us believe, with the dupes of a shallow policy, that there exists upon the earth *one* prejudice that can be called salutary or *one* error beneficial to perpetrate. As the petty fish which is fabled to possess the property of arresting the progress of the largest vessel to which it clings, even so may a single prejudice, unnoticed or despised, more than the adverse blast or the dead calm, delay the bark of Knowledge in the vast seas of Time.

“It is true that the sanguineness of philanthropists may have carried them too far; it is true (for the experiment has not yet been made) that God *may* have denied to us, in this state, the consummation of knowledge, and the consequent perfection in good; but because we cannot be perfect are we to resolve we will be evil? One step in knowledge is one step from sin: one step from sin is one step nearer to Heaven. Oh! never let us be deluded by those who, for *political* motives, would adulterate the divinity of *religious* truths; never

let us believe that our Father in Heaven rewards most the one talent unemployed, or that prejudice and indolence and folly find the most favour in His sight! The very heathen has bequeathed to us a nobler estimate of His nature; and the same sentence which so sublimely declares 'TRUTH IS THE BODY OF GOD' declares also 'AND LIGHT IS HIS SHADOW.'¹

"Persuaded, then, that knowledge contained the key to virtue, it was to knowledge that I applied. The first grand lesson which it taught me was the solution of a phrase most hackneyed, least understood; namely, 'common-sense.'² It is in the Portico of the Greek sage that that phrase has received its legitimate explanation; it is there we are taught that 'common-sense' signifies 'the sense of the common interest.' Yes! it is the most beautiful truth in morals that we have no such thing as a distinct or divided interest from our race. In their welfare is ours; and, by choosing the broadest paths to effect their happiness, we choose the surest and the shortest to our own. As I read and pondered over these truths, I was sensible that a great change was working a fresh world out of the former materials of my mind. My passions, which before I had checked into uselessness, or exerted to destruction, now started forth in a nobler shape, and prepared for a new direction: instead of urging me to individual aggrandizement, they panted for universal good, and coveted the reward of Ambition only for the triumphs of Benevolence.

"This is one stage of virtue; I cannot resist the belief that there is a higher: it is when we begin to love virtue, not for its objects, but itself. For there are in knowledge these two excellences: first, that it offers to every man, the most selfish and the most exalted, his peculiar inducement to good. It says to the former, 'Serve mankind, and you serve yourself;'¹ to the latter, 'In choosing the best means to secure your own happiness, you will have the sublime inducement of promoting the happiness of mankind.'

"The second excellence of Knowledge is that even the selfish man, when he has once begun to love Virtue from little motives, loses the motives as he increases the love; and at

¹ Plato.

² Κοινωνημοσύνη, *sensus communis*.

last worships the deity, where before he only coveted the gold upon its altar.

“And thus I learned to love Virtue solely for its own beauty. I said with one who, among much dross, has many particles of ore, ‘If it be not estimable in itself, I can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a bargain.’¹

“I looked round the world, and saw often Virtue in rags and Vice in purple: the former conduces to happiness, it is true, but the happiness lies *within* and not in externals. I contemned the deceitful folly with which writers have termed it poetical justice to make the good ultimately prosperous in wealth, honour, fortunate love, or successful desires. Nothing false, even in poetry, can be just; and that pretended moral is, of all, the falsest. Virtue is not more exempt than Vice from the ills of fate, but it contains within itself always an energy to resist them, and sometimes an anodyne to soothe, — to repay your quotation from Tibullus, —

“*Crura sonant ferro, sed canit inter opus!*”²

“When in the depths of my soul I set up that divinity of this nether earth, which Brutus never really understood, if, because unsuccessful in its efforts, he doubted its existence, I said in the proud prayer with which I worshipped it, ‘Poverty may humble my lot, but it shall not debase thee; Temptation may shake my nature, but not the rock on which thy temple is based; Misfortune may wither all the hopes that have blossomed around thine altar, but I will sacrifice dead leaves when the flowers are no more. Though all that I have loved perish, all that I have coveted fade away, I may murmur at fate, but I will have no voice but that of homage for thee! Nor, while thou smilest upon my way, would I exchange with the loftiest and happiest of thy foes! More bitter than aught of what I then dreamed have been my trials, *but I have fulfilled my vow!*

“I believe that alone to be a true description of Virtue which makes it all-sufficient to itself, that alone a just por-

¹ Lord Shaftesbury.

² “The chains clank on its limbs, but it sings amidst its tasks.”

traiture of its excellence which does not lessen its internal power by exaggerating its outward advantages, nor degrade its nobility by dwelling only on its rewards. The grandest moral of ancient lore has ever seemed to me that which the picture of Prometheus affords; in whom neither the shaking earth, nor the rending heaven, nor the rock without, nor the vulture within, could cause regret for past benevolence, or terror for future evil, or envy, even amidst tortures, for the dishonourable prosperity of his insulter!¹ Who that has glowed over this exalted picture will tell us that we must make Virtue prosperous in order to allure to it, or clothe Vice with misery in order to revolt us from its image? Oh! who, on the contrary, would not learn to adore Virtue, from the bitterest sufferings of such a votary, a hundredfold more than he would learn to love Vice from the gaudiest triumphs of its most fortunate disciples?"

Something there was in Mordaunt's voice and air, and the impassioned glow of his countenance, that, long after he had ceased, thrilled in Clarence's heart, "like the remembered tone of a mute lyre." And when a subsequent event led him at rash moments to doubt whether Virtue was indeed the chief good, Linden recalled the words of that night and the enthusiasm with which they were uttered, repented that in his doubt he had wronged the truth, and felt that there *is* a power in the deep heart of man to which even Destiny is submitted!

¹ Mercury. — See the "Prometheus" of Æschylus.

CHAPTER LXIII.

WILL you hear the letter ?

This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have before met in the forest.
As You Like It.

A MORNING or two after the conversation with which our last chapter concluded, Clarence received the following letter from the Duke of Haverfield : —

Your letter, my dear Linden, would have been answered before, but for an occurrence which is generally supposed to engross the whole attention of the persons concerned in it. Let me see, — ay, *three*, — yes, I have been *exactly* three days married! Upon my honour, there is much less in the event than one would imagine; and the next time it happens I will not put myself to such amazing trouble and inconvenience about it. But one buys wisdom only by experience. Now, however, that I have communicated to you the fact, I expect you, in the first place, to excuse my negligence for not writing before; for (as I know you are fond of the *literæ humaniores*, I will give the sentiment the dignity of a quotation) —

“Un véritable amant ne connoit point d'amis;”¹

and though I have been three days married, I am still a lover! In the second place, I expect you to be very grateful that, all things considered, I write to you *so soon*; it would indeed not be an ordinary inducement that could make me “put pen to paper” (is not that the true vulgar, commercial, academical, metaphorical, epistolary style?) so shortly after the fatal ceremony. So, had I nothing to say but in reply to your comments on state affairs (hang them!) or in applause of your Italian friend, of whom I say, as Charles II. said of the honest yeoman, “I can admire virtue, though I can't imitate it,” I think it highly probable that your letter might still remain in a certain box of tortoise-shell and gold (formerly belonging to the great Richelieu, and now in my possession), in which I at this instant descry, “with many a glance of woe and boding dire,” sundry epistles, in manifold handwritings, all classed under the one fearful denomination, — “unanswered.”

¹ “A true lover recognizes no friends.” — CORNEILLE.

No, my good Linden, my heart is inditing of a better matter than this. Listen to me, and then stay at your host's or order your swiftest steed, as seems most meet to you.

You said rightly that Miss Trevanion, now her Grace of Haverfield, was the intimate friend of Lady Flora Ardenne. I have often talked to her — namely, Eleanor, not Lady Flora — about you, and was renewing the conversation yesterday, when your letter, accidentally lying before me, reminded me of you.

Sundry little secrets passed in due conjugal course from her possession into mine. I find that you have been believed by Lady Flora to have played the perfidious with La Meronville; that she never knew of your application to her father! and his reply; that, on the contrary, she accused you of indifference in going abroad without attempting to obtain an interview or excuse your supposed infidelity; that her heart is utterly averse to a union with that odious Lord Boro — bah! I mean Lord Ulswater; and that — prepare, Linden — she still cherishes your memory, even through time, change, and fancied desertion, with a tenderness which — which — deuce take it, I never could write sentiment: but you understand me; so I will not conclude the phrase. “Nothing in oratory,” said my cousin D——, who was, *entre nous*, more honest than eloquent, “like a break!” — “down! you should have added,” said I.

I now, my dear Linden, leave you to your fate. For my part, though I own Lord Ulswater is a lord whom ladies in love with the *et ceteras* of married pomp might well desire, yet I do think it would be no difficult matter for you to eclipse him. I cannot. It is true, advise you to run away with Lady Flora. *Gentlemen* don't run away with the daughters of gentlemen; but, without running away, you may win your betrothed and Lord Ulswater's intended. A distinguished member of the House of Commons, owner of Scarsdale, and representative of the most ancient branch of the Talbots, — *mon Dieu!* you might marry a queen dowager, and decline settlements!

And so, committing thee to the guidance of that winged god, who, if three days afford any experience, has made thy friend forsake pleasure only to find happiness, I bid thee, most gentle Linden, farewell.

Haverfield.

Upon reading this letter, Clarence felt as a man suddenly transformed. From an exterior of calm and apathy, at the bottom of which lay one bitter and corroding recollection, he passed at once into a state of emotion, wild, agitated, and confused; yet, *amidst* all, was foremost a burning and intense

hope, which for long years he had not permitted himself to form.

He descended into the breakfast parlour. Mordaunt, whose hours of *appearing*, though not of rising, were much later than Clarence's, was not yet down; and our lover had full leisure to form his plans, before his host made his *entrée*.

"Will you ride to-day?" said Mordaunt; "there are some old ruins in the neighbourhood well worth the trouble of a visit."

"I grieve to say," answered Clarence, "that I must take my leave of you. I have received intelligence this morning which may greatly influence my future life, and by which I am obliged to make an excursion to another part of the country, nearly a day's journey, on horseback."

Mordaunt looked at his guest, and conjectured by his heightened colour, and an embarrassment which he in vain endeavoured to conceal, that the journey might have some cause for its suddenness and despatch which the young senator had his peculiar reasons for concealing. Algernon contented himself, therefore, with expressing his regret at Linden's abrupt departure, without incurring the indiscreet hospitality of pressing a longer sojourn beneath his roof.

Immediately after breakfast, Clarence's horse was brought to the door, and Harrison received orders to wait with the carriage at W—— until his master returned. Not a little surprised, we trow, was the worthy valet at his master's sudden attachment to equestrian excursions. Mordaunt accompanied his visitor through the park, and took leave of him with a warmth which sensibly touched Clarence, in spite of the absence and excitement of his thoughts; indeed, the unaffected and simple character of Linden, joined to his acute, bold, and cultivated mind, had taken strong hold of Mordaunt's interest and esteem.

It was a mild autumnal morning, but thick clouds in the rear prognosticated rain; and the stillness of the wind, the low flight of the swallows, and the lowing of the cattle, slowly gathering towards the nearest shelter within their appointed boundaries, confirmed the inauspicious omen. Clarence had

passed the town of W——, and was entering into a road singularly hilly, when he “was aware,” as the quaint old writers of former days expressed themselves, of a tall stranger, mounted on a neat well-trimmed galloway, who had for the last two minutes been advancing towards a closely parallel line with Clarence, and had, by sundry glances and hems, denoted a desire of commencing acquaintance and conversation with his fellow traveller.

At last he summoned courage, and said, with a respectful, though somewhat free, air, “That is a very fine horse of yours, sir; I have seldom seen so fast a walker: if all his other paces are equally good, he must be quite a treasure.”

All men have their vanities. Clarence’s was as much in his horse’s excellence as his own; and, gratified even with the compliment of a stranger, he replied to it by joining in the praise, though with a modest and measured forbearance, which the stranger, if gifted with penetration, could easily have discerned was more affected than sincere.

“And yet, sir,” resumed Clarence’s new companion, “my little palfrey might perhaps keep pace with your steed; look, I lay the rein on his neck, and, you see, he rivals — by heaven, he *outwalks* — yours.”

Not a little piqued and incensed, Linden also relaxed his rein, and urged his horse to a quicker step: but the lesser competitor not only sustained, but increased, his superiority; and it was only by breaking into a trot that Linden’s impatient and spirited steed could overtake him. Hitherto Clarence had not honoured his new companion with more than a rapid and slight glance; but rivalry, even in trifles, begets respect, and our defeated hero now examined him with a more curious eye.

The stranger was between forty and fifty, — an age in which, generally, very little of the boy has survived the advance of manhood; yet was there a hearty and frank exhilaration in the manner and look of the person we describe which is rarely found beyond the first stage of youth. His features were comely and clearly cut, and his air and appearance indicative of a man who might equally have belonged to the middle

or the upper orders. But Clarence's memory, as well as attention, was employed in his survey of the stranger; and he recognized, in a countenance on which time had passed very lightly, an old and oft-times recalled acquaintance. However, he did not immediately make himself known. "I will first see," thought he, "whether he can remember his young guest in the bronzed stranger after eight years' absence."

"Well," said Clarence, as he approached the owner of the palfrey, who was laughing with childish glee at his conquest, "well, you have won, sir; but the tortoise might beat the hare in walking, and I content myself with thinking that at a trot or a gallop the result of a race would have been very different."

"I am not so sure of that, sir," said the sturdy stranger, patting the arched neck of his little favourite: "if you would like to try either, I should have no objection to venture a trifling wager on the event."

"You are very good," said Clarence, with a smile in which urbanity was a little mingled with contemptuous incredulity; "but I am not now at leisure to win your money: I have a long day's journey before me, and must not tire a faithful servant; yet I do candidly confess that I think" (and Clarence's recollection of the person he addressed made him introduce the quotation) "that my horse

"Excels a common one

In shape, in courage, colour, *pace*, and bone."

"Eh, sir," cried our stranger, as his eyes sparkled at the verses: "I would own that your horse were worth all the horses in the kingdom, if you brought Will Shakspeare to prove it. And I am also willing to confess that your steed does fairly merit the splendid praise which follows the lines you have quoted,—

"Round hoofed, short jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tale, broad buttock, tender hide."

"Come," said Clarence, "your memory has atoned for your horse's victory, and I quite forgive your conquest in return

for your compliment; but suffer me to ask how long you have commenced cavalier. The Arab's *tent* is, if I err not, more a badge of your profession than the Arab's *steed*."

King Cole (for the stranger was no less a person) looked at his companion in surprise. "So you know me, then, sir! Well, it is a hard thing for a man to turn honest, when people have so much readier a recollection of his sins than his reform."

"Reform!" quoth Clarence, "am I then to understand that your Majesty has abdicated your dominions under the greenwood tree?"

"You are," said Cole, eying his acquaintance inquisitively; "you are.

"I fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
I my worldly task have done,
Home am gone, and ta'en my wages."

"I congratulate you," said Clarence: "but only in part; for I have often envied your past state, and do not know enough of your present to say whether I should equally envy *that*."

"Why," answered Cole, "after all, we commit a great error in imagining that it is the living wood or the dead wall which makes happiness. 'My *mind* to me a kingdom is;' and it is that which you must envy, if you honour anything belonging to me with that feeling."

"The precept is both good and old," answered Clarence; "yet I think it was not a very favourite maxim of yours some years ago. I remember a time when you thought no happiness could exist out of 'dingle and bosky dell.' If not very intrusive on your secrets, may I know how long you have changed your sentiments and manner of life? The reason of the change I dare not presume to ask."

"Certainly," said the quondam gypsy, musingly, "certainly I have seen your face before, and even the tone of your voice strikes me as not wholly unfamiliar: yet I cannot for the life of me guess whom I have the honour of addressing. However, sir, I have no hesitation in answering your questions.

It was just five years ago, last summer, when I left the Tents of Kedar. I now reside about a mile hence. It is but a hundred yards off the high road, and if you would not object to step aside and suffer a rasher, or aught else, to be 'the shoeing-horn to draw on a cup of ale,' as our plain forefathers were wont wittily to say, why, I shall be very happy to show you my habitation. You will have a double welcome, from the circumstance of *my* having been absent from home for the last three days."

Clarence, mindful of his journey, was about to decline the invitation, when a few heavy drops falling began to fulfil the cloudy promise of the morning. "Trust," said Cole, "one who has been for years a watcher of the signs and menaces of the weather: we shall have a violent shower immediately. You have now no choice but to accompany me home."

"Well," said Clarence, yielding with a good grace, "I am glad of so good an excuse for intruding on your hospitality.

"O sky!

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak?"

"Bravo!" cried the ex-chief, too delighted to find a comrade so well acquainted with Shakspeare's sonnets to heed the little injustice Clarence had done the sky, in accusing it of a treachery its black clouds had by no means deserved. "Bravo, sir; and *now*, my palfrey against your steed, — trot, eh? or gallop?"

"Trot, if it must be so," said Clarence, superciliously; "but I am a few paces before you."

"So much the better," cried the jovial chief. "Little John's mettle will be the more up: on with you, sir; he who breaks into a canter loses; on!"

And Clarence slightly touching his beautiful steed, the race was begun. At first his horse, which was a remarkable *stepper*, as the modern Messrs. Anderson and Dyson would say, greatly gained the advantage. "To the right," cried the *ci-devant* gypsy, as Linden had nearly passed a narrow lane which led to the domain of the ex-king. The turn gave "Little

John" an opportunity which he seized to advantage; and, to Clarence's indignant surprise, he beheld Cole now close behind, now beside, and now — now — *before!* In the heat of the moment he put spurs rather too sharply to his horse, and the spirited animal immediately passed his competitor, *but* — in a canter!

"Victoria!" cried Cole, keeping back his own steed. "Victoria! confess it!"

"Pshaw," said Clarence, petulantly.

"Nay, sir, never mind it," quoth the retired sovereign; "perhaps it was but a venial transgression of your horse, and on other ground I should not have beat you."

It is very easy to be generous when one is *quite* sure one is the victor. Clarence felt this, and, muttering out something about the sharp angle in the road, turned abruptly from all further comment on the subject by saying, "We are now, I suppose, entering your territory. Does not this white gate lead to your new (at least new to me) abode?"

"It does," replied Cole, opening the said gate, and pausing as if to suffer his guest and rival to look round and admire.

The house, in full view, was of red brick, small and square, faced with stone copings, and adorned in the centre with a gable roof, on which was a ball of glittering metal. A flight of stone steps led to the porch, which was of fair size and stately, considering the proportions of the mansion: over the door was a stone shield of arms, surmounted by a stag's head; and above this heraldic ornament was a window of great breadth, compared to the other conveniences of a similar nature. On either side of the house ran a slight iron fence, the protection of sundry plots of gay flowers and garden shrubs, while two peacocks were seen slowly stalking towards the enclosure to seek a shelter from the increasing shower. At the back of the building, thick trees and a rising hill gave a meet defence from the winds of winter; and, in front, a sloping and small lawn afforded pasture for few sheep and two pet deer. Towards the end of this lawn were two large fishponds, shaded by rows of feathered trees. On the margin of each of these, as if emblematic of ancient customs, was a

common tent; and in the intermediate space was a rustic pleasure-house, fenced from the encroaching cattle, and half hid by surrounding laurel and the parasite ivy.

All together there was a quiet and old-fashioned comfort, and even luxury, about the place, which suited well with the eccentric character of the abdicated chief; and Clarence, as he gazed around, really felt that he might perhaps deem the last state of the owner *not* worse than the first.

Unmindful of the rain, which now began to pour fast and full, Cole suffered "Little John's" rein to fall over his neck, and the spoiled favourite to pluck the smooth grass beneath, while he pointed out to Clarence the various beauties of his seat.

"There, sir," said he, "by those ponds in which, I assure you, old Isaac might have fished with delight, I pass many a summer's day. I was always a lover of the angle, and the farthest pool is the most beautiful bathing-place imaginable; — as glorious Geoffrey Chaucer says, —

"The gravel's gold; the water pure as glass,
The bankè round the well environing;
And softe as velvet the younge grass
That thereupon lustily come springing."

"And in that arbour, Lucy — that is, my wife — sits in the summer evenings with her father and our children; and then — ah! see our pets come to welcome me," pointing to the deer, who had advanced within a few yards of him, but, intimidated by the stranger, would not venture within reach — "Lucy loved choosing her favourites among animals which had formerly been wild, and, faith, I loved it too. But you observe the house, sir: it was built in the reign of Queen Anne; it belonged to my mother's family, but my father sold it, and his son five years ago rebought it. Those arms belonged to my maternal ancestry. Look, look at the peacocks creeping along: poor pride theirs that can't stand the shower! But, egad, that reminds me of the rain. Come, sir, let us make for our shelter." And, resuming their progress, a minute more brought them to the old-fashioned porch. Cole's ring summoned a

man, not decked in "livery gay," but, "clad in serving frock," who took the horses with a nod, half familiar, half respectful, at his master's injunctions of attention and hospitality to the stranger's beast; and then our old acquaintance, striking through a small low hall, ushered Clarence into the chief sitting-room of the mansion.

CHAPTER LXIV.

WE are not poor; although we have
 No roofs of cedar, nor our brave
 Baia, nor keep
 Account of such a flock of sheep,
 Nor bullocks fed
 To lard the shambles; nor barbles bred
 To kiss our hands; nor do we wish
 For Pollio's lampreys in our dish.

If we can meet and so confer
 Both by a shining salt-cellar,
 And have our roof,
 Although not arched, yet weather-proof,
 And ceiling free
 From that cheap candle-bawdery,
 We'll eat our bean with that full mirth
 As we were lords of all the earth.

HERRICK, *from* HORACE.

ON entering the room, Clarence recognized Lucy, whom eight years had converted into a sleek and portly matron of about thirty-two, without stealing from her countenance its original expression of mingled modesty and good-nature. She hastened to meet her husband, with an eager and joyous air of welcome seldom seen on matrimonial faces after so many years of wedlock.

A fine, stout boy, of about eleven years old, left a crossbow, which on his father's entrance he had appeared earnestly employed in mending, to share with his mother the salutations of the Returned. An old man sat in an armchair by the fire,

gazing on the three with an affectionate and gladdening eye, and playfully detaining a child of about four years old, who was struggling to escape to dear "papa"!

The room was of oak wainscot, and the furniture plain, solid, and strong, and cast in the fashion still frequently found in those country houses which have remained unaltered by innovation since the days of George II.

Three rough-coated dogs, of a breed that would have puzzled a connoisseur, gave themselves the rousing shake, and, deserting the luxurious hearth, came in various welcome to their master.

One rubbed himself against Cole's sturdy legs, murmuring soft rejoicings: he was the grandsire of the canine race, and his wick of life burned low in the socket. Another sprang up almost to the face of his master, and yelled his very heart out with joy; that was the son, exulting in the vigour of matured *doghood*; and the third scrambled and tumbled over the others, uttering his pæans in a shrill treble, and chiding most snapshily at his two progenitors for interfering with his pretensions to notice; that was the infant dog, the little reveller in puppy childishness! Clarence stood by the door, with his fine countenance smiling benevolently at the happiness he beheld, and congratulating himself that for one moment the group had forgot that he was a stranger.

As soon as our gypsy friend had kissed his wife, shaken hands with his eldest hope, shaken his head at his youngest, smiled his salutation at the father-in-law, and patted into silence the canine claimants of his favour, he turned to Clarence, and saying, half bashfully, half good-humouredly, "See what a troublesome thing it is to return home, even after three days' absence! Lucy, dearest, welcome a new friend!" he placed a chair by the fireside for his guest, and motioned him to be seated.

The chief expression of Clarence's open and bold countenance was centred in the eyes and forehead; and, as he now doffed his hat, which had hitherto concealed that expression, Lucy and her husband recognized him simultaneously.

"I am sure, sir," cried the former, "that I am glad to see you once more!"

“ Ah! my young guest under the gypsy awning!” exclaimed the latter, shaking him heartily by the hand: “ where were my eyes that they did not recognize you before?”

“ Eight years,” answered Clarence, “ have worked more change with me and my friend here” (pointing to the boy, whom he had left last so mere a child) “ than they have with you and his blooming mother. The wonder is, not that you did not remember me before, but that you remember me now!”

“ You *are* altered, sir, certainly,” said the frank chief. “ Your face is thinner, and far graver, and the smooth cheeks of the boy (for, craving your pardon, you were little more then) are somewhat darkened by the bronzed complexion with which time honours the man.”

And the good Cole sighed, as he contrasted Linden’s ardent countenance and elastic figure, when he had last beheld him, with the serious and thoughtful face of the person now before him: yet did he inly own that years, if they had in some things deteriorated from, had in others improved the effect of Clarence’s appearance; they had brought decision to his mien and command to his brow, and had enlarged, to an ampler measure of dignity and power, the proportions of his form. Something, too, there was in his look, like that of a man who has stemmed fate and won success; and the omen of future triumph, which our fortune-telling chief had drawn from his features when first beheld, seemed already in no small degree to have been fulfilled.

Having seen her guest stationed in the seat of honour opposite her father, Lucy withdrew for a few moments, and, when she reappeared, was followed by a neat-handed sort of Phillis for a country-maiden, bearing such kind of “savoury messes” as the house might be supposed to afford.

“ At all events, mine host,” said Clarence, “ you did not desert the flesh-pots of Egypt when you forsook its tents.”

“ Nay,” quoth the worthy Cole, seating himself at the table, “ either under the roof or the awning we may say, in the words of the old epilogue,¹—

“ We can but bring you meat and set you stools,
And to our best cheer say, You all are welcome.”

¹ To the play of “ All Fools,” by Chapman.

We are plain people still ; but if you can stay till dinner, you shall have a bottle of such wine as our fathers' honest souls would have rejoiced in."

"I am truly sorry that I cannot tarry with you, after so fair a promise," replied Clarence; "but before night I must be many miles hence."

Lucy came forward timidly. "Do you remember this ring, sir?" said she (presenting one); "you dropped it in my boy's frock when we saw you last."

"I did so," answered Clarence. "I trust that he will not now disdain a stranger's offering. May it be as ominous of good luck to him as my night in your caravan has proved to me!"

"I am heartily glad to hear that you have prospered," said Cole; "now, let us fall to."



CHAPTER LXV.

OUT of these convertites

There is much matter to be heard and learned. — SHAKSPEARE.

"If you are bent upon leaving us so soon," said the honest Cole, as Clarence, refusing all further solicitation to stay, seized the opportunity which the cessation of the rain afforded him, and rose to depart, "if you are bent upon leaving us so soon, I will accompany you back again into the main road, as in duty bound."

"What, immediately on your return!" said Clarence. "No, no; not a step. What would my fair hostess say to me if I suffered it?"

"Rather, what would she say to me if I neglected such a courtesy? Why, sir, when I meet one who knows Shakspeare's sonnets, to say nothing of the lights of the lesser stars, as well as you, only once in eight years, do you not think I would make the most of him? Besides, it is but a quarter of a mile to the road, and I love walking after a shower."

"I am afraid, Mrs. Cole," said Clarence, "that I must be selfish enough to accept the offer." And Mrs. Cole, blushing and smiling her assent and adieu, Clarence shook hands with the whole party, grandfather and child included, and took his departure.

As Cole was now a pedestrian, Linden threw the rein over his arm, and walked on foot by his host's side.

"So," said he, smiling, "I must not inquire into the reasons of your retirement?"

"On the contrary," replied Cole: "I have walked with you the more gladly from my desire of telling them to you; for we all love to seem consistent, even in our chimeras. About six years ago, I confess that I began to wax a little weary of my wandering life: my child, in growing up, required play-mates; shall I own that I did not like him to find them among the children of my own comrades? The old scamps were good enough for me, but the young ones were a little too bad for my son. Between you and me only be it said, my juvenile hope was already a little corrupted. The dog Mim—you remember Mim, sir—secretly taught him to filch as well as if he had been a bantling of his own; and, faith, our smaller goods and chattels, especially of an edible nature, began to disappear, with a rapidity and secrecy that our itinerant palace could very ill sustain. Among us (*i. e.* gypsies) there is a law by which no member of the gang may steal from another: but my little heaven-instructed youth would by no means abide by that distinction; and so boldly designed and well executed were his rogueries that my paternal anxiety saw nothing before him but Botany Bay on the one hand and Newgate courtyard on the other."

"A sad prospect for the heir apparent!" quoth Clarence.

"It was so!" answered Cole; "and it made me deliberate. Then, as one gets older one's romance oozes out a little in rheums and catarrhs. I began to perceive that, though I had been bred I had not been educated as a gypsy; and, what was worse, Lucy, though she never complained, felt that the walls of our palace were not exempt from the damps of winter, nor our royal state from the Caliban curses of—

“ ‘Cramps and

Side stitches that do pen our breath up.’

She fell ill; and during her illness I had sundry bright visions of warm rooms and coal fires, a friend with whom I could converse upon Chaucer, and a tutor for my son who would teach him other arts than those of picking pockets and pilfering larders. Nevertheless, I was a little ashamed of my own thoughts; and I do not know whether they would have been yet put into practice, but for a trifling circumstance which converted doubt and longing into certainty.

“ Our crank cuffs had for some time looked upon me with suspicion and coldness: my superior privileges and comforts they had at first forgiven, on account of my birth and my generosity to them; but by degrees they lost respect for the one and gratitude for the other; and as I had in a great measure ceased from participating in their adventures, or, during Lucy’s illness, which lasted several months, joining in their festivities, they at length considered me as a drone in a hive, by no means compensating by my services as an ally for my admittance into their horde as a stranger. You will easily conceive, when this once became the state of their feelings towards me, with how ill a temper they brooked the lordship of my stately caravan and my assumption of superior command. Above all, the women, who were very much incensed at Lucy’s constant seclusion from their orgies, fanned the increasing discontent; and, at last, I verily believe that no eyesore could have been more grievous to the Egyptians than my wooden habitation and the smoke of its single chimney.

“ From ill-will the rascals proceeded to ill acts; and one dark night, when we were encamped on the very same ground as that which we occupied when we received you, three of them, Mim at their head, attacked me in mine own habitation. I verily believe, if they had mastered me, they would have robbed and murdered us all; except perhaps my son, whom they thought I ill-used by depriving him of Mim’s instructive society. Howbeit, I was still stirring when they invaded me, and, by the help of the poker and a tolerably strong arm,

I repelled the assailants; but that very night I passed from the land of Egypt, and made with all possible expedition to the nearest town, which was, as you may remember, W——.

“Here, the very next day, I learned that the house I now inhabit was to be sold. It had (as I before said) belonged to my mother’s family, and my father had sold it a little before his death. It was the home from which I had been stolen, and to which I had been returned: often in my star-lit wanderings had I flown to it in thought; and now it seemed as if Providence itself, in offering to my age the asylum I had above all others coveted for it, was interested in my retirement from the empire of an ungrateful people and my atonement in rest for my past sins in migration.

“Well, sir, in short, I became the purchaser of the place you have just seen, and I now think that, after all, there is more happiness in reality than romance: like the laverock, here will I build my nest, —

“Here give my weary spirit rest,
And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love.”

“And your son,” said Clarence, “has he reformed?”

“Oh, yes,” answered Cole. “For my part, I believe the mind is less evil than people say it is; its great characteristic is imitation, and it will imitate the good as well as the bad, if we will set the example. I thank Heaven, sir, that my boy now might go from Dan to Beersheba and not filch a groat by the way.”

“What do you intend him for?” said Clarence.

“Why, he loves adventure, and, faith, I can’t break him of that, for I love it too; so I think I shall get him a commission in the army, in order to give him a fitting and legitimate sphere wherein to indulge his propensities.”

“You could not do better,” said Clarence. “But your fine sister, what says she to your amendment?”

“Oh! she wrote me a long letter of congratulation upon it: and every other summer she is graciously pleased to pay me a visit of three months long; at which time, I observe, that poor Lucy is unusually smart and uncomfortable. We sit in

the best room, and turn out the dogs; my father-in-law smokes his pipe in the arbour, instead of the drawing-room; and I receive sundry hints, all in vain, on the propriety of dressing for dinner. In return for these attentions on our part, my sister invariably brings my boy a present of a pair of white gloves, and my wife a French ribbon of the newest pattern; in the evening, instead of my reading Shakspeare, she tells us anecdotes of high life, and, when she goes away, she gives us, in return for our hospitality, a very general and very gingerly invitation to her house. Lucy sometimes talks to me about accepting it; but I turn a deaf ear to all such overtures, and so we continue much better friends than we should be if we saw more of each other."

"And how long has your father-in-law been with you?"

"Ever since we have been here. He gave up his farm, and cultivates mine for me; for I know nothing of those agricultural matters. I made his coming a little surprise, in order to please Lucy: you should have witnessed their meeting."

"I think I have now learned all particulars," said Clarence; "it only remains for me to congratulate you: but are you, in truth, never tired of the monotony and sameness of domestic life?"

"Yes! and then I do, as I have just done, saddle Little John, and go on an excursion of three or four days, or even weeks, just as the whim seizes me; for I never return till I am driven back by the yearning for home, and the feeling that after all one's wanderings there is no place like it. Whether in private life or public, sir, in parting with a little of one's liberty one gets a great deal of comfort in exchange."

"I thank you truly for your frankness," said Clarence; "it has solved many doubts with respect to you that have often occurred to me. And now we are in the main road, and I must bid you farewell: we part, but our paths lead to the same object; you return to happiness, and I *seek* it."

"May *you* find it, and *I* not lose it, sir," said the wanderer reclaimed; and, shaking hands, the pair parted.

CHAPTER LXVI.

QUICQUID agit Rufus, nihil est, nisi Nævïa Rufo,
 Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur ;
 Cœnat, propinat, poscit, negat, annuit, una est
 Nævïa ; si non sit Nævïa, mutus erit.
 Scriberet hesterna patri cum luce salutem
 Nævïa lux, inquit, Nævïa numen, ave.¹ — MART.

"THE last time," said Clarence to himself, "that I travelled this road, on exactly the same errand that I travel now, I do remember that I was honoured by the company of one in all respects the opposite to mine honest host ; for, whereas in the latter there is a luxuriant and wild eccentricity, an open and blunt simplicity, and a shrewd sense, which looks not after pence, but peace ; so, in the mind of the friend of the late Lady Waddilove there was a flat and hedged-in primness and narrowness of thought ; an enclosure of bargains and profits of all species, — mustard-pots, rings, monkeys, chains, jars, and plum-coloured velvet inexpressibles ; his ideas, with the true alchemy of trade, turned them all into gold : yet was he also as shrewd and acute as he with whose character he contrasts, — equally with him seeking comfort and gladness, and an asylum for his old age. Strange that all tempers should have a common object, and never a common road to it ! But since I have begun the contrast, let me hope that it may be extended in its omen unto me ; let me hope that as my encountering with the mercantile Brown brought me ill-luck in my enterprise, thereby signifying the crosses and vexations of those who labour in the cheateries and overreachings which consti-

¹ "Whatever Rufus does is nothing, except Nævïa be at his elbow. Be he joyful or sorrowful, be he even silent, he is still harping upon her. He eats, he drinks, he talks, he denies, he assents ; Nævïa is his sole theme : no Nævïa, and he 's dumb. Yesterday at daybreak, he would fain write a letter of salutation to his father : 'Hail, Nævïa, light of my eyes,' quoth he ; 'hail, Nævïa, my divine one.' "

tute the vocation of the world ; so my meeting with the philosophical Cole, who has, both in vagrancy and rest, found cause to boast of happiness, authorities from his studies to favour his inclination to each, and reason to despise what he, with Sir Kenelm Digby, would wisely call —

“‘ The fading blossoms of the earth ;’

so my meeting with him may prove a token of good speed to mine errand, and thereby denote prosperity to one who seeks not riches, nor honour, nor the conquest of knaves, nor the good word of fools, but happy love, and the bourne of its quiet home.”

Thus, half meditating, half moralizing, and drawing, like a true lover, an omen of fear or hope from occurrences in which plain reason could have perceived neither type nor token, Clarence continued and concluded his day's journey. He put up at the same little inn he had visited three years ago, and watched his opportunity of seeing Lady Flora alone. More fortunate in that respect than he had been before, such opportunity the very next day presented to him.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Duke. — Sir Valentine !

Thur. — Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia's mine.

Val. — Thurio, give back. — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

“ I THINK, Mamma,” said Lady Flora to her mother, “ that as the morning is so beautiful, I will go into the pavilion to finish my drawing.”

“ But Lord Ulswater will be here in an hour, or perhaps less : may I tell him where you are, and suffer him to join you ? ”

“ If you will accompany him,” answered Lady Flora, coldly, as she took up her *portefeuille* and withdrew.

Now the pavilion was a small summer-house of stone, situated in the most retired part of the grounds belonging to Westborough Park. It was a favourite retreat with Lady Flora, even in the winter months, for warm carpeting, a sheltered site, and a fireplace constructed more for comfort than economy made it scarcely less adapted to that season than to the more genial suns of summer.

The morning was so bright and mild that Lady Flora left open the door as she entered; she seated herself at the table, and, unmindful of her pretended employment, suffered the *portefeuille* to remain unopened. Leaning her cheek upon her hand, she gazed vacantly on the ground, and scarcely felt the tears which gathered slowly to her eyes, but, falling not, remained within the fair lids, chill and motionless, as if the thought which drew them there was born of a sorrow less agitated than fixed and silent.

The shadow of a man darkened the threshold, and there paused.

Slowly did Flora raise her eyes, and the next moment Clarence Linden was by her side and at her feet.

"Flora," said he, in a tone trembling with its own emotions, "Flora, have years indeed separated us forever, or dare I hope that we have misconstrued each other's hearts, and that at this moment they yearn to be united with more than the fondness and fidelity of old? Speak to me, Flora, one word."

But she had sunk on the chair overpowered, surprised, and almost insensible; and it was not for some moments that she could utter words rather wrung from than dictated by her thoughts.

"Cruel and insulting, for what have you come? is it at such a time that you taunt me with the remembrance of my past folly, or your — your —" She paused for a moment, confused and hesitating, but presently recovering herself, rose, and added, in a calmer tone, "Surely you have no excuse for this intrusion: you will suffer me to leave you."

"No," exclaimed Clarence, violently agitated, "no! Have you not wronged me, stung me, wounded me to the core by your injustice? and will you not hear now how differently I have

deserved from you? On a bed of fever and pain I thought only of you; I rose from it animated by the hope of winning you! Though, during the danger of my wound and my consequent illness, your parents alone, of all my intimate acquaintances, neglected to honour with an inquiry the man whom you professed to consecrate with your regard, yet scarcely could my hand trace a single sentence before I wrote to you requesting an interview, in order to disclose my birth and claim your plighted faith! That letter was returned to me unanswered, unopened. My friend and benefactor, whose fortune I now inherit, promised to call upon your father and advocate my cause. Death anticipated his kindness. As soon as my sorrow for his loss permitted me, I came to this very spot! For three days I hovered about your house, seeking the meeting that you would fain deny me now. I could not any longer bear the torturing suspense I endured: I wrote to you; your father answered the letter. Here, here I have it still: read! note well the cool, the damning insult of each line. I see that you knew not of this: I rejoice at it! Can you wonder that, on receiving it, I subjected myself no more to such affronts? I hastened abroad. On my return I met you. Where? In crowds, in the glitter of midnight assemblies, in the whirl of what the vain call pleasure! I observed your countenance, your manner; was there in either a single token of endearing or regretful remembrance? None! I strove to harden my heart; I entered into politics, business, intrigue; I hoped, I longed, I burned to forget you, but in vain!

“At last I heard that Rumour, though it had long preceded, had not belied, the truth, and that you were to be married, — married to Lord Ulswater! I will not say what I suffered, or how idly I summoned pride to resist affection! But I would not have come now to molest you, Flora, to trouble your nuptial rejoicings with one thought of me, if, forgive me, I had not suddenly dreamed that I had cause to hope you had mistaken, not rejected my heart; that — you turn away, Flora, you blush, you weep! Oh, tell me, by one word, one look, that I was not deceived!”

“No, no, Clarence,” said Flora, struggling with her tears:



“BE IT SO, SIR,” HE SAID, SLOWLY ADVANCING, AND CONFRONTING
CLARENCE.

“it is too late, too late now! Why, why did I not know this before? I have promised, I am pledged: in less than two months I shall be the wife of another!”

“Never!” cried Clarence, “never! You promised on a false belief: they will not bind you to such a promise. Who is he that claims you? I am his equal in birth, in the world’s name, — and oh, by what worlds his superior in love! I will advance my claim to you in his very teeth, — nay, I will not stir from these domains till you, your father, and my rival, have repaired my wrongs.”

“Be it so, sir!” cried a voice behind, and Clarence turned and beheld Lord Ulswater! His dark countenance was flushed with rage, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal; and the smile of scorn that he strove to summon to his lip made a ghastly and unnatural contrast with the lowering of his brow and the fire of his eyes. “Be it so, sir,” he said, slowly advancing, and confronting Clarence. “You will dispute my claims to the hand Lady Flora Ardenne has long promised to one who, however unworthy of the gift, knows, at least, how to defend it. It is well; let us finish the dispute elsewhere. It is not the first time we shall have met, if not as rivals, as foes.”

Clarence turned from him without reply, for he saw Lady Westborough had just entered the pavilion, and stood mute and transfixed at the door, with surprise, fear, and anger depicted upon her regal and beautiful countenance.

“It is to you, madam,” said Clarence, approaching towards her, “that I venture to appeal. Your daughter and I, four long years ago, exchanged our vows: you flattered me with the hope that those vows were not displeasing to you; since then a misunderstanding, deadly to my happiness and to hers, divided us. I come now to explain it. My birth may have seemed obscure; I come to clear it: my conduct doubtful; I come to vindicate it. I find Lord Ulswater my rival. I am willing to compare my pretensions to his. I acknowledge that he has titles which I have not; that he has wealth, to which mine is but competence: but titles and wealth, as the means of happiness, are to be referred to your daughter, to none else.

You have only, in an alliance with me, to consider my character and my lineage: the latter flows from blood as pure as that which warms the veins of my rival; the former stands already upon an eminence to which Lord Ulswater in his loftiest visions could never aspire. For the rest, madam, I adjure you, solemnly, as you value your peace of mind, your daughter's happiness, your freedom from the agonies of future remorse and unavailing regret,—I adjure you not to divorce those whom God, who speaks in the deep heart and the plighted vow, has already joined. This is a question in which your daughter's permanent woe or lasting happiness from this present hour to the last sand of life is concerned. It is to her that I refer it: let her be the judge."

And Clarence moved from Lady Westborough, who, agitated, confused, awed by the spell of a power and a nature of which she had not dreamed, stood pale and speechless, vainly endeavouring to reply: he moved from her towards Lady Flora, who leaned, sobbing and convulsed with contending emotions, against the wall; but Lord Ulswater, whose fiery blood was boiling with passion, placed himself between Clarence and the unfortunate object of the contention.

"Touch her not, approach her not!" he said, with a fierce and menacing tone. "Till you have proved your pretensions superior to mine, unknown, presuming, and probably base-born as you are, you will only pass over my body to your claims."

Clarence stood still for one moment, evidently striving to master the wrath which literally swelled his form beyond its ordinary proportions; and Lady Westborough, recovering herself in the brief pause, passed between the two, and, taking her daughter's arm, led her from the pavilion.

"Stay, madam, for one instant!" cried Clarence, and he caught hold of her robe.

Lady Westborough stood quite erect and still; and, drawing her stately figure to its full height, said with that quiet dignity by which a woman so often stills the angrier passions of men, "I lay the prayer and command of a mother upon you, Lord Ulswater, and on you, sir, whatever be your real rank and name, not to make mine and my daughter's presence the

scene of a contest which dishonours both. Still further, if Lady Flora's hand and my approval be an object of desire to either, I make it a peremptory condition with both of you, that a dispute already degrading to her name pass not from word to act. For you, Mr. Linden, if so I may call you, I promise that my daughter shall be left free and unbiased to give that reply to your singular conduct which I doubt not her own dignity and sense will suggest."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater, utterly beside himself with rage which, suppressed at the beginning of Lady Westborough's speech, had been kindled into double fury by its conclusion, "you will not suffer Lady Flora, no, nor any one but her affianced bridegroom, her only legitimate defender, to answer this arrogant intruder! You cannot think that her hand, the hand of my future wife, shall trace line or word to one who has so insulted her with his addresses and me with his rivalry."

"Man!" cried Clarence, abruptly, and seizing Lord Ulswater fiercely by the arm, "there are some causes which will draw fire from ice: beware, beware how you incense me to pollute my soul with the blood of a —"

"What!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater.

Clarence bent down and whispered one word in his ear.

Had that word been the spell with which the sorcerers of old disarmed the fiend, it could not have wrought a greater change upon Lord Ulswater's mien and face. He staggered back several paces; the glow of his swarthy cheek faded into a deathlike paleness; the word which passion had conjured to his tongue died there in silence; and he stood with eyes dilated and fixed on Clarence's face, on which their gaze seemed to force some unwilling certainty.

But Linden did not wait for him to recover his self-possession: he hurried after Lady Westborough, who, with her daughter, was hastening home.

"Pardon me, Lady Westborough," he said, as he approached, with a tone and air of deep respect, "pardon me; but will you suffer me to hope that Lady Flora and yourself will, in a moment of greater calmness, consider over all I have said? and — that

she — that you, Lady Flora” (added he, changing the object of his address), “will vouchsafe one line of unprejudiced, unbiassed reply, to a love which, however misrepresented and calumniated, has in it, I dare to say, nothing that can disgrace her to whom, with an enduring constancy, and undimmed, though unhoping, ardour, it has been inviolably dedicated?”

Lady Flora, though she spoke not, lifted her eyes to his; and in that glance was a magic which made his heart burn with a sudden and flashing joy that atoned for the darkness of years.

“I assure you, sir,” said Lady Westborough, touched, in spite of herself, with the sincerity and respect of Clarence’s bearing, “that Lady Flora will reply to any letter of explanation or proposal: for myself, I will not even see her answer. Where shall it be sent to you?”

“I have taken my lodgings at the inn by your park gates. I shall remain there till — till —”

Clarence paused, for his heart was full; and, leaving the sentence to be concluded as his listeners pleased, he drew himself aside from their path and suffered them to proceed.

As he was feeding his eyes with the last glimpse of their forms, ere a turn in the grounds snatched them from his view, he heard a rapid step behind, and Lord Ulswater, approaching, laid his hand upon Linden’s shoulder, and said calmly, —

“Are you furnished with proof to support the word you uttered?”

“I am!” replied Clarence, haughtily.

“And will you favour me with it?”

“At your leisure, my lord,” rejoined Clarence.

“Enough! Name your time and I will attend you.”

“On Tuesday. I require till then to produce my witnesses.”

“So be it; yet stay: on Tuesday I have military business at W——, some miles hence; the next day let it be; the place of meeting where you please.”

“Here, then, my lord,” answered Clarence; “you have insulted me grossly before Lady Westborough and your affianced bride, and before them my vindication and answer should be given.”

“You are right,” said Lord Ulswater; “be it here, at the hour of twelve.” Clarence bowed his assent and withdrew.

Lord Ulswater remained on the spot, with downcast eyes, and a brow on which thought had succeeded passion.

“If true,” said he aloud, though unconsciously, “if this be true, why, then I owe him reparation, and he shall have it at my hands. I owe it to him on my account, and that of one now no more. Till we meet, I will not again see Lady Flora; after that meeting, perhaps I may resign her forever.”

And with these words the young nobleman, who, despite of many evil and overbearing qualities, had, as we have said, his redeeming virtues, in which a capricious and unsteady generosity was one, walked slowly to the house; wrote a brief note to Lady Westborough, the purport of which the next chapter will disclose; and then, summoning his horse, flung himself on its back, and rode hastily away.



CHAPTER LXVIII.

WE will examine if those accidents,
Which common fame calls injuries, happen to him
Deservedly or no. — *The New Inn.*

FROM LORD ULSWATER TO LADY WESTBOROUGH.

FORGIVE me, dearest Lady Westborough, for my violence: you know and will allow for the infirmities of my temper. I have to make you and Lady Flora one request, which I trust you will not refuse me.

Do not see or receive any communication from Mr. Linden till Wednesday; and on that day at the hour of twelve suffer me to meet him at your house. I will then either prove him to be the basest of impostors, or, if I fail in this and Lady Flora honours my rival with one sentiment of preference, I will without a murmur submit to her decree and my rejection. Dare I trust that this petition will be accorded to one who is, with great regard and esteem, etc.

“This is fortunate,” said Lady Westborough gently to her daughter, who, leaning her head on her mother’s bosom, suffered hopes, the sweeter for their long sleep, to divide, if not wholly to possess, her heart. “We shall have now time well and carefully to reflect over what will be best for your future happiness. We owe this delay to one to whom you have been affianced. Let us, therefore, now merely write to Mr. Linden, to inform him of Lord Ulswater’s request; and to say that if he will meet his lordship at the time appointed, we, that is I, shall be happy to see him.”

Lady Flora sighed, but she saw the reasonableness of her mother’s proposal, and pressing Lady Westborough’s hand murmured her assent.

“At all events,” thought Lady Westborough, as she wrote to Clarence, “the affair can but terminate to advantage. If Lord Ulswater proves Mr. Linden’s unworthiness, the suit of the latter is of course at rest forever: if not, and Mr. Linden be indeed all that he asserts, my daughter’s choice cannot be an election of reproach; Lord Ulswater promises peaceably to withdraw his pretensions; and though Mr. Linden may not possess his rank or fortune, he is certainly one with whom, if of ancient blood, any family would be proud of an alliance.”

Blending with these reflections a considerable share of curiosity and interest in a secret which partook so strongly of romance, Lady Westborough despatched her note to Clarence. The answer returned was brief, respectful, and not only acquiescent in but grateful for the proposal.

With this arrangement both Lady Westborough and Lady Flora were compelled, though with very different feelings, to be satisfied; and an agreement was established between them, to the effect that if Linden’s name passed unblemished through the appointed ordeal Lady Flora was to be left to, and favoured in, her own election; while, on the contrary, if Lord Ulswater succeeded in the proof he had spoken of, his former footing in the family was to be fully re-established and our unfortunate adventurer forever discarded.

To this Lady Flora readily consented; for with a sanguine

and certain trust in her lover's truth and honour, which was tenfold more strong for her late suspicions, she would not allow herself a doubt as to the result; and with an impatience, mingled with a rapturous exhilaration of spirit, which brought back to her the freshness and radiancy of her youngest years, she counted the hours and moments to the destined day.

While such was the state of affairs at Westborough Park, Clarence was again on horseback and on another excursion. By the noon of the day following that which had seen his eventful meeting with Lady Flora, he found himself approaching the extreme boundaries of the county in which Mordaunt Court and the memorable town of W—— were situated. The characteristics of the country were now materially changed from those which gave to the vicinity of Algernon's domains its wild and uncultivated aspect.

As Clarence slowly descended a hill of considerable steepness and length, a prospect of singular and luxurious beauty opened to his view. The noblest of England's rivers was seen, through "turfs and shades and flowers," pursuing "its silver-winding way." On the opposite banks lay, embosomed in the golden glades of autumn, the busy and populous town that from the height seemed still and lifeless as an enchanted city, over which the mid-day sun hung like a guardian spirit. Behind, in sweeping diversity, stretched wood and dale, and fields despoiled of their rich harvest, yet still presenting a yellow surface to the eye; and ever and anon some bright patch of green, demanding the gaze as if by a lingering spell from the past spring; while, here and there, spire and hamlet studded the landscape, or some lowly cot lay, backed by the rising ground or the silent woods, white and solitary, and sending up its faint tribute of smoke in spires to the altars of Heaven. The river was more pregnant of life than its banks: barge and boat were gliding gayly down the wave, and the glad oar of the frequent and slender vessels consecrated to pleasure was seen dimpling the water, made by distance smoother than glass.

On the right side of Clarence's road, as he descended the hill, lay wide plantations of fir and oak, divided from the road

by a park paling, the uneven sides of which were covered with brown moss, and which, at rare openings in the young wood, gave glimpses of a park, seemingly extending over great space, the theatre of many a stately copse and oaken grove, which might have served the Druids with fane and temple meet for the savage sublimity of their worship.

Upon these unfrequent views, Clarence checked his horse, and gazed, with emotions sweet yet bitter, over the pales, along the green expanse which they contained. And once, when through the trees he caught a slight glimpse of the white walls of the mansion they adorned, all the years of his childhood seemed to rise on his heart, thrilling to its farthest depths with a mighty and sorrowful yet sweet melody, and —

“Singing of boyhood back, the voices of his home.”

Home! yes, amidst those groves had the April of his life lavished its mingled smiles and tears! There was the spot hallowed by his earliest joys! and the scene of sorrows still more sacred than joys! and now, after many years, the exiled boy came back, a prosperous and thoughtful man, to take but one brief glance of that home which to him had been less hospitable than a stranger's dwelling, and to find a witness among those who remembered him of his very birth and identity!

He wound the ascent at last, and entering a small town at the foot of the hill, which was exactly facing the larger one on the opposite shore of the river, put up his horse at one of the inns, and then, with a beating heart, remounted the hill, and entering the park by one of its lodges found himself once more in the haunts of his childhood.

CHAPTER LXIX.

OH, the steward, the steward : I might have guessed as much.

Tales of the Crusaders.

THE evening was already beginning to close, and Clarence was yet wandering in the park, and retracing, with his heart's eye, each knoll and tree and tuft once so familiar to his wanderings.

At the time we shall again bring him personally before the reader, he was leaning against an iron fence that, running along the left wing of the house, separated the pleasure-grounds from the park, and gazing with folded arms and wistful eyes upon the scene on which the dusk of twilight was gradually gathering.

The house was built originally in the reign of Charles II.; it had since received alteration and additions, and now presented to the eye a vast pile of Grecian or rather Italian architecture, heterogeneously blended with the massive window, the stiff coping, and the heavy roof which the age immediately following the Revolution introduced. The extent of the building and the grandeur of the circling demesnes were sufficient to render the mansion imposing in effect; while, perhaps, the style of the architecture was calculated to conjoin a stately comfort with magnificence, and to atone in solidity for any deficiency in grace.

At a little distance from the house, and placed on a much more commanding site, were some ancient and ivy-grown ruins, now scanty indeed and fast mouldering into decay, but sufficient to show the antiquarian the remains of what once had been a hold of no ordinary size and power. These were the wrecks of the old mansion, which was recorded by tradition to have been reduced to this state by accidental fire, during the banishment of its loyal owner in the time of the Protectorate. Upon his return the present house was erected.

As Clarence was thus stationed he perceived an elderly man approach towards him. "This is fortunate," said he to himself, — "the very person I have been watching for. Well, years have passed lightly over old Wardour: still the same precise garb, the same sturdy and slow step, the same upright form."

The person thus designated now drew near enough for parlance; and, in a tone a little authoritative, though very respectful, inquired if Clarence had any business to transact with him.

"I beg pardon," said Clarence, slouching his hat over his face, "for lingering so near the house at this hour: but I have seen it many years ago, and indeed been a guest within its walls; and it is rather my interest for an old friend, than my curiosity to examine a new one, which you are to blame for my trespass."

"Oh, sir," answered Mr. Wardour, a short and rather stout man, of about sixty-four, attired in a chocolate coat, gray breeches, and silk stockings of the same dye, which, by the waning light, took a sombrero and sadder hue, "oh, sir, pray make no apology. I am only sorry the hour is so late that I cannot offer to show you the interior of the house: perhaps, if you are staying in the neighbourhood, you would like to see it to-morrow. You were here, I take it, sir, in my old lord's time?"

"I was! — upon a visit to his second son: we had been boys together."

"What! Master Clinton?" cried the old man, with extreme animation; and then, suddenly changing his voice, added, in a subdued and saddened tone, "Ah, poor young gentleman, I wonder where he is now?"

"Why, is he not in this country?" asked Clarence.

"Yes — no — that is, I can't exactly say where he is; I wish I could: poor Master Clinton! I loved him as my own son."

"You surprise me," said Clarence. "Is there anything in the fate of Clinton L'Estrange that calls forth your pity? If so, you would gratify a much better feeling than curiosity if

you would inform me of it. The fact is that I came here to seek him ; for I have been absent from the country many years, and on my return my first inquiry was for my old friend and schoolfellow. None knew anything of him in London, and I imagined therefore that he might have settled down into a country gentleman. I was fully prepared to find him marshalling the fox-hounds or beating the preserves ; and you may consequently imagine my mortification on learning at my inn that he had not been residing here for many years ; further I know not !”

“ Ay, ay, sir,” said the old steward, who had listened very attentively to Clarence’s detail, “ had you pressed one of the village gossips a little closer, you would doubtless have learned more. But ’tis a story I don’t much love telling, although formerly I could have talked of Master Clinton by the hour together to any one who would have had the patience to listen to me.”

“ You have really created in me a very painful desire to learn more,” said Clarence ; “ and, if I am not intruding on any family secrets, you would oblige me greatly by whatever information you may think proper to afford to an early and attached friend of the person in question.”

“ Well, sir, well,” replied Mr. Wardour, who, without imputation on his discretion, loved talking as well as any other old gentleman of sixty-four, “ if you will condescend to step up to my house, I shall feel happy and proud to converse with a friend of my dear young master ; and you are heartily welcome to the information I can give you.”

“ I thank you sincerely,” said Clarence ; “ but suffer me to propose, as an amendment to your offer, that you accompany me for an hour or two to my inn.”

“ Nay, sir,” answered the old gentleman, in a piqued tone, “ I trust you will not disdain to honour me with your company. Thank Heaven, I can afford to be hospitable now and then.”

Clarence, who seemed to have his own reasons for the amendment he had proposed, still struggled against this offer, but was at last, from fear of offending the honest steward, obliged to accede.

Striking across a path, which led through a corner of the plantation to a space of ground containing a small garden, quaintly trimmed in the Dutch taste, and a brick house of moderate dimensions, half overgrown with ivy and jessamine, Clarence and his inviter paused at the door of the said mansion, and the latter welcomed his guest to his abode.

"Pardon me," said Clarence, as a damsel in waiting opened the door, "but a very severe attack of rheumatism obliges me to keep on my hat: you will, I hope, indulge me in my rudeness."

"To be sure, to be sure, sir. I myself suffer terribly from rheumatism in the winter; though you look young, sir, very young, to have an old man's complaint. Ah, the people of my day were more careful of themselves, and that is the reason we are such stout fellows in our age."

And the worthy steward looked complacently down at legs which very substantially filled their comely investments.

"True, sir," said Clarence, laying his hand upon that of the steward, who was just about to open the door of an apartment; "but suffer me at least to request you not to introduce me to any of the ladies of your family. I could not, were my very life at stake, think of affronting them by not doffing my hat. I have the keenest sense of what is due to the sex, and I must seriously entreat you, for the sake of my health during the whole of the coming winter, to suffer our conversation not to take place in their presence."

"Sir, I honour your politeness," said the prim little steward: "I, myself, like every true Briton, reverence the ladies; we will therefore retire to my study. Mary, girl," turning to the attendant, "see that we have a nice chop for supper in half an hour; and tell your mistress that I have a gentleman of quality with me upon particular business, and must not be disturbed."

With these injunctions, the steward led the way to the farther end of the house, and, having ushered his guest into a small parlour, adorned with sundry law-books, a great map of the estate, a print of the late owner of it, a rusty gun slung over the fireplace, two stuffed pheasants, and a little mahogany

buffet, — having, we say, led Clarence to this sanctuary of retiring stewardship, he placed a seat for him and said, —

“Between you and me, sir, be it respectfully said, I am not sorry that our little confabulation should pass alone. Ladies are very delightful, very delightful, certainly : but they won’t let one tell a story one’s own way ; they are fidgety, you know, sir, — fidgety, nothing more ; ’t is a trifle, but it is unpleasant. Besides, my wife was Master Clinton’s foster-mother, and she can’t hear a word about him, without running on into a long rigmarole of what he did as a baby, and so forth. I like people to be chatty, sir, but not garrulous ; I can’t bear garrulity, at least in a female. But, suppose, sir, we defer our story till after supper ? A glass of wine or warm punch makes talk glide more easily ; besides, sir, I want something to comfort me when I talk about Master Clinton. Poor gentleman, he was so comely, so handsome !”

“Did you think so ?” said Clarence, turning towards the fire.

“Think so !” ejaculated the steward, almost angrily ; and forthwith he launched out into an encomium on the perfections, personal, moral, and mental, of Master Clinton which lasted till the gentle Mary entered to lay the cloth. This reminded the old steward of the glass of wine which was so efficacious in making talk glide easily ; and, going to the buffet before mentioned, he drew forth two bottles, both of port. Having carefully and warily decanted both, he changed the subject of his praise ; and, assuring Clarence that the wine he was about to taste was at least as old as Master Clinton, having been purchased in joyous celebration of the young gentleman’s birthday, he whiled away the minutes with a glowing eulogy on its generous qualities, till Mary entered with the supper.

Clarence, with an appetite sharpened, despite his romance, by a long fast, did ample justice to the fare ; and the old steward, warming into familiarity with the virtues of the far-famed port, chatted and laughed in a strain half simple and half shrewd.

The fire being stirred up to a free blaze, the hearth swept,

and all the tokens of supper, save and except the kingly bottle and its subject glasses, being removed, the steward and his guest drew closer to each other, and the former began his story.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

Midsummer-Night's Dream.

“You know, probably, sir, that my late lord was twice married; by his first wife he had three children, only one of whom, the youngest, though now the present earl, survived the first period of infancy. When Master Francis, as we always called him, in spite of his accession to the title of viscount, was about six years old, my lady died, and a year afterwards my lord married again. His second wife was uncommonly handsome: she was a Miss Talbot (a Catholic), daughter of Colonel Talbot, and niece to the celebrated beau, Squire Talbot of Scarsdale Park. Poor lady! they say that she married my lord through a momentary pique against a former lover. However that may be, she was a fine, high-spirited creature: very violent in temper, to be sure, but generous and kind when her passion was over; and however haughty to her equals charitable and compassionate to the poor.

“She had but one son, Master Clinton. Never, sir, shall I forget the rejoicings that were made at his birth: for my lord doted on his second wife, and had disliked his first, whom he had married for her fortune; and it was therefore natural that he should prefer the child of the present wife to Master Francis. Ah, it is sad to think how love can change! Well, sir, my lord seemed literally to be wrapped up in the infant: he nursed it and fondled it, and hung over it, as if he had been its mother rather than its father. My lady desired that it might be christened by one of her family names; and my lord

consenting, it was called Clinton. (The wine is with you, sir! Do observe that it has not changed colour in the least, notwithstanding its age.)

“My lord was fond of a quiet, retired life; indeed, he was a great scholar, and spent the chief part of his time among his books. Dr. Latinas, the young gentleman’s tutor, said his lordship made Greek verses better than Dr. Latinas could make English ones, so you may judge of his learning. But my lady went constantly to town, and was among the gayest of the gay; nor did she often come down here without bringing a whole troop of guests. Lord help us, what goings on there used to be at the great house!—such dancing and music, and dining and stipping, and shooting-parties, fishing-parties, gypsy-parties: you would have thought all England was merry-making there.

“But my lord, though he indulged my lady in all her whims and extravagance, seldom took much share in them himself. He was constantly occupied with his library and children, nor did he ever suffer either Master Francis or Master Clinton to mix with the guests. He kept them very close at their studies, and when the latter was six years old, I do assure you, sir, he could say his *Propria quæ maribus* better than I can. (You don’t drink, sir.) When Master Francis was sixteen, and Master Clinton eight, the former was sent abroad on his travels with a German tutor, and did not return to England for many years afterwards; meanwhile Master Clinton grew up to the age of fourteen, increasing in comeliness and goodness. He was very fond of his studies, much more so than Master Francis had been, and was astonishingly forward for his years. So my lord loved him better and better, and would scarcely ever suffer him to be out of his sight.

“When Master Clinton was about the age I mentioned, namely, fourteen, a gentleman of the name of Sir Clinton Manners became a constant visitor at the house. Report said that he was always about my lady in London at Ranelagh, and the ball-rooms and routs, and all the fine places; and certainly he was scarcely ever from her side in the pleasure parties at the Park. But my lady said that he was a cousin of hers,

and an old playmate in childhood, and so he was; and unhappily for her, something more too. My lord, however, shut up in his library, did not pay any attention to my lady's intimacy with Sir Clinton; on the contrary, as he was a cousin and friend of hers, his lordship seemed always happy to see him, and was the only person in the neighbourhood who had no suspicion of what was going on.

“Oh, sir, it is a melancholy story, and I can scarcely persuade myself to tell it. (It is really delicious wine this — six-and-twenty years old last *birthday* — to say nothing of its age before I bought it.) Ah! well, sir, the blow came at last like a thunderclap: my lady, finding disguise was in vain, went off with Sir Clinton. Letters were discovered which showed that they had corresponded for years; that he was her lover before marriage; that she, in a momentary passion with him, had accepted my lord's offer; that she had always repented her precipitation; and that she had called her son after his name: all this, and much more, sir, did my lord learn, as it were, at a single blow.

“He obtained a divorce, and Sir Clinton and my lady went abroad. But from that time my lord was never the same man. Always proud and gloomy, he now became intolerably violent and morose. He shut himself up, saw no company of any description, rarely left the house, and never the park; and, from being one of the gayest places in the country, sir, the mansion became as dreary and deserted as if it had been haunted. (It is for you to begin the second bottle, sir.)

“But the most extraordinary change in my lord was in his conduct to Master Clinton: from doting upon him, to a degree that would have spoilt any temper less sweet than my poor young master's, he took the most violent aversion to him. From the circumstance of his name, and the long intimacy existing between my lady and her lover, his lordship would not believe that Master Clinton was his own child; and indeed I must confess there seemed good ground for his suspicions. Besides this, Master Clinton took very much after his mother. He had her eyes, hair, and beautiful features, so that my lord could never see him without being reminded of his disgrace;

therefore whenever the poor young gentleman came into his presence, he would drive him out with oaths and threats which rang through the whole house. He could not even bear that he should have any attendance or respect from the servants, for he considered him quite as an alien like, and worse than a stranger; and his lordship's only delight seemed to consist in putting upon him every possible indignity and affront. But Master Clinton was a high-spirited young gentleman; and, after having in vain endeavoured to soothe my lord by compliance and respect, he at last utterly avoided his lordship's presence.

“He gave up his studies in a great measure, and wandered about the park and woods all day and sometimes even half the night; his mother's conduct and his father's unkindness seemed to prey upon his health and mind, and at last he grew almost as much altered as my lord. From being one of the merriest boys possible, full of life and spirits, he became thoughtful and downcast, his step lost its lightness, and his eye all the fire which used once quite to warm one's heart when one looked at it; in short, sir, the sins of the mother were visited as much upon the child as the husband. (Not the least tawny, sir, you see, though it is so old!)

“My lord at first seemed to be glad that he now never saw his son, but, by degrees, I think he missed the pleasure of venting his spleen upon him; and so he ordered my young master not to stir out without his leave, and confined him closer than ever to his studies. (Well, sir, if it were not for this port I could not get out another sentence.) There used then to be sad scenes between them: my lord was a terribly passionate man, and said things sharper than a two-edged sword, as the psalms express it; and though Master Clinton was one of the mildest and best-tempered boys imaginable, yet he could not at all times curb his spirit; and, to my mind, when a man is perpetually declaring he is not your father, one may now and then be forgiven in forgetting that you are to behave as his son.

“Things went on in this way sadly enough for about three years and a half, when Master Clinton was nearly eighteen.

One evening, after my lord had been unusually stormy, Master Clinton's spirit warmed, I suppose, and, from word to word, the dispute increased, till my lord, in a furious rage, ordered in the servants, and told them to horsewhip his son. Imagine, sir, what a disgrace to that noble house! But there was not one of them who would not rather have cut off his right hand than laid a finger upon Master Clinton, so greatly was he beloved; and, at last, my lord summoned his own gentleman, a German, six feet high, entirely devoted to his lordship, and commanded him, upon pain of instant dismissal, to make use in his presence of a horsewhip which he put into his hand.

"The German did not dare refuse, so he approached Master Clinton. The servants were still in the room, and perhaps they would have been bold enough to rescue Master Clinton, had there been any need of their assistance; but he was a tall youth, as bold as a hero, and, when the German approached, he caught him by the throat, threw him down, and very nearly strangled him; he then, while my lord was speechless with rage, left the room, and did not return all night. (What a body it has, sir — ah!)

"The next morning I was in a little room adjoining my lord's study, looking over some papers and maps. His lordship did not know of my presence, but was sitting alone at breakfast, when Master Clinton suddenly entered the study; the door leading to my room was ajar, and I heard all the conversation that ensued.

"My lord asked him very angrily how he had dared absent himself all night; but Master Clinton, making no reply to this question, said, in a very calm, loud voice, which I think I hear now, 'My lord, after the insult you have offered to me, it is perhaps unnecessary to observe that nothing could induce me to remain under your roof. I come, therefore, to take my last leave of you.'

"He paused, and my lord (probably like me, being taken by surprise) making no reply, he continued, 'You have often told me, my lord, that I am not your son; if this be possible, so much the more must you rejoice at the idea of ridding your presence of an intruder.' 'And how, sir, do you expect to

live, except upon my bounty?' exclaimed my lord. 'You remember,' answered my young master, 'that a humble dependant of my mother's family, who had been our governess in childhood, left me at her death the earnings of her life. I believe they amount to nearly a thousand pounds; I look to your lordship's honour either for the principal or the yearly interest, as may please you best: further I ask not from you.' 'And do you think, sir,' cried my lord, almost screaming with passion, 'that upon that beggarly pittance you shall go forth to dishonour more than it is yet dishonoured the name of my ancient house? Do you think, sir, that that name to which you have no pretension, though the law iniquitously grants it you, shall be sullied either with trade or robbery? for to one or the other you must necessarily be driven.' 'I foresaw your speech, my lord, and am prepared with an answer. Far be it from me to thrust myself into any family, the head of which thinks proper to reject me; far be it from me to honour my humble fortunes with a name which I am as willing as yourself to disown: I purpose, therefore, to adopt a new one; and, whatever may be my future fate, that name will screen me both from your remembrance and the world's knowledge. Are you satisfied now, my lord?'

"His lordship did not answer for some minutes: at last, he said sneeringly, 'Go, boy, go! I am delighted to hear you have decided so well. Leave word with my steward where you wish your clothes to be sent to you: Heaven forbid I should rob you either of your wardrobe or your princely fortune. Wardour will transmit to you the latter, even to the last penny, by the same conveyance as that which is honoured by the former. And now good-morning, sir; yet stay, and mark my words: never dare to re-enter my house, or to expect an iota more of fortune or favour from me. And, hark you, sir: if you dare violate your word; if you dare, during my life, at least, assume a name which you were born to sully, — my curse, my deepest, heartiest, eternal curse, be upon your head in this world and the next!' 'Fear not, my lord: my word is pledged,' said the young gentleman; and the next moment I heard his parting step in the hall.

“Sir, my heart was full (your glass is empty!) and my head spun round as if I were on a precipice: but I was determined my young master should not go till I had caught another glimpse of his dear face; so I gently left the room I was in, and, hastening out of the house by a private entrance, met Master Clinton in the park, not very far from the spot where I saw you, sir, just now. To my surprise there was no sign of grief or agitation upon his countenance. I had never seen him look so proud, or for years so happy.

“‘Wardour,’ said he, in a gay tone, when he saw me, ‘I was going to your house: my father has at last resolved that I should, like my brother, commence my travels; and I wish to leave with you the address of the place to which my clothes, etc., will be sent.’

“I could not contain any longer when I heard this, sir: I burst into tears, confessed that I had accidentally heard his conversation with my lord, and besought him not to depart so hastily, and with so small a fortune; but he shook his head and would not hear me. ‘Believe me, my good Wardour,’ said he, ‘that since my unhappy mother’s flight, I have never felt so elated or so happy as I do now: one should go through what I have done, to learn the rapture of independence.’ He then told me to have his luggage sent to him, under his initials of C. L., at the Golden Fleece, the principal inn in the town of W——, which, you know, sir, is at the other end of the county, on the road to London; and then, kindly shaking me by the hand, he broke away from me: but he turned back before he had got three paces, and said (and then, for the first time, the pride of his countenance fell, and the tears stood in his eyes), ‘Wardour, do not divulge what you have heard: put as good a face upon my departure as you can, and let the blame, if any, fall upon me, not upon your lord; after all he is to be pitied, not blamed, and I can never forget that he once loved me.’ He did not wait for my answer, — perhaps he did not like to show me how much he was affected, — but hurried down the park, and I soon lost sight of him. My lord that very morning sent for me, demanded what address his son had left, and gave me a letter, enclosing, I suppose, a

bill for my poor young master's fortune, ordering it to be sent with the clothes immediately.

"Sir, I have never seen or heard aught of the dear gentleman since; you must forgive me, I cannot help tears, sir — (the wine is with you)."

"But the mother, the mother!" said Clarence, earnestly; "what became of her? she died abroad, two years since, did she not?"

"She did, sir," answered the honest steward, refilling his glass. "They say that she lived very unhappily with Sir Clinton, who did not marry her; till all of a sudden she disappeared, none knew whither."

Clarence redoubled his attention.

"At last," resumed the steward, "two years ago, a letter came from her to my lord; she was a nun in some convent (in Italy I think) to which she had, at the time of her disappearance, secretly retired. The letter was written on her death-bed, and so affectingly, I suppose, that even my stern lord was in tears for several days after he received it. But the principal passage in it was relative to her son: it assured my lord (for so with his own lips he told me just before he died, some months ago) that Master Clinton was in truth his son, and that it was not till she had been tempted many years after her marriage that she had fallen; she implored my lord to believe this 'on the word of one for whom earth and earth's objects were no more;' those were her words.

"Six months ago, when my lord lay on the bed from which he never rose, he called me to him and said, 'Wardour, you have always been the faithful servant of our house, and warmly attached to my second son; tell my poor boy, if ever you see him, that I did at last open my eyes to my error and acknowledge him as my child; tell him that I have desired his brother (who was then, sir, kneeling by my lord's side), as he values my blessing, to seek him out and repair the wrong I have done him; and add that my best comfort in death was the hope of his forgiveness.'"

"Did he, did he say *that*?" exclaimed Clarence, who had been violently agitated during the latter part of this recital,

and now sprang from his seat. "My father, my father! would that I had borne with thee more! mine, mine was the fault; from *thee* should have come the forgiveness!"

The old steward sat silent and aghast. At that instant his wife entered, with a message of chiding at the lateness of the hour upon her lip, but she started back when she saw Clarence's profile, as he stood leaning against the wall: "Good heavens!" cried she, "is it, is it,—yes, it is my young master, my own foster-son!"

Rightly had Clarence conjectured, when he had shunned her presence. Years had indeed wrought a change in his figure and face; acquaintance, servant, friend, relation,—the remembrance of his features had passed from all: but she who had nursed him as an infant on her lap and fed him from her breast, she who had joined the devotion of clanship to the fondness of a mother, knew him at a glance. "Yes," cried he, as he threw himself into her withered and aged arms, "it is I, the child *you* reared, come, after many years, to find too late, when a father is no more, that he had a right to a father's home."

CHAPTER LXXI.

LET us go in,
And charge us there upon inter'gatories. — SHAKSPEARE.

"BUT did not any one recognize you in your change of name?" said the old foster-mother, looking fondly upon Clarence, as he sat the next morning by her side. "How could any one forget so winsome a face who had once seen it?"

"You don't remember," said Clarence (as we will yet continue to call our hero), smiling, "that your husband had forgotten it."

"Ay, sir," cried the piqued steward, "but that was because you wore your hat slouched over your eyes: if you had taken off *that*, I should have known you directly."

“ However that may be,” said Clarence, unwilling to dwell longer on an occurrence which he saw hurt the feelings of the kind Mr. Wardour, “ it is very easy to explain how I preserved my incognito. You recollect that my father never suffered me to mix with my mother’s guests : so that I had no chance of their remembering me, especially as during the last three years and a half no stranger had ever entered our walls. Add to this that I was in the very time of life in which a few years work the greatest change, and on going to London I was thrown entirely among people who could never have seen me before. Fortunately for me, I became acquainted with my mother’s unclé ; circumstances subsequently led me to disclose my birth to him, upon a promise that he would never call me by any other name than that which I had assumed. He, who was the best, the kindest, the most generous of human beings, took a liking to me. He insisted not only upon his relationship to me, as my grand-uncle, but upon the justice of repairing to me the wrongs his unhappy niece had caused me. The delicacy of his kindness, the ties of blood, and an accident which had enabled me to be of some service to him, all prevented my resisting the weight of obligation with which he afterwards oppressed me. He procured me an appointment abroad : I remained there four years. When I returned, I entered, it is true, into very general society : but four years had, as you may perceive, altered me greatly ; and even had there previously existed any chance of my being recognized, that alteration would probably have been sufficient to insure my secret.”

“ But your brother, — my present lord, — did you never meet him, sir ? ”

“ Often, my good mother ; but you remember that I was little more than six years old when he left England, and when he next saw me I was about two and twenty : it would have been next to a miracle, or, at least, would have required the eyes of love like yours, to have recalled me to memory after such an absence.

“ Well — to turn to my story — I succeeded, partly as his nearest relation, but principally from an affection dearer than

blood, to the fortune of my grand-uncle, Mr. Talbot. Fate prospered with me: I rose in the world's esteem and honour, and soon became prouder of my borrowed appellation than of all the titles of my lordly line. Circumstances occurring within the last week which it will be needless to relate, but which may have the greatest influence over my future life, made it necessary to do what I had once resolved I would never do, — prove my identity and origin. Accordingly I came here to seek you."

"But why did not my honoured young master disclose himself last night?" asked the steward.

"I might say," answered Clarence, "because I anticipated great pleasure in a surprise; but I had another reason; it was this: I had heard of my poor father's death, and I was painfully anxious to learn if at the last he had testified any relenting towards me, and yet more so to ascertain the manner of my unfortunate mother's fate. Both abroad and in England, I had sought tidings of her everywhere, but in vain; in mentioning my mother's retiring into a convent, you have explained the reason why my efforts were so fruitless. With these two objects in view, I thought myself more likely to learn the whole truth as a stranger than in my proper person; for in the latter case, I deemed it probable that your delicacy and kindness might tempt you to conceal whatever was calculated to wound my feelings, and to exaggerate anything that might tend to flatter or to soothe them. Thank Heaven, I now learn that I have a right to the name my boyhood bore, and that my birth is not branded with the foulest of private crimes, and that in death my father's heart yearned to his too hasty but repentant son. Enough of this: I have now only to request you, my friend, to accompany me, before daybreak on Wednesday morning, to a place several miles hence. Your presence there will be necessary to substantiate the proof for which I came hither."

"With all my heart, sir," cried the honest steward; "and after Wednesday you will, I trust, assume your rightful name."

"Certainly," replied Clarence; "since I am no longer 'the Disowned.'"

Leaving Clarence now for a brief while to renew his acquaintance with the scenes of his childhood, and to offer the tribute of his filial tears to the ashes of a father whose injustice had been but "the stinging of a heart the world had stung," we return to some old acquaintances in the various conduct of our drama.

CHAPTER LXXII.

UPON his couch the veiled Mokanna lay. — *The Veiled Prophet.*

THE autumn sun broke through an apartment in a villa in the neighbourhood of London, furnished with the most prodigal yet not tasteless attention to luxury and show, within which, beside a table strewn with newspapers, letters, and accounts, lay Richard Crauford, extended carelessly upon a sofa which might almost have contented the Sybarite who quarrelled with a rose-leaf. At his elbow was a bottle half-emptied and a wineglass just filled. An expression of triumph and enjoyment was visible upon his handsome but usually inexpressive countenance.

"Well," said he, taking up a newspaper, "let us read this paragraph again. What a beautiful sensation it is to see one's name in print. 'We understand that Richard Crauford, Esq., M. P. for —, is to be raised to the dignity of the peerage. There does not perhaps exist in the country a gentleman more universally beloved and esteemed' (mark that, Dicky Crauford). 'The invariable generosity with which his immense wealth has been employed, his high professional honour, the undeviating and consistent integrity of his political career' (ay, to be sure, it is only your honest fools who are inconsistent: no man can deviate who has one firm principle, self-interest), 'his manly and energetic attention to the welfare of religion' (he! he! he!), 'conjoined to a fortune almost incalculable, render this condescension of our gracious Sovereign no

less judicious than deserved! We hear that the title proposed for the new peer is that of Viscount Innisdale, which, we believe, was formerly in the noble family of which Mr. Crauford is a distant branch.'

"He! he! he! Bravo! bravo! Viscount Innisdale, noble family, distant branch, — the devil I am! What an ignoramus my father was not to know that! Why, rest his soul, he never knew who his grandfather was; but the world shall not be equally ignorant of that important point. Let me see, who shall be Viscount Innisdale's great-grandfather? Well, well, whoever he is, here's long life to his great-grandson! 'Incalculable fortune!' Ay, ay, I hope at all events it will never be calculated. But now for my letters. Bah! this wine is a thought too acid for the cellars of Viscount Innisdale! What, another from Mother H——! Dark eyes, small mouth, sings like an angel, eighteen! Pish! I am too old for such follies now: 't is not pretty for Viscount Innisdale. Humph! Lisbon, seven hundred pounds five shillings and seven-pence — half-penny, is it, or farthing? I must note that down. Loan for King of Prussia. Well, must negotiate that to-morrow. Ah, Hockit, the wine-merchant, pipe of claret in the docks, vintage of 17—. Bravo! all goes smooth for Viscount Innisdale! Pish! from my damnable wife! What a pill for my lordship! What says she?"

DAWLISH, DEVONSHIRE.

You have not, my dearest Richard, answered my letters for months. I do not, however, presume to complain of your silence; I know well that you have a great deal to occupy your time, both in business and pleasure. But one little line, dear Richard, — one little line, surely that is not too much now and then. I am most truly sorry to trouble you again about money; and you must know that I strive to be as saving as possible; ["Pish — curse the woman; sent her twenty pounds three months ago!"] but I really am so distressed, and the people here are so pressing; and, at all events, I cannot bear the thought of your wife being disgraced. Pray, forgive me, Richard, and believe how painful it is in me to say so much. I know you will answer this! and, oh, do, do tell me how you are.

Ever your affectionate wife,

CAROLINE CRAUFORD.

“Was there ever poor man so plagued? Where’s my notebook? * Mem. — Send Car. to-morrow £20 to last her the rest of the year. Mem. — Send Mother H——, £100. Mem. — Pay Hockit’s bill, £830. Bless me, what shall I do with Viscountess Innisdale? Now, if I were not married, I would be son-in-law to a duke. Mem. — Go down to Dawlish, and see if she won’t die soon. Healthy situation, I fear, — devilish unlucky, — must be changed. Mem. — Swamps in Essex. Who’s that?”

A knock at the door disturbed Mr. Crauford in his meditations. He started up, hurried the bottle and glass under the sofa, where the descending drapery completely hid them; and, taking up a newspaper, said in a gentle tone, “Come in.” A small thin man, bowing at every step, entered.

“Ah! Bradley, is it you, my good fellow?” said Crauford: “glad to see you, — a fine morning: but what brings you from town so early?”

“Why, sir,” answered Mr. Bradley, very obsequiously, “something unpleasant has —”

“Merciful Heaven!” cried Crauford, blanched into the whiteness of death, and starting up from the sofa with a violence which frightened the timid Mr. Bradley to the other end of the room, “the counting-house, the books, — all safe?”

“Yes, sir, yes, *at present*, but —”

“But what, man?”

“Why, honoured sir,” returned Mr. Bradley, bowing to the ground, “your partner, Mr. Jessopp, has been very inquisitive about the accounts. He says Mr. Da Costa, the Spanish merchant, has been insinuating very unpleasant hints, and that he must have a conversation with you at your earliest convenience; and when, sir, I ventured to remonstrate about the unreasonableness of attending to what Mr. Da Costa said, Mr. Jessopp was quite abusive, and declared that there seemed some very mysterious communication between you (begging your pardon, sir) and me, and that he did not know what business I, who had no share in the firm, had to interfere.”

“But,” said Crauford, “you were civil to him; did not reply hotly, eh! my good Bradley?”

“Lord forbid, sir; Lord forbid, that I should not know my place better, or that I should give an unbecoming word to the partner of my honoured benefactor. But, sir, if I dare venture to say so, I think Mr. Jessopp is a little jealous or so of you; he seemed quite in a passion at the paragraph in the paper about my honoured master’s becoming a lord.”

“Right, honest Bradley, right; he is jealous: we must soothe him. Go, my good fellow, go to him with my compliments, and say that I will be with him by one. Never fear: this business will be easily settled.”

And, bowing himself out of the room, Bradley withdrew.

Left alone, a dark cloud gathered over the brow of Mr. Crauford.

“I am on a precipice,” thought he; “but if my own brain does not turn giddy with the prospect, all yet may be safe. Cruel necessity, that obliged me to admit another into the business, that foiled me of Mordaunt, and drove me upon this fawning rascal! So, so: I almost think there is a Providence, now that Mordaunt has grown rich; but then his wife died; ay, ay, God saved *him*, but the devil killed *her*.¹ He! he! he! But, seriously, seriously, there is danger in the very air I breathe! I must away to that envious Jessopp instantly; but first let me finish the bottle.”



CHAPTER LXXIII.

A STRANGE harmonious inclination
Of all degrees to reformation. — *Hudibras*.

ABOUT seven miles from W—, on the main road from —, there was in 17— a solitary public-house, which by the by is now a magnificent hotel. Like many of its brethren in the more courtly vicinity of the metropolis, this *amœnum hospitium peregrinæ gentis* then had its peculiar renown for cer-

¹ Dieu a puni ce fripon, le diable a noyé les autres. — VOLTAIRE: *Candide*.

tain dainties of the palate; and various in degree and character were the numerous parties from the neighbouring towns and farms, which upon every legitimate holiday were wont to assemble at the mansion of mine host of the Jolly Angler, in order to feast upon eel-pie and grow merry over the true Herefordshire cider.

But upon that special day on which we are about to introduce our reader into the narrow confines of its common parlour, the said hostelry was crowded with persons of a very different description from the peaceable idlers who were ordinarily wont to empty mine host's larder, and forget the price of corn over the divine inspirations of pomarial nectar. Instead of the indolent, satisfied air of the saturnalian merry-maker, the vagrant angler, or the gentleman farmer, with his comely dame who "walked in silk attire, and siller had to spare;" instead of the quiet yet glad countenances of such hunters of pleasure and eaters of eel-pie, or the more obstreperous joy of urchins let loose from school to taste some brief and perennial recreation, and mine host's delicacies at the same time; instead of these, the little parlour presented a various and perturbed group, upon whose features neither eel-pie nor Herefordshire cider had wrought the relaxation of a holiday or the serenity of a momentary content.

The day to which we now refer was the one immediately preceding that appointed for the far-famed meeting at W——; and many of the patriots, false or real, who journeyed from a distance to attend that rendezvous, had halted at our host's of the Jolly Angler, both as being within a convenient space from the appointed spot, and as a tabernacle where promiscuous intrusion and (haply) immoderate charges were less likely to occur than at the bustling and somewhat extraordinary hotels and inns of the town of W——.

The times in which this meeting was held were those of great popular excitement and discontent; and the purport of the meeting proposed was to petition Parliament against the continuance of the American war and the King against the continuance of his ministers.

Placards of an unusually inflammatory and imprudent nature

had given great alarm to the more sober and well-disposed persons in the neighbourhood of W——; and so much fear was felt or assumed upon the occasion that a new detachment of Lord Ulswater's regiment had been especially ordered into the town; and it was generally rumoured that the legal authorities would interfere, even by force, for the dispersion of the meeting in question. These circumstances had given the measure a degree of general and anxious interest which it would not otherwise have excited; and while everybody talked of the danger of attending the assembly, everybody resolved to thrust himself into it.

It was about the goodly hour of noon, and the persons assembled were six in number, all members of the most violent party, and generally considered by friend and foe as embracers of republican tenets. One of these, a little, oily, corpulent personage, would have appeared far too sleek and well fed for a disturber of things existing, had not a freckled, pimpled, and fiery face, a knit brow, and a small black eye of intolerable fierceness belied the steady and contented appearance of his frame and girth. This gentleman, by name Christopher Culpepper, spoke in a quick, muffled, shuffling sort of tone, like the pace of a Welsh pony, somewhat lame, perfectly broken-winded, but an exemplary ambler for all that.

Next to him sat, with hands clasped over his knees, a thin, small man, with a countenance prematurely wrinkled and an air of great dejection. Poor Castleton! his had been, indeed, the bitter lot of a man, honest but weak, who attaches himself, heart and soul, to a public cause which, in his life at least, is hopeless. Three other men were sitting by the open window, disputing, with the most vehement gestures, upon the character of Wilkes; and at the other window, alone, silent, and absorbed, sat a man whose appearance and features were singularly calculated to arrest and to concentrate attention. His raven hair, grizzled with the first advance of age, still preserved its strong, wiry curl and luxuriant thickness. His brows, large, bushy, and indicative of great determination, met over eyes which at that moment were fixed upon vacancy with a look of thought and calmness very unusual to their

ordinary restless and rapid glances. His mouth, that great seat of character, was firmly and obstinately shut; and though, at the first observation, its downward curve and iron severity wore the appearance of unmitigated harshness, disdain, and resolve, yet a more attentive deducer of signs from features would not have been able to detect in its expression anything resembling selfishness or sensuality, and in that absence would have found sufficient to redeem the more repellent indications of mind which it betrayed.

Presently the door was opened, and the landlord, making some apology to both parties for having no other apartment unoccupied, introduced a personage whose dress and air, as well as a kind of saddle-bag, which he would not intrust to any other bearer than himself, appeared to denote him as one rather addicted to mercantile than political speculations. Certainly he did not seem much at home among the patriotic reformers, who, having glared upon him for a single moment, renewed, without remark, their several attitudes or occupations.

The stranger, after a brief pause, approached the solitary reformer whom we last described; and making a salutation, half timorous and half familiar, thus accosted him, —

“Your servant, Mr. Wolfe, your servant. I think I had the pleasure of hearing you a long time ago at the Westminster election: very eloquent you were, sir, very!”

Wolfe looked up for an instant at the face of the speaker, and, not recognizing it, turned abruptly away, threw open the window, and, leaning out, appeared desirous of escaping from all further intrusion on the part of the stranger; but that gentleman was by no means of a nature easily abashed.

“Fine day, sir, for the time of year; very fine day, indeed. October is a charming month, as my lamented friend and customer, the late Lady Waddilove, was accustomed to say. Talking of that, sir, as the winter is now approaching, do you not think it would be prudent, Mr. Wolfe, to provide yourself with an umbrella? I have an admirable one which I might dispose of: it is from the effects of the late Lady Waddilove. ‘Brown,’ said her ladyship, a short time before her death,

‘Brown, you are a good creature; but you ask too much for the Dresden vase. We have known each other a long time; you must take fourteen pounds ten shillings, and you may have that umbrella in the corner into the bargain.’ Mr. Wolfe, the bargain was completed, and the umbrella became mine: it may now be yours.”

And so saying, Mr. Brown, depositing his saddle-bag on the ground, proceeded to unfold an umbrella of singular antiquity and form,—a very long stick, tipped with ivory, being surmounted with about a quarter of a yard of sea-green silk, somewhat discoloured by time and wear.

“It is a beautiful article, sir,” said Mr. Brown, admiringly surveying it: “is it not?”

“Pshaw!” said Wolfe, impatiently, “what have I to do with your goods and chattels? Go and palm the cheatings and impositions of your pitiful trade upon some easier gull.”

“Cheatings and impositions, Mr. Wolfe!” cried the slandered Brown, perfectly aghast; “I would have you to know, sir, that I have served the first families in the country, ay, and in this county too, and never had such words applied to me before. Sir, there was the late Lady Waddilove, and the respected Mrs. Minden, *and her nephew the ambassador*, and the Duchess of Pugadale, and Mr. Mordaunt of Mordaunt Court, poor gentleman, though he is poor no more,” and Mr. Brown proceeded to enumerate the long list of his customers.

Now, we have stated that Wolfe, though he had never known the rank of Mordaunt, was acquainted with his real name; and, as the sound caught his ear, he muttered, “Mordaunt, Mordaunt, ay, but not my former acquaintance,—not him who was called Glendower. No, no: the man cannot mean him.”

“Yes, sir, but I do mean him,” cried Brown, in a rage. “I do mean that Mr. Glendower, who afterwards took another name, but whose real appellation is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt of Mordaunt Court, in this county, sir.”

“What description of man is he?” said Wolfe; “rather tall, slender, with an air and mien like a king’s, I was going to say, but better than a king’s, like a freeman’s?”

“Ay, ay,—the same,” answered Mr. Brown, sullenly;

“but why should I tell you? ‘Cheating and imposition,’ indeed! I am sure my word can be of no avail to you; and I sha’ n’t stay here any longer to be insulted, Mr. Wolfe, which, I am sure, talking of freemen, no freeman ought to submit to; but as the late Lady Waddilove once very wisely said to me, ‘Brown, never have anything to do with those republicans: they are the worst tyrants of all.’ Good morning, Mr. Wolfe; gentlemen, your servant; ‘cheating and imposition,’ indeed!” and Mr. Brown banged the door as he departed.

“Wolfe,” said Mr. Christopher Culpepper, “who is that man?”

“I know not,” answered the republican, laconically, and gazing on the ground, apparently in thought.

“He has the air of a slave,” quoth the free Culpepper, “and slaves cannot bear the company of freemen; therefore he did right to go, whe—w! Had we a proper and thorough and efficient reform, human nature would not be thus debased by trades and callings and barter and exchange, for all professions are injurious to the character and the dignity of man, whe—w! but, as I shall prove upon the hustings to-morrow, it is in vain to hope for any amendment in the wretched state of things until the people of these realms are fully, freely, and fairly represented, whe—w! Gentlemen, it is past two, and we have not ordered dinner, whe—w!” (N. B. — This ejaculation denotes the kind of snuffle which lent peculiar energy to the dicta of Mr. Culpepper.)

“Ring the bell, then, and summon the landlord,” said, very pertinently, one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

The landlord appeared; dinner was ordered.

“Pray,” said Wolfe, “has that man, Mr. Brown I think he called himself, left the inn?”

“He has, sir, for he was mightily offended at something which —”

“And,” interrupted Wolfe, “how far hence does Mr. Mordaunt live?”

“About five miles on the other side of W——,” answered mine host.

Wolfe rose, seized his hat, and was about to depart.

“Stay, stay,” cried citizen Christopher Culpepper; “you will not leave us till after dinner?”

“I shall dine at W——,” answered Wolfe, quitting the room.

“Then our reckoning will be heavier,” said Culpepper. “It is not handsome in Wolfe to leave us, whe—w! Really I think that our brother in the great cause has of late relaxed in his attentions and zeal to the goddess of our devotions, whe—w!”

“It is human nature!” cried one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

“It is not human nature!” cried the second disputant, folding his arms doggedly, in preparation for a discussion.

“Contemptible human nature!” exclaimed the third disputant, soliloquizing with a supercilious expression of hateful disdain.

“Poor human nature!” murmured Castleton, looking upward with a sigh; and though we have not given to that gentleman other words than these, we think they are almost sufficient to let our readers into his character.



CHAPTER LXXIV.

SILVIS, ubi passim

Palantes error certo de tramite pellit,—

Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit; unus utrique

Error, sed variis illudit partibus.¹ — HORACE.

As Wolfe strode away from the inn, he muttered to himself,—

“Can it be that Mordaunt has suddenly grown rich? If so, I rejoice at it. True, that he was not for our cause, but he had

¹ “Wandering in those woods where error evermore forces life’s stragglers from the beaten path,—this one deflects to the left, his fellow chooses the exact contrary. The fault is all the same in each, but it excuses itself by a thousand different reasons.”

the spirit and the heart which belonged to it. Had he not been bred among the prejudices of birth, or had he lived in stormier times, he might have been the foremost champion of freedom. As it is, I rather lament than condemn. Yet I would fain see him once more. Perhaps prosperity may have altered his philosophy. But can he, indeed, be the same Mordaunt of whom that trading itinerant spoke? Can he have risen to the pernicious eminence of a landed aristocrat? Well, it is worth the journey; for if he have power in the neighbourhood, I am certain that he will exert it for our protection; and, at the worst, I shall escape from the idle words of my compatriots. Oh! if it were possible that the advocates could debase the glory of the cause, how long since should I have flinched from the hardship and the service to which my life is devoted! Self-interest; Envy, that snarls at all above it, without even the beast's courage to bite; Folly, that knows not the substance of Freedom, but loves the glitter of its name; Fear, that falters; Crime, that seeks in licentiousness an excuse; Disappointment, only craving occasion to rail; Hatred; Sourness, boasting of zeal, but only venting the blackness of rancour and evil passion, — all these make our adherents, and give our foes the handle and the privilege to scorn and to despise. But man chooses the object, and Fate only furnishes the tools. Happy for our posterity, that when the object is once gained, the frailty of the tools will be no more!"

Thus soliloquizing, the republican walked rapidly onwards, till a turn of the road brought before his eye the form of Mr. Brown, seated upon a little rough pony, and "whistling as he went for want of thought."

Wolfe quickened his pace, and soon overtook him.

"You must forgive me, my good man," said he, soothingly; "I meant not to impeach your honesty or your calling. Perhaps I was hasty and peevish; and, in sad earnest, I have much to tease and distract me."

"Well, sir, well," answered Mr. Brown, greatly mollified; "I am sure no Christian can be more forgiving than I am; and, since you are sorry for what you were pleased to say, let us think no more about it. But touching the umbrella, Mr.

Wolfe, have you a mind for that interesting and useful relic of the late Lady Waddilove?"

"Not at present, I thank you," said Wolfe, mildly; "I care little for the inclemencies of the heavens, and you may find many to whom your proffered defence from them may be more acceptable. But tell me if the Mr. Mordaunt you mentioned was ever residing in town, and in very indifferent circumstances?"

"Probably he was," said the cautious Brown, who, as we before said, had been bribed into silence, and who now grievously repented that passion had betrayed him into the imprudence of candour; "but I really do not busy myself about other people's affairs. 'Brown,' said the late Lady Waddilove to me, 'Brown, you are a good creature, and never talk of what does not concern you.' Those, Mr. Wolfe, were her ladyship's own words."

"As you please," said the reformer, who did not want shrewdness, and saw that his point was already sufficiently gained; "as you please. And now, to change the subject, I suppose we shall have your attendance at the meeting at W—— to-morrow?"

"Ay," replied the worthy Brown: "I thought it likely I should meet many of my old customers in the town on such a busy occasion; so I went a little out of my way home to London, in order to spend a night or two there. Indeed, I have some valuable articles for Mr. Glumford, the magistrate, who will be in attendance to-morrow."

"They say," observed Wolfe, "that the magistrates, against all law, right, and custom, will dare to interfere with and resist the meeting. Think you report says true?"

"Nay," returned Brown, prudently, "I cannot exactly pretend to decide the question: all I know is that Squire Glumford said to me, at his own house, five days ago, as he was drawing on his boots, 'Brown,' said he, 'Brown, mark my words, we shall do for those rebellious dogs!'"

"Did he say so?" muttered Wolfe, between his teeth. "Oh, for the old times, or those yet to come, when our answer would have been, or shall be, the sword!"

"And you know," pursued Mr. Brown, "that Lord Ulswater and his regiment are in town, and have even made great preparations against the meeting a week ago."

"I *have* heard this," said Wolfe; "but I cannot think that any body of armed men dare interrupt or attack a convocation of peaceable subjects, met solely to petition Parliament against famine for themselves and slavery for their children."

"Famine!" quoth Mr. Brown. "Indeed it^e is very true, very! times are dreadfully bad. I can scarcely get my own living; Parliament certainly ought to do something: but you must forgive me, Mr. Wolfe; it may be dangerous to talk with you on these matters; and, now I think of it, the sooner I get to W—— the better; good morning; a shower's coming on. You won't have the umbrella, then?"

"They dare not," said Wolfe to himself, "no, no, — they dare not attack us; they dare not;" and clenching his fist, he pursued, with a quicker step, and a more erect mien, his solitary way.

When he was about the distance of three miles from W——, he was overtaken by a middle-aged man of a frank air and a respectable appearance. "Good day, sir," said he; "we seem to be journeying the same way: will it be against your wishes to join company?"

Wolfe assented, and the stranger resumed: —

"I suppose, sir, you intend to be present at the meeting at W—— to-morrow? There will be an immense concourse, and the entrance of a new detachment of soldiers, and the various reports of the likelihood of their interference with the assembly, make it an object of some interest and anxiety to look forward to."

"True, true," said Wolfe, slowly, eying his new acquaintance with a deliberate and scrutinizing attention. "It will, indeed, be interesting to see how far an evil and hardy government will venture to encroach upon the rights of the people, which it ruins while it pretends to rule."

"Of a truth," rejoined the other, "I rejoice that I am no politician. I believe my spirit is as free as any cooped in the narrow dungeon of earth's clay can well be; yet I confess that

it has drawn none of its liberty from book, pamphlet, speech, or newspaper, of modern times."

"So much the worse for you, sir," said Wolfe, sourly: "the man who has health and education can find no excuse for supineness or indifference to that form of legislation by which his country decays or prospers."

"Why," said the other, gayly, "I willingly confess myself less of a patriot than a philosopher; and as long as I am harmless, I strive very little to be useful, in a public capacity; in a private one, as a father, a husband, and a neighbour, I trust I am not utterly without my value."

"Pish!" cried Wolfe; "let no man who forgets his public duties prate of his private merits. I tell you, man, that he who can advance by a single hair's-breadth the happiness or the freedom of mankind has done more to save his own soul than if he had paced every step of the narrow circle of his domestic life with the regularity of clockwork."

"You may be right," quoth the stranger, carelessly; "but I look on things in the mass, and perhaps see only the superficies, while you, I perceive already, are a lover of the abstract. For my part, Harry Fielding's two definitions seem to me excellent. 'Patriot, — a candidate for a place!' 'Politics, — the art of getting such a place!' Perhaps, sir, as you seem a man of education, you remember the words of our great novelist."

"No!" answered Wolfe, a little contemptuously; "I cannot say that I burden my memory with the deleterious witticisms and shallow remarks of writers of fancy. It has been a mighty and spreading evil to the world that the vain fictions of the poets or the exaggerations of novelists have been hitherto so welcomed and extolled. Better had it been for us if the destruction of the lettered wealth at Alexandria had included all the lighter works which have floated, from their very levity, down the stream of time, an example and a corruption to the degraded geniuses of later days."

The eyes of the stranger sparkled. "Why, you outgoth the Goth!" exclaimed he, sharply. "But you surely preach against what you have not studied. Confess that you are but slightly acquainted with Shakspeare, and Spenser, and noble Dan

Chaucer. Ay, if you knew them as well as I do, you would, like me, give —

“To hem faith and full credence,
And in your heart have hem in reverence.”

“Pish!” again muttered Wolfe; and then rejoined aloud, “It grieves me to see time so wasted, and judgment so perverted, as yours appears to have been; but it fills me with pity and surprise, as well as grief, to find that, so far from shame at the effeminacy of your studies, you appear to glory and exult in them.”

“May the Lord help me, and lighten thee,” said Cole; for it was he. “You are at least not a novelty in human wisdom, whatever you may be in character; for you are far from the only one proud of being ignorant, and pitying those who are not so.”

Wolfe darted one of his looks of fire at the speaker, who, nothing abashed, met the glance with an eye, if not as fiery, at least as bold.

“I see,” said the republican, “that we shall not agree upon the topics you have started. If you still intrude your society upon me, you will, at least, choose some other subject of conversation.”

“Pardon me,” said Cole, whose very studies, while they had excited, in their self-defence, his momentary warmth, made him habitually courteous and urbane, “pardon me for my hastiness of expression. I own myself in fault.” And, with this apology, our ex-king slid into the new topics which the scenery and the weather afforded him.

Wolfe, bent upon the object of his present mission, made some inquiries respecting Mordaunt; and though Cole only shared the uncertain information of the country gossips as to the past history of that person, yet the little he did know was sufficient to confirm the republican in his belief of Algeron's identity; while the ex-gypsy's account of his rank and reputation in the country made Wolfe doubly anxious to secure, if possible, his good offices and interference on behalf of the meeting. But the conversation was not always restricted

to neutral and indifferent ground, but ever and anon wandered into various allusions or opinions from the one, certain to beget retort or controversy in the other.

Had we time and our reader patience, it would have been a rare and fine contrast to have noted more at large the differences of thought and opinion between the companions: each in his several way so ardent for liberty, and so impatient of the control and customs of society; each so enthusiastic for the same object, yet so coldly contemptuous to the enthusiasm of the other. The one guided only by his poetical and erratic tastes, the other solely by dreams, seeming to the world no less baseless, yet, to his own mind, bearing the name of stern judgment and inflexible truth. Both men of active and adventurous spirits, to whom forms were fetters and ceremonies odious; yet, deriving from that mutual similarity only pity for mutual perversion, they were memorable instances of the great differences congeniality itself will occasion, and of the never-ending varieties which minds, rather under the influence of imagination than judgment, will create.



CHAPTER LXXV.

*GRATIS anhelans, multa agendo, nihil agens.*¹ — PHÆDRUS.

UPON entering the town, the streets displayed all the bustle and excitement which the approaching meeting was eminently calculated to create in a place ordinarily quiescent and undisturbed: groups of men were scattered in different parts, conversing with great eagerness; while here and there some Demosthenes of the town, impatient of the coming strife, was haranguing his little knot of admiring friends, and preparing his oratorical organs by petty skirmishing for the grand battle of the morrow. Now and then the eye roved upon the gaunt forms of Lord Ulswater's troopers, as they strolled idly

¹ "Panting and labouring in vain; doing much, — effecting nothing."

along the streets, in pairs, perfectly uninterested by the great event which set all the more peaceable inmates of the town in a ferment, and returning, with a slighting and supercilious glance, the angry looks and muttered anathemas which, ever and anon, the hardier spirits of the petitioning party liberally bestowed upon them.

As Wolfe and his comrade entered the main street, the former was accosted by some one of his compatriots, who, seizing him by the arm, was about to apprise the neighbouring idlers, by a sudden exclamation, of the welcome entrance of the eloquent and noted republican. But Wolfe perceived and thwarted his design.

"Hush!" said he, in a low voice; "I am only now on my way to an old friend, who seems a man of influence in these parts, and may be of avail to us on the morrow; keep silence, therefore, with regard to my coming till I return. I would not have my errand interrupted."

"As you will," said the brother spirit: "but whom have you here, a fellow-labourer?" and the reformer pointed to Cole, who, with an expression of shrewd humour, blended with a sort of philosophical compassion, stood at a little distance waiting for Wolfe, and eying the motley groups assembled before him.

"No," answered Wolfe; "he is some vain and idle sower of unprofitable flowers; a thing who loves poetry, and, for aught I know, writes it: but that reminds me that I must rid myself of his company; yet stay; do you know this neighbourhood sufficiently to serve me as a guide?"

"Ay," quoth the other; "I was born within three miles of the town."

"Indeed!" rejoined Wolfe; "then perhaps you can tell me if there is any way of reaching a place called Mordaunt Court without passing through the more public and crowded thoroughfares."

"To be sure," rejoined the brother spirit; "you have only to turn to the right up yon hill, and you will in an instant be out of the purlieus and precincts of W—, and on your shortest road to Mordaunt Court; but surely it is not to its owner that you are bound?"

“And why not?” said Wolfe.

“Because,” replied the other, “he is the wealthiest, the highest, and, as report says, the haughtiest aristocrat of these parts.”

“So much the better, then,” said Wolfe, “can he aid us in obtaining a quiet hearing to-morrow, undisturbed by those liveried varlets of hire, who are termed, in sooth, Britain’s defence! Much better, when we think of all they cost us to pamper and to clothe, should they be termed Britain’s ruin: but farewell for the present; we shall meet to-night; your lodgings — ?”

“Yonder,” said the other, pointing to a small inn opposite; and Wolfe, nodding his adieu, returned to Cole, whose vivacious and restless nature had already made him impatient of his companion’s delay.

“I must take my leave of you now,” said Wolfe, “which I do with a hearty exhortation that you will change your studies, fit only for effeminate and enslaved minds.”

“And I return the exhortation,” answered Cole. “Your studies seem to me tenfold more crippling than mine: mine take all this earth’s restraints from me, and yours seem only to remind you that all earth is restraint: mine show me whatever worlds the fondest fancy could desire; yours only the follies and chains of this. In short, while ‘my mind to me a *kingdom* is,’ yours seems to consider the whole universe itself nothing but a great meeting for the purpose of abusing ministers and demanding reform!”

Not too well pleased by this answer, and at the same time indisposed to the delay of further reply, Wolfe contented himself with an iron sneer of disdain, and, turning on his heel, strode rapidly away in the direction his friend had indicated.

Meanwhile, Cole followed him with his eye till he was out of sight, and then muttered to himself, “Never was there a fitter addition to old Barclay’s ‘Ship of Fools’! I should not wonder if this man’s patriotism leads him from despising the legislature into breaking the law; and, faith, the surest way to the gallows is less through vice than discontent: yet I would fain hope better things for him; for, methinks, he is neither a common declaimer nor an ordinary man.”

With these words the honest Cole turned away, and, strolling towards the Golden Fleece, soon found himself in the hospitable mansion of Mistress and Mister Merrylack.

While the ex-king was taking his ease at his inn, Wolfe proceeded to Mordaunt Court. The result of the meeting that there ensued was a determination on the part of Algernon to repair immediately to W——.



CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE commons here in Kent are up in arms. — *Second Part of Henry VI.*

WHEN Mordaunt arrived at W——, he found that the provincial deities (who were all assembled at dinner with the principal inhabitants of the town), in whose hands the fate of the meeting was placed, were in great doubt and grievous consternation. He came in time, first to balance the votes, and ultimately to decide them. His mind, prudent and acute, when turned to worldly affairs, saw at a glance the harmless though noisy nature of the meeting; and he felt that the worst course the government or the county could pursue would be to raise into importance, by violence, what otherwise would meet with ridicule from most and indifference from the rest.

His large estates, his ancient name, his high reputation for talent, joined to that manner, half eloquent and half commanding, which rarely fails of effect when deliberation only requires a straw on either side to become decision, — all these rendered his interference of immediate avail; and it was settled that the meeting should, as similar assemblies had done before, proceed and conclude, undisturbed by the higher powers, so long as no positive act of sedition to the government or danger to the town was committed.

Scarcely was this arrangement agreed upon, before Lord Ulswater, who had hitherto been absent, entered the room in

which the magisterial conclave was assembled. Mr. Glumford (whom our readers will possibly remember as the suitor to Isabel St. Leger, and who had at first opposed, and then reluctantly subscribed to, Mordaunt's interference) bustled up to him.

"So, so, my lord," said he, "since I had the honour of seeing your lordship, quite a new sort of trump has been turned up."

"I do not comprehend your metaphorical elegances of speech, Mr. Glumford," said Lord Ulswater.

Mr. Glumford explained. Lord Ulswater's cheek grew scarlet. "So Mr. Mordaunt has effected this wise alteration," said he.

"Nobody else, my lord, nobody else: and I am sure, though your lordship's estates are at the other end of the county, yet they are much larger than his; and since your lordship has a troop at your command, and that sort of thing, I would not, if I were your lordship, suffer any such opposition to your wishes."

Without making a reply to this harangue, Lord Ulswater stalked haughtily up to Mordaunt, who was leaning against the wainscot and conversing with those around him.

"I cannot but conceive, Mr. Mordaunt," said he, with a formal bow, "that I have been misinformed in the intelligence I have just received."

"Lord Ulswater will perhaps inform me to what intelligence he alludes."

"That Mr. Mordaunt, the representative of one of the noblest families in England, has given the encouragement and influence of his name and rank to the designs of a seditious and turbulent mob."

Mordaunt smiled slightly, as he replied, "Your lordship *rightly* believes that you are misinformed. It is precisely because I would *not* have the mob you speak of seditious or turbulent that I have made it my request that the meeting of to-morrow should be suffered to pass off undisturbed."

"Then, sir," cried Lord Ulswater, striking the table with a violence which caused three reverend potentates of the province to start back in dismay, "I cannot but consider such

interference on your part to the last degree impolitic and uncalled for: these, sir, are times of great danger to the State, and in which it is indispensably requisite to support and strengthen the authority of the law."

"I waive, at present," answered Mordaunt, "all reply to language neither courteous nor appropriate. I doubt not but that the magistrates will decide as is most in accordance with the spirit of that law which, in this and in all times, should be supported."

"Sir," said Lord Ulswater, losing his temper more and more, as he observed that the bystanders, whom he had been accustomed to awe, all visibly inclined to the opinion of Mordaunt, "sir, if your name has been instrumental in producing so unfortunate a determination on the part of the magistrates, I shall hold you responsible to the government for those results which ordinary prudence may calculate upon."

"When Lord Ulswater," said Mordaunt, sternly, "has learned what is due not only to the courtesies of society, but to those legitimate authorities of his country, who (he ventures to suppose) are to be influenced contrary to their sense of duty by any individual, then he may perhaps find leisure to make himself better acquainted with the nature of those laws which he now so vehemently upholds."

"Mr. Mordaunt, you will consider yourself answerable to me for those words," said Lord Ulswater, with a tone of voice unnaturally calm; and the angry flush of his countenance gave place to a livid paleness. Then, turning on his heel, he left the room.

As he repaired homeward he saw one of his soldiers engaged in a loud and angry contest with a man in the plain garb of a peaceful citizen; a third person, standing by, appeared ineffectually endeavouring to pacify the disputants. A rigid disciplinarian, Lord Ulswater allowed not even party feeling, roused as it was, to conquer professional habits. He called off the soldier, and the man with whom the latter had been engaged immediately came up to Lord Ulswater, with a step as haughty as his own. The third person, who had attempted the peacemaker, followed him.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that you are an officer of this man's regiment."

"I am the commanding officer, sir," said Lord Ulswater, very little relishing the air and tone of the person who addressed him.

"Then," answered the man (who was, indeed, no other than Wolfe, who, having returned to W—— with Mordaunt, had already succeeded in embroiling himself in a dispute), "then, sir, I look to you for his punishment and my redress;" and Wolfe proceeded in his own exaggerated language to detail a very reasonable cause of complaint. The fact was that Wolfe, meeting one of his compatriots and conversing with him somewhat loudly, had uttered some words which attracted the spleen of the soldier, who was reeling home very comfortably intoxicated; and the soldier had most assuredly indulged in a copious abuse of the d—d rebel who could not walk the streets without chattering sedition.

Wolfe's friend confirmed the statement.

The trooper attempted to justify himself; but Lord Ulswater saw his intoxication in an instant, and, secretly vexed that the complaint was not on the other side, ordered the soldier to his quarters, with a brief but sure threat of punishment on the morrow. Not willing, however, to part with the "d—d rebel" on terms so flattering to the latter, Lord Ulswater, turning to Wolfe with a severe and angry air, said, —

"As for you, fellow, I believe the whole fault was on your side; and if you dare again give vent to your disaffected ravings, I shall have you sent to prison to tame your rank blood upon bread and water. Begone, and think yourself fortunate to escape now!"

The fierce spirit of Wolfe was in arms on the instant; and his reply, in subjecting him to Lord Ulswater's threat, might at least have prevented his enlightening the public on the morrow, had not his friend, a peaceable, prudent man, seized him by the arm, and whispered, "What are you about? Consider for what you are here: another word may rob the assembly of your presence. A man bent on a public cause must not, on the eve of its trial, enlist in a private quarrel."

"True, my friend, true," said Wolfe, swallowing his rage and eying Lord Ulswater's retreating figure with a menacing look; "but the time may yet come when I shall have license to retaliate on the upstart."

"So be it," quoth the other; "he is our bitterest enemy. You know, perhaps, that he is Lord Ulswater of the ——— regiment? It has been at his instigation that the magistrates proposed to disturb the meeting. He has been known publicly to say that all who attended the assembly ought to be given up to the swords of his troopers."

"The butchering dastard, to dream even of attacking unarmed men: but enough of him; I must tarry yet in the street to hear what success our intercessor has obtained." And as Wolfe passed the house in which the magisterial conclave sat, Mordaunt came out and accosted him.

"You have sworn to me that your purpose is peaceable," said Mordaunt.

"Unquestionably," answered Wolfe.

"And you will pledge yourself that no disturbance, that can either be effected or counteracted by yourself and friends, shall take place?"

"I will."

"Enough!" answered Mordaunt. "Remember that if you commit the least act that can be thought dangerous I may not be able to preserve you from the military. As it is, your meeting will be unopposed."

Contrary to Lord Ulswater's prediction, the meeting went off as quietly as an elderly maiden's tea-party. The speakers, even Wolfe, not only took especial pains to recommend order and peace, but avoided, for the most part, all inflammatory enlargement upon the grievances of which they complained. And the sage foreboders of evil, who had locked up their silver spoons, and shaken their heads very wisely for the last week, had the agreeable mortification of observing rather an appearance of good humour upon the countenances of the multitude than that ferocious determination against the lives and limbs of the well-affected which they had so sorrowfully anticipated.

As Mordaunt (who had been present during the whole time of the meeting) mounted his horse and quitted the ground, Lord Ulswater, having just left his quarters, where he had been all day in expectation of some violent act of the orators or the mob demanding his military services, caught sight of him with a sudden recollection of his own passionate threat. There had been nothing in Mordaunt's words which would in our times have justified a challenge; but in that day duels were fought upon the slightest provocation. Lord Ulswater therefore rode up at once to a gentleman with whom he had some intimate acquaintance, and briefly saying that he had been insulted both as an officer and gentleman by Mr. Mordaunt, requested his friend to call upon that gentleman and demand satisfaction.

"To-morrow," said Lord Ulswater, "I have the misfortune to be unavoidably engaged. The next day you can appoint place and time of meeting."

"I must first see the gentleman to whom Mr. Mordaunt may refer me," said the friend, prudently; "and perhaps your honour may be satisfied without any hostile meeting at all."

"I think not," said Lord Ulswater, carelessly, as he rode away; "for Mr. Mordaunt is a gentleman, and gentlemen never apologize."

Wolfe was standing unobserved near Lord Ulswater while the latter thus instructed his proposed second. "Man of blood," muttered the republican; "with homicide thy code of honour, and massacre thine interpretation of law, by violence wouldst thou rule, and by violence mayst thou perish!"

CHAPTER LXXVII.

JAM te premet nox, fabulæque Manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia.¹ — HORACE.

THE morning was dull and heavy as Lord Ulswater mounted his horse, and unattended took his way towards Westborough Park. His manner was unusually thoughtful and absent; perhaps two affairs upon his hands, either of which seemed likely to end in bloodshed, were sufficient to bring reflection even to the mind of a cavalry officer.

He had scarcely got out of the town before he was overtaken by our worthy friend Mr. Glumford. As he had been a firm ally of Lord Ulswater in the contest respecting the meeting, so, when he joined and saluted that nobleman, Lord Ulswater, mindful of past services, returned his greeting with an air rather of condescension than *hauteur*. To say truth, his lordship was never very fond of utter loneliness, and the respectful bearing of Glumford, joined to that mutual congeniality which sympathy in political views always occasions, made him more pleased with the society than shocked with the intrusion of the squire; so that when Glumford said, "If your lordship's way lies along this road for the next five or six miles, perhaps you will allow me the honour of accompanying you," Lord Ulswater graciously signified his consent to the proposal, and carelessly mentioning that he was going to Westborough Park, slid into that conversation with his new companion which the meeting and its actors afforded.

Turn we for an instant to Clarence. At the appointed hour he had arrived at Westborough Park, and, bidding his companion, the trusty Wardour, remain within the chaise which had conveyed them, he was ushered with a trembling heart, but a mien erect and self-composed, into Lady Westborough's presence; the marchioness was alone.

¹ "This very hour Death shall overcome thee, and the fabled Manes, and the shadowy Plutonian realms receive thee."

“I am sensible, sir,” said she, with a little embarrassment, “that it is not exactly becoming to my station and circumstances to suffer a meeting of the present nature between Lord Ulswater and yourself to be held within this house; but I could not resist the request of Lord Ulswater, conscious from his character that it could contain nothing detrimental to the — to the consideration and delicacy due to Lady Flora Ardenne.”

Clarence bowed. “So far as I am concerned,” said he, “I feel confident that Lady Westborough will not repent of her condescension.”

There was a pause.

“It is singular,” said Lady Westborough, looking to the clock upon an opposite table, “that Lord Ulswater has not yet arrived.”

“It is,” said Clarence, scarcely conscious of his words, and wondering whether Lady Flora would deign to appear.

Another pause. Lady Westborough felt the awkwardness of her situation.

Clarence made an effort to recover himself.

“I do not see,” said he, “the necessity of delaying the explanation I have to offer to your ladyship till my Lord Ulswater deems it suitable to appear. Allow me at once to enter upon a history, told in few words and easily proved.”

“Stay,” said Lady Westborough, struggling with her curiosity; “it is due to one who has stood in so peculiar a situation in our family to wait yet a little longer for his coming. We will therefore, till the hour is completed, postpone the object of our meeting.”

Clarence again bowed and was silent. Another and a longer pause ensued: it was broken by the sound of the clock striking; the hour was completed.

“Now,” began Clarence, when he was interrupted by a sudden and violent commotion in the hall. Above all was heard a loud and piercing cry, in which Clarence recognized the voice of the old steward. He rose abruptly, and stood motionless and aghast; his eyes met those of Lady Westborough, who, pale and agitated, lost for the moment all her

habitual self-command. The sound increased: Clarence rushed from the room into the hall; the open door of the apartment revealed to Lady Westborough, as to him, a sight which allowed her no further time for hesitation. She hurried after Clarence into the hall, gave one look, uttered one shriek of horror, and fainted.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Idem. — But thou wilt brave me in these saucy terms.

Cade. — Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was broached, and beard thee too. — SHAKESPEARE.

“You see, my lord,” said Mr. Glumford to Lord Ulswater, as they rode slowly on, “that as long as those rebellious scoundrels are indulged in their spoutings and meetings, and that sort of thing, that — that there will be no bearing them.”

“Very judiciously remarked, sir,” replied Lord Ulswater. “I wish all gentlemen of birth and consideration viewed the question in the same calm, dispassionate, and profound light that you do. Would to Heaven it were left to me to clear the country of those mutinous and dangerous rascals: I would make speedy and sure work of it.”

“I am certain you would, my lord; I am certain you would. It is a thousand pities that pompous fellow Mordaunt interfered yesterday, with his moderation, and policy, and all that sort of thing; so foolish, you know, my lord, — mere theory and romance, and that sort of thing: we should have had it all our own way, if he had not.”

Lord Ulswater played with his riding-whip, but did not reply. Mr. Glumford continued, —

“Pray, my lord, did your lordship see what an ugly ill-dressed set of dogs those *meetings* were; that Wolfe, above all? Oh, he’s a horrid-looking fellow. By the by, he left the town this very morning; I saw him take leave of his friends in the street just before I set out. He is going to some other

meeting, — on foot too. Only think of the folly of talking about the policy and prudence and humanity, and that sort of thing, of sparing such a pitiful poor fellow as that; can't afford a chaise, or a stage-coach even, my lord, — positively can't."

"You see the matter exactly in its true light, Mr. Glumford," said his lordship, patting his fine horse, which was somewhat impatient of the slow pace of its companion.

"A very beautiful animal of your lordship," said Mr. Glumford, spurring his own horse, — a heavy, dull quadruped with an obstinate ill-set tail, a low shoulder, and a Roman nose. "I am very partial to horses myself, and love a fine horse as well as anybody." Lord Ulswater cast a glance at his companion's steed, and seeing nothing in its qualities to justify this assertion of attachment to fine horses was silent: Lord Ulswater never flattered even his mistress, much less Mr. Glumford.

"I will tell you, my lord," continued Mr. Glumford, "what a bargain this horse was;" and the squire proceeded, much to Lord Ulswater's discontent, to retail the history of his craft in making the said bargain.

The riders were now entering a part of the road, a little more than two miles from Westborough Park, in which the features of the neighbouring country took a bolder and ruder aspect than they had hitherto worn. On one side of the road, the view opened upon a descent of considerable depth, and the dull sun looked drearily over a valley in which large fallow fields, a distant and solitary spire, and a few stunted and withering trees formed the chief characteristics. On the other side of the road a narrow footpath was separated from the highway by occasional posts; and on this path Lord Ulswater (how the minute and daily occurrences of life show the grand pervading principles of character!) was, at the time we refer to, riding, in preference to the established thoroughfare for equestrian and aurigal travellers. The side of this path farthest from the road was bordered by a steep declivity of stony and gravelly earth, which almost deserved the dignified appellation of a precipice; and it was with no small exertion of dexterous horsemanship that Lord Ulswater kept his spirited

and susceptible steed upon the narrow and somewhat perilous path, in spite of its frequent starts at the rugged descent below.

"I think, my lord, if I may venture to say so," said Mr. Glumford, having just finished the narration of his bargain, "that it would be better for you to take the high road just at present; for the descent from the footpath is steep and abrupt, and deuced crumbling! so that if your lordship's horse shied or took a wrong step, it might be attended with unpleasant consequences, — a fall, or that sort of thing."

"You are very good, sir," said Lord Ulswater, who, like most proud people, conceived advice an insult; "but I imagine myself capable of guiding my horse, at least upon a road so excellent as this."

"Certainly, my lord, certainly; I beg your pardon; but — bless me, who is that tall fellow in black, talking to himself yonder, my lord? The turn of the road hides him from *you* just at present; but I see him well. Ha! ha! what gestures he uses! I dare say he is one of the petitioners, and — yes, my lord, by Jupiter, it is Wolfe himself! You had better (excuse me, my lord) come down from the footpath: it is not wide enough for two people; and Wolfe, I dare say, a d—d rascal, would not get out of the way for the devil himself! He's a nasty, black, fierce-looking fellow; I would not for something meet him in a dark night, or that sort of thing!"

"I do not exactly understand, Mr. Glumford," returned Lord Ulswater, with a supercilious glance at that gentleman, "what peculiarities of temper you are pleased to impute to me, or from what you deduce the supposition that I shall move out of my way for a person like Mr. Woolt, or Wolfe, or whatever be his name."

"I beg your pardon, my lord, I am sure," answered Glumford: "of course your lordship knows best, and if the rogue is impertinent, why, I'm a magistrate, and will commit him; though, to be sure," continued our righteous Daniel, in a lower key, "he has a right to walk upon the footpath without being ridden over, or that sort of thing."

The equestrians were now very near Wolfe, who, turning

hastily round, perceived, and immediately recognized Lord Ulswater. Ah-ha!" muttered he to himself, "here comes the insolent thirster for blood, grudging *us* seemingly even the meagre comfort of the path which his horse's hoofs are breaking up; yet, thank Heaven," added the republican, looking with a stern satisfaction at the narrowness of the footing, "he cannot very well pass me, and the free lion does not move out of his way for such pampered kine as those to which this creature belongs."

Actuated by this thought, Wolfe almost insensibly moved entirely into the middle of the path, so that with the posts on one side, and the abrupt and undefended precipice, if we may so call it, on the other, it was quite impossible for any horseman to pass the republican, unless over his body.

Lord Ulswater marked the motion, and did not want penetration to perceive the cause. Glad of an opportunity to wreak some portion of his irritation against a member of a body so offensive to his mind, and which had the day before obtained a sort of triumph over his exertions against them, and rendered obstinate in his intention by the pique he had felt at Glumford's caution, Lord Ulswater, tightening his rein and humming with apparent indifference a popular tune, continued his progress till he was within a foot of the republican. Then, checking his horse for a moment, he called, in a tone of quiet arrogance, to Wolfe to withdraw himself on one side till he had passed.

The fierce blood of the republican, which the least breath of oppression sufficed to kindle, and which yet boiled with the remembrance of Lord Ulswater's threat to him two nights before, was on fire at this command. He stopped short, and turning half round, stood erect in the strength and power of his singularly tall and not ungraceful form. "Poor and proud fool," said he, with a voice of the most biting scorn, and fixing an eye eloquent of ire and menaced danger upon the calmly contemptuous countenance of the patrician, "poor and proud fool, do you think that your privileges have already reached so pleasant a pitch that you may ride over men like dust? Off, fool! the basest peasant in England, degraded as he is, would resist while he ridiculed your arrogance."

Without deigning any reply, Lord Ulswater spurred his horse; the spirited animal bounded forward almost on the very person of the obstructor of the path; with uncommon agility Wolfe drew aside from the danger, seized with a powerful grasp the bridle, and abruptly arresting the horse backed it fearfully towards the descent. Enraged beyond all presence of mind, the fated nobleman, raising his whip, struck violently at the republican. The latter, as he felt the blow, uttered a single shout of such ferocity that it curdled the timorous blood of Glumford, and with a giant and iron hand he backed the horse several paces down the precipice. The treacherous earth crumbled beneath the weight, and Lord Ulswater spurring his steed violently at the same instant that Wolfe so sharply and strongly curbed it, the affrighted animal reared violently, forced the rein from Wolfe, stood erect for a moment of horror to the spectator, and then, as its footing and balance alike failed, it fell backward, and rolled over and over its unfortunate and helpless rider.

“Good heavens!” cried Glumford, who had sat quietly upon his dozing horse, watching the result of the dispute, “what have you done? you have killed his lordship, — positively killed him, — and his horse, too, I dare say. You shall be hanged for this, sir, as sure as I am a magistrate, and that sort of thing.”

Unheeding this denunciation, Wolfe had made to the spot where rider and horse lay blent together at the foot of the descent; and assisting the latter to rise, bent down to examine the real effect of his violence. “Methinks,” said he, as he looked upon the hueless but still defying features of the horseman, “methinks I have seen that face years before, — but where? Perhaps my dreams have foretold me this.”

Lord Ulswater was utterly senseless; and as Wolfe raised him, he saw that the right side of the head was covered with blood, and that one arm seemed crushed and broken. Meanwhile a carriage had appeared, was hailed by Glumford, stopped; and on being informed of the circumstance and the rank of the sufferer, the traveller, a single gentleman, descended, assisted to raise the unhappy nobleman, placed him in the car-

riage, and, obeying Glumford's instructions, proceeded slowly to Westborough Park.

"But the ruffian, the rebel, the murderer?" said Mr. Glumford, both querulously and inquiringly, looking towards Wolfe, who, without having attempted to assist his victim, stood aloof, with arms folded, and an expression of sated ferocity upon his speaking features.

"Oh! as to him," quoth the traveller, stepping into his carriage, in order to support the mangled man, "you, sir, and my valet can bring him along with you, or take him to the next town, or do, in short, with him just as you please, only be sure he does not escape; drive on, post-boy, very gently." And poor Mr. Glumford found the muscular form of the stern Wolfe consigned to the sole care of himself and a very diminutive man in pea-green silk stockings, who, however excellently well he might perform the office of valet, was certainly by no means calculated in physical powers for the detention of a criminal.

Wolfe saved the pair a world of trouble and anxiety.

"Sir," said he, gravely, turning to Glumford, "you beheld the affray, and whatever its consequences will do me the common justice of witnessing as to the fact of the first aggressor. It will, however, be satisfactory to both of us to seize the earliest opportunity of putting the matter upon a legal footing, and I shall therefore return to W——, to which town you will doubtless accompany me."

"With all my heart!" cried Mr. Glumford, feeling as if a mountain of responsibility were taken from his breast. "And I wish to Heaven you may be transported instead of hanged."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

BUT gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew. — BYRON.

THE light broke partially through the half-closed shutters of the room in which lay Lord Ulswater, who, awakened to sense and pain by the motion of the carriage, had now relapsed into insensibility. By the side of the sofa on which he was laid, knelt Clarence, bathing one hand with tears violent and fast; on the opposite side leaned over, with bald front, and an expression of mingled fear and sorrow upon his intent countenance, the old steward; while, at a little distance, Lord Westborough, who had been wheeled into the room, sat mute in his chair, aghast with bewilderment and horror, and counting every moment to the arrival of the surgeon, who had been sent for. The stranger to whom the carriage belonged stood by the window, detailing in a low voice to the chaplain of the house what particulars of the occurrence he was acquainted with, while the youngest scion of the family, a boy of about ten years, and who in the general confusion had thrust himself unnoticed into the room, stood close to the pair, with open mouth and thirsting ears and a face on which childish interest at a fearful tale was strongly blent with the more absorbed feeling of terror at the truth.

Slowly Lord Ulswater opened his eyes; they rested upon Clarence.

“My brother! my brother!” cried Clarence, in a voice of powerful anguish, “is it thus — thus that you have come hither to — ” He stopped in the gushing fulness of his heart. Extricating from Clarence the only hand he was able to use, Lord Ulswater raised it to his brow, as if in the effort to clear remembrance; and then, turning to Wardour, seemed to ask the truth of Clarence’s claim, — at least so the old man inter-

preted the meaning of his eye, and the faint and scarce intelligible words which broke from his lips.

"It is; it is, my honoured lord," cried he, struggling with his emotion; "it is your brother, your lost brother, Clinton L'Estrange." And as he said these words, Clarence felt the damp chill hand of his brother press his own, and knew by that pressure and the smile — kind, though brief from exceeding pain — with which the ill-fated nobleman looked upon him, that the claim long unknown was at last acknowledged, and the ties long broken united, though in death.

The surgeon arrived: the room was cleared of all but Clarence; the first examination was sufficient. Unaware of Clarence's close relationship to the sufferer, the surgeon took him aside. "A very painful operation," said he, "might be performed, but it would only torture, in vain, the last moments of the patient; no human skill can save or even protract his life."

The doomed man, who, though in great pain, was still sensible, stirred. His brother flew towards him. "Flora," he murmured, "let me see *her*, I implore."

Curbing, as much as he was able, his emotion, and conquering his reluctance to leave the sufferer even for a moment, Clarence flew in search of Lady Flora. He found her; in rapid and hasty words, he signified the wish of the dying man, and hurried her, confused, trembling, and scarce conscious of the melancholy scene she was about to witness, to the side of her affianced bridegroom.

I have been by the death-beds of many men, and I have noted that shortly before death, as the frame grows weaker and weaker, the fiercer passions yield to those feelings better harmonizing with the awfulness of the hour. Thoughts soft and tender, which seem little to belong to the character in the health and vigour of former years, obtain then an empire, brief, indeed, but utter for the time they last; and this is the more impressive because (as in the present instance I shall have occasion to portray) in the moments which succeed and make *the very* latest of life, the ruling passion, suppressed for an interval by such gentler feelings, sometimes again returns

to take its final triumph over that frail clay, which, through existence, it has swayed, agitated, and moulded like wax unto its will.

When Lord Ulswater saw Flora approach and bend weepingly over him, a momentary softness stole over his face. Taking her hand he extended it towards Clarence, and turning to the latter faltered out, "Let this — my — brother — atone — for —;" apparently unable to finish the sentence, he then relaxed his hold and sank upon the pillow; and so still, so apparently breathless did he remain for several minutes, that they thought the latest agony was over.

As, yielding to this impression, Clarence was about to withdraw the scarce conscious Flora from the chamber, words, less tremulous and indistinct than aught which he had yet uttered, broke from Lord Ulswater's lips. Clarence hastened to him; and bending over his countenance saw that even through the rapid changes and shades of death, it darkened with the peculiar characteristics of the unreleased soul within: the brow was knit into more than its wonted sternness and pride; and in the eye which glared upon the opposite wall, the light of the waning life broke into a momentary blaze, — that flash, so rapid and evanescent, before the air drinks in the last spark of the being it has animated, and night — the starless and eternal — falls over the extinguished lamp! The hand of the right arm (which was that unshattered by the fall) was clenched and raised; but, when the words which came upon Clarence's ear had ceased, it fell heavily by his side, like a clod of that clay which it had then become. In those words it seemed as if, in the confused delirium of passing existence, the brave soldier mingled some dim and bewildered recollection of former battles with that of his last most fatal though most ignoble strife.

"Down, down with them!" he muttered between his teeth, though in a tone startlingly deep and audible; "down with them! No quarter to the infidels! strike for England and Effingham. Ha! — who strives for flight there! — kill him! no mercy, I say, — none! — there, there, I have despatched him; ha! ha! What, still alive? — off, slave, off! Oh, slain!

slain in a ditch, by a base-born hind; oh, bitter! bitter! bitter!" And with these words, of which the last, from their piercing anguish and keen despair, made a dread contrast with the fire and defiance of the first, the jaw fell, the flashing and fierce eye glazed and set, and all of the haughty and bold patrician which the earth retained was — dust!

CHAPTER LXXX.

IL n'est jamais permis de détériorer une âme humaine pour l'avantage des autres, ni de faire un scélérat pour le service des honnêtes gens.¹ — ROUSSEAU.

As the reader approaches the termination of this narrative, and looks back upon the many scenes he has passed, perhaps, in the mimic representation of human life, he may find no unfaithful resemblance to the true.

As, amongst the crowd of characters jostled against each other in their course, some drop off at the first, the second, or the third stage, and leave a few only continuing to the last, while Fate chooses her agents and survivors among those whom the bystander, perchance, least noticed as the objects of her selection; and they who, haply, seemed to him, at first, among the most conspicuous as characters, sink, some abruptly, some gradually, into actors of the least importance in events; as the reader notes the same passion, in different strata, producing the most opposite qualities, and gathers from that notice some estimate of the vast perplexity in the code of morals, deemed by the shallow so plain a science; when he finds that a similar and single feeling will produce both the virtue we love and the vice we detest, the magnanimity we admire and the meanness we despise; as the feeble hands of the author force into contrast ignorance and wisdom, the affectation of philosophy and its true essence, coarseness and refinement, the lowest vulgarity of sentiment with an exaltation

¹ "It is not permitted us to degrade one single soul for the sake of conferring advantage on others, nor to make a rogue for the good of the honest."

of feeling approaching to morbidity, the reality of virtue with the counterfeit, the glory of the Divinity with the hideousness of the Idol, sorrow and eager joy, marriage and death, tears and their young successors, smiles ; as all, blent together, these varieties of life form a single yet many-coloured web, leaving us to doubt whether, in fortune the bright hue or the dark, in character the base material or the rich, predominate, — the workman of the web could almost reconcile himself to his glaring and great deficiency in art by the fond persuasion that he has, at least in his choice of tint and texture, caught something of the likeness of Nature : but he knows, to the abasement of his vanity, that these enumerated particulars of resemblance to life are common to all, even to the most unskilful of his brethren ; and it is not the mere act of copying a true original, but the rare circumstance of force and accuracy in the copy, which can alone constitute a just pretension to merit, or flatter the artist with the hope of a moderate success.

The news of Lord Ulswater's untimely death soon spread around the neighbourhood, and was conveyed to Mordaunt by the very gentleman whom that nobleman had charged with his hostile message. Algernon repaired at once to W——, to gather from Wolfe some less exaggerated account of the affray than that which the many tongues of Rumour had brought to him.

It was no difficult matter to see the precise share of blame to be attached to Wolfe ; and, notwithstanding the biased account of Glumford and the strong spirit of party then existing in the country, no rational man could for a moment term the event of a sudden fray a premeditated murder, or the violence of the aggrieved the black offence of a wilful criminal. Wolfe, therefore, soon obtained a release from the confinement to which he had been at first committed ; and with a temper still more exasperated by the evident disposition of his auditors to have treated him, had it been possible, with the utmost rigour, he returned to companions well calculated by their converse and bent of mind to inflame the fester of his moral constitution.

It happens generally that men very vehement in any particular opinion choose their friends, not for a general similarity of character, but in proportion to their mutual congeniality of sentiment upon that particular opinion; it happens, also, that those most *audibly* violent, if we may so speak, upon *any* opinion, moral or political, are rarely the wisest or the purest of their party. Those with whom Wolfe was intimate were men who shared none of the nobler characteristics of the republican; still less did they participate in or even comprehend the enlightened and benevolent views for which the wise and great men of that sect — a sect to which all philanthropy is, perhaps too fondly, inclined to lean — have been so conspicuously eminent. On the contrary, Wolfe's comrades, without education and consequently without principle, had been driven to disaffection by desperate fortunes and ruined reputations acting upon minds polluted by the ignorance and hardened among the dross of the populace. But the worst can by constant intercourse corrupt the best; and the barriers of good and evil, often confused in Wolfe's mind by the blindness of his passions, seemed, as his intercourse with these lawless and ruffian associates thickened, to be at last utterly broken down and swept away.

Unhappily too — soon after Wolfe's return to London — the popular irritation showed itself in mobs, perhaps rather to be termed disorderly than seditious. The ministers, however, thought otherwise; the military were summoned, and much injury, resulting, it is to be hoped, from accident, not design, ensued to many of the persons assembled. Some were severely wounded by the swords of the soldiers; others maimed and trampled upon by the horses, which shared the agitation or irritability of their riders; and a few, among whom were two women and three children, lost their lives. Wolfe had been one of the crowd; and the scene, melancholy as it really was, and appearing to his temper unredeemed and inexcusable on the part of the soldiers, left on his mind a deep and burning impression of revenge. Justice (as they termed it) was demanded by strong bodies of the people upon the soldiers; but the administration, deeming it politic rather to awe than to

conciliate, so far from censuring the military, approved their exertions.

From that time Wolfe appears to have resolved upon the execution of a design which he had long imperfectly and confusedly meditated.

This was no less a crime (and to him did conscientiously seem no less a virtue) than to seize a favourable opportunity for assassinating the most prominent member of the administration, and the one who, above all the rest, was the most odious to the disaffected. It must be urged, in extenuation of the atrocity of this design, that a man perpetually brooding over one scheme, which to him has become the very sustenance of existence, and which scheme, perpetually frustrated, grows desperate by disappointment, acquires a heat of morbid and oblique enthusiasm, which may be not unreasonably termed insanity; and that, at the very time Wolfe reconciled it to his conscience to commit the murder of his fellow creature, he would have moved out of his path for a worm. Assassination, indeed, seemed to him justice; and a felon's execution the glory of martyrdom. And yet, O Fanatic, thou didst anathematize the Duellist as the Man of blood: what is the Assassin?

CHAPTER LXXXI.

AND thou that, silent at my knee,
 Dost lift to mine thy soft, dark, earnest eyes,
 Filled with the love of childhood, which I see
 Pure through its depths, — a thing without disguise.
 Thou that hast breathed in slumber on my breast,
 When I have checked its throbs to give thee rest,
 Mine own, whose young thoughts fresh before me rise,
 Is it not much that I may guide thy prayer,
 And circle thy young soul with free and healthful air? — HEMANS.

THE events we have recorded, from the time of Clarence's visit to Mordaunt to the death of Lord Ulswater, took place within little more than a week. We have now to pass in

silence over several weeks; and as it was the commencement of autumn when we introduced Clarence and Mordaunt to our reader, so it is the first opening of winter in which we will resume the thread of our narration.

Mordaunt had removed to London; and, although he had not yet taken any share in public business, he was only watching the opportunity to commence a career the brilliancy of which those who knew aught of his mind began already to foretell. But he mixed little, if at all, with the gayer occupants of the world's prominent places. Absorbed alternately in his studies and his labours of good, the halls of pleasure were seldom visited by his presence; and they who in the crowd knew nothing of him but his name, and the lofty bearing of his mien, recoiled from the coldness of his exterior; and, while they marvelled at his retirement and reserve, saw in both but the moroseness of the student and the gloom of the misanthropist.

But the nobleness of his person; the antiquity of his birth; his wealth, his unblemished character, and the interest thrown over his name by the reputation of talent and the unpenetrated mystery of his life, all powerfully spoke in his favour to those of the gentler sex, who judge us not only from what we are to others, but from what they imagine we can be to them. From such allurements, however, as from all else, the mourner turned only the more deeply to cherish the memory of the dead; and it was a touching and holy sight to mark the mingled excess of melancholy and fondness with which he watched over that treasure in whose young beauty and guileless heart his departed Isabel had yet left the resemblance of her features and her love. There seemed between them to exist even a dearer and closer tie than that of daughter and sire; for, in both, the objects which usually divide the affections of the man or the child had but a feeble charm: Isabel's mind had expanded beyond her years, and Algernon's had outgrown his time; so that neither the sports natural to her age, nor the ambition ordinary to his, were sufficient to wean or to distract the unity of their love. When, after absence, his well-known step trod lightly in the hall, her ear, which had listened and longed and

thirsted for the sound, taught her fairy feet to be the first to welcome his return; and when the slightest breath of sickness menaced her slender frame, it was his hand that smoothed her pillow, and his smile that cheered away her pain; and when she sank into sleep she knew that a father's heart watched over her through the long but untiring night; that a father's eye would be the first which, on waking, she would meet.

"Oh! beautiful, and rare as beautiful," was that affection; in the parent no earthlier or harder sternness in authority, nor weakness in doting, nor caprice in love; in the child no fear debasing reverence, yet no familiarity diminishing respect. But Love, whose pride is in serving, seemed to make at once soft and hallowed the offices mutually rendered; and Nature, never counteracted in her dictates, wrought, without a visible effort, the proper channels into which those offices should flow; and that Charity which not only covers sins, but lifts the veil from virtues, whose beauty might otherwise have lain concealed, linked them closer and closer, and threw over that link the sanctity of itself. For it was Algernon's sweetest pleasure to make her young hands the ministers of good to others, and to drink at such times from the rich glow of her angel countenance the purified selfishness of his reward. And when after the divine joy of *blessing*, which, perhaps, the youngest taste yet more vividly than their sires, she threw her arms around his neck and thanked him with glad tears for the luxury he had bestowed upon her, how could they, in that gushing overflow of heart, help loving each other the more, or feeling that in that love there was something which justified the excess?

Nor have we drawn with too exaggerating a pencil, nor, though Isabel's *mind* was older than her years, extended that prematureness to her *heart*. For, where we set the example of benevolence, and see that the example is in nought corrupted, the milk of human kindness will flow not the less readily from the youngest breast, and out of the mouths of babes will come the wisdom of charity and love!

Ever since Mordaunt's arrival in town, he had sought out Wolfe's abode, for the purpose of ministering to the poverty

under which he rightly conjectured that the republican laboured. But the habitation of one, needy, distressed, seldom living long in one place, and far less notorious of late than he had formerly been, was not easy to discover; nor was it till after long and vain search that he ascertained the retreat of his singular acquaintance. The day in which he effected this object we shall have hereafter occasion to specify. Meanwhile we return to Mr. Crauford.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

PLOT on thy little hour, and skein on skein
Weave the vain mesh, in which thy subtle soul
Broods on its venom! Lo! behind, before,
Around thee, like an armament of cloud,
The black Fate labours onward — ANONYMOUS.

THE dusk of a winter's evening gathered over a room in Crauford's house in town, only relieved from the closing darkness by an expiring and sullen fire, beside which Mr. Bradley sat, with his feet upon the fender, apparently striving to coax some warmth into the icy palms of his spread hands. Crauford himself was walking up and down the room with a changeful step, and ever and anon glancing his bright, shrewd eye at the partner of his fraud, who, seemingly unconscious of the observation he underwent, appeared to occupy his attention solely with the difficulty of warming his meagre and withered frame.

"Ar'n't you very cold there, sir?" said Bradley, after a long pause, and pushing himself farther into the verge of the dying embers, "may I not ring for some more coals?"

"Hell and the —: I beg your pardon, my good Bradley, but you vex me beyond patience; how can you think of such trifles when our very lives are in so imminent a danger?"

"I beg your pardon, my honoured benefactor, they are indeed in danger!"

“Bradley, we have but one hope, — fidelity to each other. If we persist in the same story, not a tittle can be brought home to us, — not a tittle, my good Bradley; and though our characters may be a little touched, why, what is a character? Shall we eat less, drink less, enjoy less, when we have lost it? Not a whit. No, my friend, we will go abroad: leave it to me to save from the wreck of our fortunes enough to live upon like princes.”

“If not like *peers*, my honoured benefactor.”

“’Sdeath! — yes, yes, very good, — he! he! he! if not *peers*. Well, all happiness is in the senses, and Richard Crauford has as many senses as Viscount Innisdale; but had we been able to protract inquiry another week, Bradley, why, I would have been my Lord, and you Sir John.”

“You bear your losses like a hero, sir,” said Mr. Bradley.

“To be sure: there *is* no loss, man, but life, — none; let us preserve that — and it will be our own fault if we don’t — and the devil take all the rest. But, bless me, it grows late, and, at all events, we are safe for some hours; the inquiry won’t take place till twelve to-morrow, why should we not feast till twelve to-night? Ring, my good fellow: dinner must be nearly ready.”

“Why, honoured sir,” said Bradley, “I want to go home to see my wife and arrange my house. Who knows but I may sleep in Newgate to-morrow?”

Crauford, who had been still walking to and fro, stopped abruptly at this speech; and his eye, even through the gloom, shot out a livid and fierce light, before which the timid and humble glance of Mr. Bradley quailed in an instant.

“Go home! — no, my friend, no: I can’t part with you to-night, no, not for an instant. I have many lessons to give you. How are we to learn our parts for to-morrow, if we don’t rehearse them beforehand? Do you not know that a single blunder may turn what I hope will be a farce into a tragedy? Go home! — pooh! pooh! why, man, I have not seen *my* wife, nor put *my* house to rights, and if you do but listen to me I tell you again and again that not a hair of our heads can be touched.”

“You know best, honoured sir; I bow to your decision.”

“Bravo, honest Brad! and now for dinner. I have the most glorious champagne that ever danced in foam to your lip. No counsellor like the bottle, believe me!”

And the servant entering to announce dinner, Crauford took Bradley's arm, and leaning affectionately upon it, passed through an obsequious and liveried row of domestics to a room blazing with light and plate. A noble fire was the first thing which revived Bradley's spirit; and, as he spread his hands over it before he sat down to the table, he surveyed, with a gleam of gladness upon his thin cheeks, two vases of glittering metal formerly the boast of a king, in which were immersed the sparkling genii of the grape.

Crauford, always a *gourmand*, ate with unusual appetite, and pressed the wine upon Bradley with an eager hospitality, which soon somewhat clouded the senses of the worthy man. The dinner was removed, the servants retired, and the friends were left alone.

“A pleasant trip to France!” cried Crauford, filling a bumper. “That's the land for hearts like ours. I tell you what, little Brad, we will leave our wives behind us, and take, with a new country and new names, a new lease of life. What will it signify to men making love at Paris what fools say of them in London? Another bumper, honest Brad, — a bumper to the girls! What say you to that, eh?”

“Lord, sir, you are so facetious, so witty! It must be owned that a black eye is a great temptation, — Lira-lira, la-la!” and Mr. Bradley's own eyes rolled joyously.

“Bravo, Brad! — a song, a song! but treason to King Burgundy! Your glass is —”

“Empty, honoured sir, I know it! — Lira-lira la! — but it is easily filled! We who have all our lives been pouring from one vessel into another know how to keep it up to the last!

“Courage then, cries the knight, we may yet be forgiven,
Or at worst buy the bishop's reversion in heaven;
Our frequent escapes in this world show how true 't is
That gold is the only *Elixir Salutis*.

Derry down, Derry down.

“All you who to swindling conveniently creep,
 Ne'er piddle; by thousands the treasury sweep:
 Your safety depends on the weight of the sum,
 For no rope was yet made that could tie up a plum.
 Derry down, etc.”¹

“Bravissimo, little Brad! — you are quite a wit! See what it is to have one's faculties called out. Come, a toast to old England, the land in which no man ever wants a farthing who has wit to steal it, — ‘Old England forever!’ your rogue is your only true patriot!” and Crauford poured the remainder of the bottle, nearly three parts full, into a beaker, which he pushed to Bradley. That convivial gentleman emptied it at a draught, and, faltering out, “Honest Sir John! — room for my Lady Bradley's carriage,” dropped down on the floor insensible.

Crauford rose instantly, satisfied himself that the intoxication was genuine, and giving the lifeless body a kick of contemptuous disgust, left the room, muttering, “The dull ass, did he think it was on his back that I was going to ride off? He! he! he! But stay, let me feel my pulse. Too fast by twenty strokes! One's never sure of the mind if one does not regulate the body to a hair! Drank too much; must take a powder before I start.”

Mounting by a back staircase to his bedroom, Crauford unlocked a chest, took out a bundle of clerical clothes, a large shovel hat, and a huge wig. Hastily, but not carelessly, inducing himself in these articles of disguise, he then proceeded to stain his fair cheeks with a preparation which soon gave them a swarthy hue. Putting his own clothes in the chest, which he carefully locked (placing the key in his pocket), he next took from a desk on his dressing-table a purse; opening this, he extracted a diamond of great size and immense value, which, years before, in preparation of the event that had now taken place, he had purchased.

His usual sneer curled his lip as he gazed at it. “Now,” said he, “is it not strange that this little stone should supply the mighty wants of that grasping thing, man? Who talks of

¹ From a ballad called “The Knight and the Prelate.”

religion, country, wife, children? This petty mineral can purchase them all! Oh, what a bright joy speaks out in your white cheek, my beauty! What are all human charms to yours? Why, by your spell, most magical of talismans, my years may walk, gloating and revelling, through a lane of beauties, till they fall into the grave! Pish! that grave is an ugly thought,—a very, very ugly thought! But come, my sun of hope, I must eclipse you for a while! Type of myself, while you hide, I hide also; and when I once more let you forth to the day, *then* shine out Richard Crauford,—shine out!” So saying, he sewed the diamond carefully in the folds of his shirt; and, rearranging his dress, took the cooling powder, which he weighed out to a grain, with a scrupulous and untrembling hand; descended the back stairs; opened the door, and found himself in the open street.

The clock struck ten as he entered a hackney-coach and drove to another part of London. “What, so late!” thought he; “I must be at Dover in twelve hours: the vessel sails then. Humph! some danger yet! What a pity that I could not trust that fool! He! he! he!—what will he think to-morrow, when he wakes and finds that only *one* is destined to swing!”

The hackney-coach stopped, according to his direction, at an inn in the city. Here Crauford asked if a note had been left for Dr. Stapylton. One (written by himself) was given to him.

“Merciful Heaven!” cried the false doctor, as he read it, “my daughter is on a bed of death!”

The landlord’s look wore anxiety; the doctor seemed for a moment paralyzed by silent woe. He recovered, shook his head piteously, and ordered a post-chaise and four on to Canterbury without delay.

“It is an ill wind that blows nobody good!” thought the landlord, as he issued the order into the yard.

The chaise was soon out; the doctor entered; off went the post-boys; and Richard Crauford, feeling his diamond, turned his thoughts to safety and to France.

A little, unknown man, who had been sitting at the bar for

the last two hours sipping brandy and water, and who from his extreme taciturnity and quiet had been scarcely observed, now rose. "Landlord," said he, "do you know who that gentleman is?"

"Why," quoth Boniface, "the letter to him was directed, 'For the Rev. Dr. Stapylton; will be called for.'"

"Ah," said the little man, yawning, "I shall have a long night's work of it. Have you another chaise and four in the yard?"

"To be sure, sir, to be sure!" cried the landlord in astonishment.

"Out with it, then! Another glass of brandy and water, — a little stronger, no sugar!"

The landlord stared; the barmaid stared; even the head-waiter, a very stately person, stared too.

"Hark ye," said the little man, sipping his brandy and water, "I am a deuced good-natured fellow, so I'll make you a great man to-night; for nothing makes a man so great as being let into a great secret. Did you ever hear of the rich Mr. Crauford?"

"Certainly: who has not?"

"Did you ever see him?"

"No! I can't say I ever did."

"You lie, landlord: you saw him to-night."

"Sir!" cried the landlord, bristling up.

The little man pulled out a brace of pistols, and very quietly began priming them out of a small powder-flask.

The landlord started back; the head-waiter cried "Rape!" and the barmaid "Murder!"

"Who the devil are you, sir?" cried the landlord.

"Mr. Tickletrout, the celebrated officer, — thief-taker, as they call it. Have a care, ma'am, the pistols are loaded. I see the chaise is out; there's the reckoning, landlord."

"O Lord! I'm sure I don't want any reckoning: too great an honour for my poor house to be favoured with your company; but [following the little man to the door] whom did you please to say you were going to catch?"

"Mr. Crauford, *alias* Dr. Stapylton."

“Lord! Lord! to think of it,—how shocking! What has he done?”

“Swindled, I believe.”

“My eyes! And why, sir, did not you catch him when he was in the bar?”

“Because then I should not have got paid for my journey to Dover. Shut the door, boy; first stage on to Canterbury.”

And, drawing a woollen nightcap over his ears, Mr. Tickletrout resigned himself to his nocturnal excursion.

On the very day on which the patent for his peerage was to have been made out, on the very day on which he had afterwards calculated on reaching Paris, on that very day was Mr. Richard Crauford lodged in Newgate, fully committed for a trial of life and death.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

THERE, if, O gentle love! I read aright
 The utterance that sealed thy sacred bond,
 'T was listening to those accents of delight
 She hid upon his breast those eyes, beyond
 Expression's power to paint, all languishingly fond. — CAMPBELL.

“AND you will positively leave us for London,” said Lady Flora, tenderly, “and to-morrow too!” This was said to one who under the name of Clarence Linden has played the principal part in our drama, and whom now, by the death of his brother succeeding to the honours of his house, we present to our reader as Clinton L'Estrange, Earl of Ulswater.

They were alone in the memorable pavilion; and though it was winter the sun shone cheerily into the apartment; and through the door, which was left partly open, the evergreens, contrasting with the leafless boughs of the oak and beech, could be just descried, furnishing the lover with some meet simile of love, and deceiving the eyes of those willing to be deceived with a resemblance to the departed summer. The

unusual mildness of the day seemed to operate genially upon the birds, — those children of light and song; and they grouped blithely beneath the window and round the door, where the hand of the kind young spirit of the place had so often ministered to their wants. Every now and then, too, you might hear the shrill glad note of the blackbird keeping measure to his swift and low flight, and sometimes a vagrant hare from the neighbouring preserves sauntered fearlessly by the half-shut door, secure, from long experience, of an asylum in the vicinity of one who had drawn from the breast of Nature a tenderness and love for all its offspring.

Her lover sat at Flora's feet; and, looking upward, seemed to seek out the fond and melting eyes which, too conscious of their secret, turned bashfully from his gaze. He had drawn her arm over his shoulder; and clasping that small and snowy hand, which, long coveted with a miser's desire, was at length won, he pressed upon it a thousand kisses, sweeter beguilers of time than even words. All had been long explained; the space between their hearts annihilated; doubt, anxiety, misconstruction, those clouds of love, had passed away, and left not a wreck to obscure its heaven.

“And you will leave us to-morrow; must it be to-morrow?”

“Ah! Flora, it must; but see, I have your lock of hair — your beautiful, dark hair — to kiss, when I am away from you, and I shall have your letters, dearest, — a letter every day; and oh! more than all, I shall have the hope, the certainty, that when we meet again, you will be mine forever.”

“And I, too, must, by seeing it in your handwriting, learn to reconcile myself to your new name. Ah! I wish you had been still Clarence, — only Clarence. Wealth, rank, power, — what are all these but rivals to poor Flora?”

Lady Flora sighed, and the next moment blushed; and, what with the sigh and the blush, Clarence's lips wandered from the hands to the cheek, and thence to a mouth on which the west wind seemed to have left the sweets of a thousand summers.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A HOUNDSDITCH man, one of the devil's near kinsmen, — a broker. — *Every Man in His Humour*.

We have here discovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth. — *Much Ado about Nothing*.

It was an evening of mingled rain and wind, the hour about nine, when Mr. Morris Brown, under the shelter of that admirable umbrella of sea-green silk, to which we have before had the honour to summon the attention of our readers, was, after a day of business, plodding homeward his weary way. The obscure streets through which his course was bent were at no time very thickly thronged, and at the present hour the inclemency of the night rendered them utterly deserted. It is true that now and then a solitary female, holding up, with one hand, garments already piteously bedraggled, and with the other thrusting her umbrella in the very teeth of the hostile winds, might be seen crossing the intersected streets, and vanishing amid the subterranean recesses of some kitchen area, or tramping onward amidst the mazes of the metropolitan labyrinth, till, like the cuckoo, "heard," but no longer "seen," the echo of her retreating pattens made a dying music to the reluctant ear; or indeed, at intervals of unfrequent occurrence, a hackney vehicle jolted, rumbling, bumping over the uneven stones, as if groaning forth its gratitude to the elements for which it was indebted for its fare. Sometimes also a chivalrous gallant of the feline species ventured its delicate paws upon the streaming pavement, and shook, with a small but dismal cry, the raindrops from the pyramidal roofs of its tender ears.

But, save these occasional infringements on its empire, solitude, dark, comfortless, and unrelieved, fell around the creaking footsteps of Mr. Morris Brown. "I wish," soliloquized the worthy broker, "that I had been able advantageously to

dispose of this cursed umbrella of the late Lady Waddilove ; it is very little calculated for any but a single lady of slender shape, and though it certainly keeps the rain off my hat, it only sends it with a double dripping upon my shoulders. Pish, deuce take the umbrella ! I shall catch my death of cold."

These complaints of an affliction that was assuredly sufficient to irritate the naturally sweet temper of Mr. Brown, only ceased as that industrious personage paused at the corner of the street, for the purpose of selecting the driest path through which to effect the miserable act of crossing to the opposite side. Occupied in stretching his neck over the kennel, in order to take the fullest survey of its topography which the scanty and agitated lamps would allow, the unhappy wanderer, lowering his umbrella, suffered a cross and violent gust of wind to rush, as if on purpose, against the interior. The rapidity with which this was done, and the sudden impetus, which gave to the inflated silk the force of a balloon, happening to occur exactly at the moment Mr. Brown was stooping with such wistful anxiety over the pavement, that gentleman, to his inexpressible dismay, was absolutely lifted, as it were, from his present footing, and immersed in a running rivulet of liquid mire, which flowed immediately below the pavement. Nor was this all: for the wind, finding itself somewhat imprisoned in the narrow receptacle it had thus abruptly entered, made so strenuous an exertion to extricate itself, that it turned Lady Waddilove's memorable relic utterly inside out ; so that when Mr. Brown, aghast at the calamity of his immersion, lifted his eyes to heaven, with a devotion that had in it more of expostulation than submission, he beheld, by the melancholy lamps, the apparition of his umbrella, — the exact opposite to its legitimate conformation, and seeming, with its lengthy stick and inverted summit, the actual and absolute resemblance of a gigantic wineglass.

"Now," said Mr. Brown, with that ironical bitterness so common to intense despair, "now, that's what I call pleasant."

As if the elements were guided and set on by all the departed souls of those whom Mr. Brown had at any time overreached in his profession, scarcely had the afflicted broker uttered this brief sentence, before a discharge of rain, tenfold more heavy than any which had yet fallen, tumbled down in literal torrents upon the defenceless head of the itinerant.

"This won't do," said Mr. Brown, plucking up courage and splashing out of the little rivulet once more into *terra firma*, "this won't do: I must find a shelter somewhere. Dear, dear, how the wet runs down me! I am for all the world like the famous dripping well in Derbyshire. What a beast of an umbrella! I'll never buy one again of an old lady: hang me if I do."

As the miserable Morris uttered these sentences, which gushed out, one by one, in a broken stream of complaint, he looked round and round — before, behind, beside — for some temporary protection or retreat. In vain: the uncertainty of the light only allowed him to discover houses in which no portico extended its friendly shelter, and where even the doors seemed divested of the narrow ledge wherewith they are, in more civilized quarters, ordinarily crowned.

"I shall certainly have the rheumatism all this winter," said Mr. Brown, hurrying onward as fast as he was able. Just then, glancing desperately down a narrow lane, which crossed his path, he perceived the scaffolding of a house in which repair or alteration had been at work. A ray of hope flashed across him; he redoubled his speed, and, entering the welcome haven, found himself entirely protected from the storm. The extent of the scaffolding was, indeed, rather considerable; and though the extreme narrowness of the lane and the increasing gloom of the night left Mr. Brown in almost total darkness, so that he could not perceive the exact peculiarities of his situation, yet he was perfectly satisfied with the shelter he had obtained; and after shaking the rain from his hat, squeezing his coat sleeves and lappets, satisfying himself that it was only about the shoulders that he was thoroughly wetted, and thrusting two pocket-handkerchiefs between his shirt and his skin, as preventives to the dreaded rheumatism, Mr. Brown

leaned luxuriously back against the wall in the farthest corner of his retreat, and busied himself with endeavouring to restore his insulted umbrella to its original utility of shape.

Our wanderer had been about three minutes in this situation, when he heard the voices of two men, who were hastening along the lane.

“But do stop,” said one; and these were the first words distinctly audible to the ear of Mr. Brown, “do stop, the rain can’t last much longer, and we have a long way yet to go.”

“No, no,” said the other, in a voice more imperious than the first, which was evidently plebeian and somewhat foreign in its tone, “no, we have no time. What signify the inclemencies of weather to men feeding upon an inward and burning thought, and made, by the workings of the mind, almost callous to the contingencies of the frame?”

“Nay, my very good friend,” said the first speaker, with positive though not disrespectful earnestness, “that may be all very fine for you, who have a constitution like a horse; but I am quite a — what call you it — an invalid, eh? and have a devilish cough ever since I have been in this d—d country; beg your pardon, no offence to it; so I shall just step under cover of this scaffolding for a few minutes, and if you like the rain so much, my very good friend, why, there is plenty of room in the lane to — (ugh! ugh! ugh!) to enjoy it.”

As the speaker ended, the dim light, just faintly glimmering at the entrance of the friendly shelter, was obscured by his shadow, and presently afterwards his companion, joining him, said, —

“Well, if it must be so; but how can you be fit to brave all the perils of our scheme, when you shrink, like a palsied crone, from the sprinkling of a few water-drops?”

“A few water-drops, my very good friend,” answered the other, “a few — what call you them, ay, water-falls rather; (ugh! ugh!) but let me tell you, my brother citizen, that a man may not like to get his skin wet with water. and would yet thrust his arm up to the very elbow in blood! (ugh! ugh!)”

“The devil!” mentally ejaculated Mr. Brown, who at the word “scheme” had advanced one step from his retreat, but

who now at the last words of the intruder drew back as gently as a snail into his shell; and although his person was far too much enveloped in shade to run the least chance of detection, yet the honest broker began to feel a little tremor vibrate along the chords of his thrilling frame, and a new anathema against the fatal umbrella rise to his lips.

"Ah!" quoth the second, "I trust that it may be so; but, to return to our project, are you quite sure that these two identical ministers are in the *regular* habit of *walking* homeward from that Parliament which their despotism has so degraded?"

"Sure? ay, that I am; Davidson swears to it!"

"And you are also sure of their persons, so that, even in the dusk, you can recognize them? for you know I have never seen them."

"Sure as fivepence!" returned the first speaker, to whose mind the lives of the persons referred to were of considerably less value than the sum elegantly specified in his metaphorical reply.

"Then," said the other, with a deep, stern determination of tone, "then shall this hand, by which one of the proudest of our oppressors has already fallen, be made a still worthier instrument of the wrath of Heaven!"

"You are a d—d pretty shot, I believe," quoth the first speaker, as indifferently as if he were praising the address of a Norfolk squire.

"Never did my eye misguide me, or my aim swerve a hair's-breadth from its target! I thought once, when I learned the art as a boy, that in battle, rather than in the execution of a single criminal, that skill would avail me."

"Well, we shall have a glorious opportunity to-morrow night!" answered the first speaker; "that is, if it does not rain so infernally as it does this night; but we shall have a watch of many hours, I dare say."

"That matters but little," replied the other conspirator; "nor even if, night after night, the same vigil is renewed and baffled, so that it bring its reward at last."

"Right," quoth the first; "I long to be at it! — ugh! ugh!"

ugh! — what a confounded cough I have! it will be my death soon, I'm thinking."

"If so," said the other, with a solemnity which seemed ludicrously horrible, from the strange contrast of the words and object, "die at least with the sanctity of a brave and noble deed upon your conscience and your name!"

"Ugh! ugh! — I am but a man of colour, but I am a patriot, for all that, my good friend! See, the violence of the rain has ceased; we will proceed;" and with these words the worthy pair left the place to darkness and Mr. Brown.

"O Lord!" said the latter, stepping forth, and throwing, as it were, in that exclamation, a whole weight of suffocating emotion from his chest, "what bloody miscreants! Murder his Majesty's ministers! — 'shoot them like pigeons!' — 'd—d pretty shot!' indeed. O Lord! what *would* the late Lady Waddilove, who always hated even the Whigs so cordially, say, if she were alive? But how providential that I should have been here! Who knows but I may save the lives of the whole administration, and get a pension or a little place in the post-office? I'll go to the prime minister directly, — this very minute! Pish! ar'n't you right now, you cursed thing?" upbraiding the umbrella, which, half-right and half-wrong, seemed endued with an instinctive obstinacy for the sole purpose of tormenting its owner.

However, losing this petty affliction in the greatness of his present determination, Mr. Brown issued out of his lair, and hastened to put his benevolent and loyal intentions into effect.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

WHEN laurelled ruffians die, the Heaven and Earth,
And the deep Air give warning. Shall the good
Perish and not a sign? — ANONYMOUS.

IT was the evening after the event recorded in our last chapter: all was hushed and dark in the room where Mor-

daunt sat alone; the low and falling embers burned dull in the grate, and through the unclosed windows the high stars rode pale and wan in their career. The room, situated at the back of the house, looked over a small garden, where the sickly and hoar shrubs, overshadowed by a few wintry poplars and grim firs, saddened in the dense atmosphere of fog and smoke, which broods over our island city. An air of gloom hung comfortless and chilling over the whole scene externally and within. The room itself was large and old, and its far extremities, mantled as they were with dusk and shadow, impressed upon the mind that involuntary and vague sensation, not altogether unmixed with awe, which the eye, resting upon a view that it can but dimly and confusedly define, so frequently communicates to the heart. There was a strange oppression at Mordaunt's breast with which he in vain endeavoured to contend. Ever and anon, an icy but passing chill, like the shivers of a fever, shot through his veins, and a wild and unearthly and objectless awe stirred through his hair, and his eyes filled with a glassy and cold dew, and sought, as by a self-impulse, the shadowy and unpenetrated places around, which momentarily grew darker and darker. Little addicted by his peculiar habits to an over-indulgence of the imagination, and still less accustomed to those absolute conquests of the physical frame over the mental, which seem the usual sources of that feeling we call presentiment, Mordaunt rose, and walking to and fro along the room, endeavoured by the exercise to restore to his veins their wonted and healthful circulation. It was past the hour in which his daughter retired to rest: but he was often accustomed to steal up to her chamber, and watch her in her young slumbers; and he felt this night a more than usual desire to perform that office of love; so he left the room and ascended the stairs. It was a large old house that he tenanted. The staircase was broad, and lighted from above by a glass dome; and as he slowly ascended, and the stars gleamed down still and ghastly upon his steps, he fancied — but he knew not why — that there was an omen in their gleam. He entered the young Isabel's chamber: there was a light burning within; he stole to her bed, and putting

aside the curtain, felt, as he looked upon her peaceful and pure beauty, a cheering warmth gather round his heart. How lovely is the sleep of childhood! What worlds of sweet, yet not utterly sweet, associations, does it not mingle with the envy of our gaze! What thoughts and hopes and cares and forebodings does it not excite! There lie in that yet un-grieved and unsullied heart what unnumbered sources of emotion! what deep fountains of passion and woe! Alas! whatever be its earlier triumphs, the victim must fall at last! As the hart which the jackals pursue, the moment its race is begun the human prey is foredoomed for destruction, not by the *single* sorrow, but the *thousand* cares: it may baffle one race of pursuers, but a new succeeds; as fast as some drop off exhausted, others spring up to renew and to perpetuate the chase; and the fated, though flying victim never escapes — but in death. There was a faint smile upon his daughter's lip, as Mordaunt bent down to kiss it; the dark lash rested on the snowy lid — ah, that tears had no well beneath its surface! — and her breath stole from her rich lips with so regular and calm a motion that, like the “forest leaves,” it “seemed stirred with prayer!”¹ One arm lay over the coverlet, the other pillowed her head, in the unrivalled grace of infancy.

Mordaunt stooped once more, for his heart filled as he gazed upon his child, to kiss her cheek again, and to mingle a blessing with the kiss. When he rose, upon that fair smooth face there was one bright and glistening drop; and Isabel stirred in sleep, and, as if suddenly vexed by some painful dream, she sighed deeply as she stirred. It was the last time that the cheek of the young and predestined orphan was ever pressed by a father's kiss or moistened by a father's tear! He left the room silently; no sooner *had* he left it, than, as if without the precincts of some charmed and preserving circle, the chill and presentiment at his heart returned. There is a feeling which perhaps all have in a momentary hypochondria felt at times: it is a strong and shuddering impression which Coleridge has embodied in his own dark and supernatural verse, *that something not of earth is behind us*; that if we turned our gaze backward we should behold that

1 And yet the forest leaves seem stirred with prayer. — BYRON.

which would make the heart as a bolt of ice, and the eye shrivel and parch within its socket. And so intense is the fancy that *when* we turn, and all is void, from that very void we could shape a spectre, as fearful as the image our terror had foredrawn. Somewhat such feeling had Mordaunt now, as his steps sounded hollow and echoless on the stairs, and the stars filled the air around him with their shadowy and solemn presence. Breaking by a violent effort from a spell of which he felt that a frame somewhat overtaken of late was the real enchanter, he turned once more into the room which he had left to visit Isabel. He had pledged his personal attendance at an important motion in the House of Commons for that night, and some political papers were left upon his table which he had promised to give to one of the members of his party. He entered the room, purposing to stay only a minute; an hour passed before he left it: and his servant afterwards observed that, on giving him some orders as he passed through the hall to the carriage, his cheek was as white as marble, and that his step, usually so haughty and firm, reeled and trembled like a fainting man's. Dark and inexplicable Fate! weaver of wild contrasts, demon of this hoary and old world, that movest through it, as a spirit moveth over the waters, filling the depths of things with a solemn mystery and an everlasting change! Thou sweepest over our graves, and Joy is born from the ashes: thou sweepest over Joy, and lo, it is a grave! Engine and tool of the Almighty, whose years cannot fade, thou changest the earth as a garment, and as a vesture it is changed; thou makest it one vast sepulchre and womb united, swallowing and creating life! and reproducing, over and over, from age to age, from the birth of creation to the creation's doom, the same dust and atoms *which were* our fathers, and which are the sole heirlooms that through countless generations they bequeath and perpetuate to their sons.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

METHINKS, before the issue of our fate,
 A spirit moves within us, and impels
 The passion of a prophet to our lips. — ANONYMOUS.

O vitæ Philosophia dux, virtutis indagatrix! ¹ — CICERO.

UPON leaving the House of Commons, Mordaunt was accosted by Lord Ulswater, who had just taken his seat in the Upper House. Whatever abstraction or whatever weakness Mordaunt might have manifested before he had left his home, he had now entirely conquered both; and it was with his usual collected address that he replied to Lord Ulswater's salutations, and congratulated him on his change of name and accession of honours.

It was a night of uncommon calm and beauty; and, although the moon was not visible, the frosty and clear sky, "clad in the lustre of its thousand stars," ² seemed scarcely to mourn either the hallowing light or the breathing poesy of her presence; and when Lord Ulswater proposed that Mordaunt should dismiss his carriage, and that they should walk home, Algernon consented not unwillingly to the proposal. He felt, indeed, an unwonted relief in companionship; and the still air and the deep heavens seemed to woo him from more unwelcome thoughts, as with a softening and a sister's love.

"Let us, before we return home," said Lord Ulswater, "stroll for a few moments towards the bridge: I love looking at the river on a night like this."

Whoever inquires into human circumstances will be struck to find how invariably a latent current of fatality appears to pervade them. It is the turn of the atom in the scale which makes our safety or our peril, our glory or our shame, raises us to the throne or sinks us to the grave. A secret voice at

¹ "O Philosophy, conductress of life, searcher after virtue!"

² Marlowe.

Mordaunt's heart prompted him to dissent from this proposal, trifling as it seemed and welcome as it was to his present and peculiar mood: he resisted the voice,—the moment passed away, and the last seal was set upon his doom; they moved onward towards the bridge. At first both were silent, for Lord Ulswater used the ordinary privilege of a lover and was absent and absorbed, and his companion was never the first to break a taciturnity natural to his habits. At last Lord Ulswater said, "I rejoice that you are now in the sphere of action most likely to display your talents: you have not spoken yet, I think; indeed, there has been no fitting opportunity, but you will soon, I trust."

"I know not," said Mordaunt, with a melancholy smile, "whether you judge rightly in thinking the sphere of political exertion the one most calculated for me; but I feel at my heart a foreboding that my planet is not fated to shine in *any* earthly sphere. Sorrow and misfortune have dimmed it in its birth, and now it is waning towards its decline."

"Its decline!" repeated his companion, "no, rather its meridian. You are in the vigor of your years, the noon of your prosperity, the height of your intellect and knowledge; you require only an effort to add to these blessings the most lasting of all, — Fame!"

"Well," said Mordaunt, and a momentary light flashed over his countenance, "the effort *will* be made. I do not pretend not to have felt ambition. No man should make it his boast, for it often gives to our frail and earth-bound virtue both its weapon and its wings; but when the soil is exhausted its produce fails; and when we have forced our hearts to too great an abundance, whether it be of flowers that perish or of grain that endures, the seeds of after hope bring forth but a languid and scanty harvest. My earliest idol was ambition; but then came others, love and knowledge, and afterwards the desire to bless. That desire you may term ambition: but we will suppose them separate passions; for by the latter I would signify the thirst for glory, either in evil or in good; and the former teaches us, though by little and little, to gain its object, no less in secrecy than for applause; and Wisdom, which

opens to us a world, vast, but hidden from the crowd, establishes also over that world an arbiter of its own, so that its disciples grow proud, and, communing with their own hearts, care for no louder judgment than the still voice within. It is thus that indifference not to the welfare but to the report of others grows over us; and often, while we are the most ardent in their cause, we are the least anxious for their esteem."

"And yet," said Lord Ulswater, "I have thought the passion for esteem is the best guarantee for deserving it."

"Nor without justice: other passions may supply its place, and produce the same effects; but the love of true glory is the most legitimate agent of extensive good, and you do right to worship and enshrine it. For me it is dead: it survived — ay, the truth shall out! — poverty, want, disappointment, baffled aspirations, — all, all, but the deadness, the lethargy of regret: when no one was left upon this altered earth to animate its efforts, to smile upon its success, then the last spark quivered and died; and — and — but forgive me — on this subject I am not often wont to wander. I would say that ambition is for me no more; not so are its effects: but the hope of serving that race whom I have loved as brothers, but who have never known me, — who, by the exterior" (and here something bitter mingled with his voice), "pass sentence upon the heart; in whose eyes I am only the cold, the wayward, the haughty, the morose, — the hope of serving them is to me, now, a far stronger passion than ambition was heretofore; and, whatever for that end the love of fame would have dictated, the love of mankind will teach me still more ardently to perform."

They were now upon the bridge. Pausing, they leaned over, and looked along the scene before them. Dark and hushed, the river flowed sullenly on, save where the reflected stars made a tremulous and broken beam on the black surface of the water, or the lights of the vast City, which lay in shadow on its banks, scattered at capricious intervals a pale but unpiercing wanness rather than lustre along the tide, or save where the stillness was occasionally broken by the faint oar of the boatman or the call of his rude voice, mellowed almost into music by distance and the element.

But behind them, as they leaned, the feet of passengers on the great thoroughfare passed not oft, — but quick; and that sound, the commonest of earth's, made rarer and rarer by the advancing night, contrasted rather than destroyed the quiet of the heaven and the solemnity of the silent stars.

“It is an old but a just comparison,” said Mordaunt's companion, “which has likened life to a river such as we now survey, gliding alternately in light or in darkness, in sunshine or in storm, to that great ocean in which all waters meet.”

“If,” said Algernon, with his usual thoughtful and pensive smile, “we may be allowed to vary that simile, I would, separating the universal and eternal course of Destiny from the fleeting generations of human life, compare the river before us to *that* course, and not *it*, but the city scattered on its banks, to the varieties and mutability of life. There (in the latter) crowded together in the great chaos of social union, we herd in the night of ages, flinging the little lustre of our dim lights over the sullen tide which rolls beside us, — seeing the tremulous ray glitter on the surface, only to show us how profound is the gloom which it cannot break, and the depths which it is too faint to pierce. There Crime stalks, and Woe hushes her moan, and Poverty couches, and Wealth riots, — and Death, in all and each, is at his silent work. But the stream of Fate, unconscious of our changes and decay, glides on to its engulfing bourne; and, while it mirrors the faintest smile or the lightest frown of heaven, beholds, without a change upon its surface, the generations of earth perish, and be renewed, along its banks!”

There was a pause; and by an involuntary and natural impulse, they turned from the waves beneath to the heaven which, in its breathing contrast, spread all eloquently, yet hushed, above. They looked upon the living and intense stars, and felt palpably at their hearts that spell — wild, but mute — which nothing on or of earth can inspire; that pining of the imprisoned soul, that longing after the immortality on high, which is perhaps no imaginary type of the immortality ourselves are heirs to.

“It is on such nights as these,” said Mordaunt, who first

broke the silence, but with a low and soft voice, "that we are tempted to believe that in Plato's divine fancy there is as divine a truth; that 'our souls are *indeed* of the same essence as the stars,' and that the mysterious yearning, the impatient wish which swells and soars within us to mingle with their glory, is but the instinctive and natural longing to re-unite the divided *portion* of an immortal spirit, stored in these cells of clay, with the original lustre of the heavenly and burning *whole!*"

"And *hence* then," said his companion, pursuing the idea, "might we also believe in that wondrous and wild influence which the stars have been fabled to exercise over our fate; hence might we shape a visionary clew to their imagined power over our birth, our destinies, and our death."

"Perhaps," rejoined Mordaunt, and Lord Ulswater has since said that his countenance as he spoke wore an awful and strange aspect, which lived long and long afterwards in the memory of his companion, "perhaps they *are* tokens and signs between the soul and the things of Heaven which do not wholly shame the doctrine of *him*¹ from whose bright wells Plato drew (while he coloured with his own gorgeous errors) the waters of his sublime lore." As Mordaunt thus spoke, his voice changed: he paused abruptly, and, pointing to a distant quarter of the heavens, said, —

"Look yonder; do you see, in the far horizon, one large and solitary star, that, at this very moment, seems to wax pale and paler, as my hand points to it?"

"I see it; it shrinks and soars, while we gaze into the farther depths of heaven, as if it were seeking to rise to some higher orbit."

"And do you see," rejoined Mordaunt, "yon fleecy but dusky cloud which sweeps slowly along the sky towards it? What shape does that cloud wear to your eyes?"

"It seems to me," answered Lord Ulswater, "to assume the exact semblance of a funeral procession: the human shape appears to me as distinctly moulded in the thin vapours as in ourselves; nor would it perhaps ask too great indulgence from

¹ Socrates, who taught the belief in omens.

our fancy to image amongst the darker forms in the centre of the cloud one bearing the very appearance of a *bier*, — the plume, and the caparison, and the steeds, and the mourners! Still, as I look, the likeness seems to me to increase!”

“Strange!” said Mordaunt, musingly, “how strange is this thing which we call the mind! Strange that the dreams and superstitions of childhood should cling to it with so inseparable and fond a strength! I remember, years since, that I was affected even as I am now, to a degree which wiser men might shrink to confess, upon gazing on a cloud exactly similar to that which at this instant we behold. But see: that cloud has passed over the star; and now, as it rolls away, look, the star itself has vanished into the heavens.”

“But I fear,” answered Lord Ulswater, with a slight smile, “that we can deduce no omen either from the cloud or the star: would, indeed, that Nature *were* more visibly knit with our individual existence! Would that in the heavens there *were* a book, and in the waves a voice, and on the earth a token of the mysteries and enigmas of our fate!”

“And yet,” said Mordaunt, slowly, as his mind gradually rose from its dream-like oppression to its wonted and healthful tone, “yet, in truth, we want neither sign nor omen from other worlds to teach us all that it is the end of existence to fulfil in this; and that seems to me a far less exalted wisdom which enables us to solve the *riddles*, than that which elevates us above the *chances*, of the future.”

“But *can* we be placed above those chances, — can we become independent of that fate to which the ancients taught that even their deities were submitted?”

“Let us not so wrong the ancients,” answered Mordaunt; “their poets taught it, not their philosophers. Would not virtue be a dream, a mockery indeed, if it were, like the herb of the field, a thing of blight and change, of withering and renewal, a minion of the sunbeam and the cloud? Shall calamity deject it? Shall prosperity pollute? *then* let it not be the object of our aspiration, but the byword of our contempt. No: let us rather believe, with the great of old, that when it is based on wisdom, it is throned above change and chance!

throned above the things of a petty and sordid world! throned above the Olympus of the heathen! throned above the Stars which fade, and the Moon which waneth in her course! Shall *we* believe less of the divinity of Virtue than an Athenian Sage? Shall *we*, to whose eyes have been revealed without a cloud the blaze and the glory of Heaven, make Virtue a slave to those chains of earth which the Pagan subjected to her feet? But if by *her* we can trample on the ills of life, are we not a hundredfold more by her the vanquishers of death? All creation lies before us: shall we cling to a grain of dust? All immortality is our heritage: shall we gasp and sicken for a moment's breath? What if we perish within an hour? — what if already the black cloud lowers over us? — what if from our hopes and projects, and the fresh woven ties which we have knit around our life, we are abruptly torn? — shall we be the creatures or the conquerors of fate? Shall we be the exiled from a home, or the escaped from a dungeon? Are we not as birds which look into the Great Air only through a barred cage? Shall we shrink and mourn when the cage is shattered, and all space spreads around us, — our element and our empire? No; it was not for this that, in an elder day, Virtue and Valour received but a common name! The soul, into which *that* Spirit has breathed its glory, is not only above Fate, — it profits by her assaults! Attempt to weaken it, and you nerve it with a new strength; to wound it, and you render it more invulnerable; to destroy it, and you make it immortal! This, indeed, is the Sovereign whose realm every calamity increases, the Hero whose triumph every invasion augments; standing on the last sands of life, and encircled by the advancing waters of Darkness and Eternity, it becomes in its expiring effort *doubly* the Victor and the King!”

Impressed by the fervour of his companion, with a sympathy almost approaching to awe, Lord Ulswater pressed Mordaunt's hand, but offered no reply; and both, excited by the high theme of their conversation, and the thoughts which it produced, moved in silence from their post and walked slowly homeward.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

Is it possible ?

Is 't so ? I *can* no longer what I *would* :
No longer draw back at my liking ! I
Must do the deed because I thought of it.

What is thy enterprise, — thy aim, thy object ?
Hast honestly confessed it to thyself ?

O bloody, frightful deed !

Was that my purpose when we parted ?
O God of Justice ! — COLERIDGE : *Wallenstein*.

WE need scarcely say that one of the persons overheard by Mr. Brown was Wolfe, and the peculiar tone of oratorical exaggeration, characteristic of the man, has already informed the reader with which of the two he is identified.

On the evening after the conversation — the evening fixed for the desperate design on which he had set the last hazard of his life — the republican, parting from the companions with whom he had passed the day, returned home to compose the fever of his excited thoughts, and have a brief hour of solitary meditation, previous to the committal of that act which he knew must be his immediate passport to the jail and the gibbet. On entering his squalid and miserable home, the woman of the house, a bleary-eyed and filthy hag, who was holding to her withered breast an infant, which, even in sucking the stream that nourished its tainted existence, betrayed upon its haggard countenance the polluted nature of the mother's milk, from which it drew at once the support of life and the seeds of death, — this woman, meeting him in the narrow passage, arrested his steps to acquaint him that a gentleman had that day called upon him and left a letter in his room with strict charge of care and speed in its delivery. The visitor had not, however, communicated his name, though the

curiosity excited by his mien and dress had prompted the crone particularly to demand it.

Little affected by this incident, which to the hostess seemed no unimportant event, Wolfe pushed the woman aside with an impatient gesture, and, scarcely conscious of the abuse which followed this motion, hastened up the sordid stairs to his apartment. He sat himself down upon the foot of his bed, and, covering his face with his hands, surrendered his mind to the tide of contending emotions which rushed upon it.

What was he about to commit? Murder!—murder in its coldest and most premeditated guise! “No!” cried he aloud, starting from the bed, and dashing his clenched hand violently against his brow, “no! no! no! it is not murder: it is justice! Did not they, the hirelings of Oppression, ride over their crushed and shrieking countrymen, with drawn blades and murderous hands? Was I not among them at the hour? Did I not with these eyes see the sword uplifted and the smiter strike? Were not my ears filled with the groans of their victims and the savage yells of the trampling dastards?—yells which rang in triumph over women and babes and weaponless men! And shall there be no vengeance? Yes, it shall fall, not upon the tools, but the master; not upon the slaves, but the despot. Yet,” said he, suddenly pausing, as his voice sank into a whisper, “assassination!—in another hour perhaps; a deed irrevocable; a seal set upon two souls,—the victim’s and the judge’s! Fetters and the felon’s cord before me! the shouting mob! the stigma!—no, no, it will *not* be the stigma; the gratitude, rather, of future times, when motives will be appreciated and party hushed! Have I not wrestled with wrong from my birth? have I not rejected all offers from the men of an impious power? have I made a moment’s truce with the poor man’s foe? have I not thrice purchased free principles with an imprisoned frame? have I not bartered my substance, and my hopes, and the pleasures of this world for my unmoving, unswerving faith in the Great Cause? am I not about to crown all by one blow,—one lightning blow, destroying at once myself and a criminal too mighty for the law?

and shall not history do justice to this devotedness,— this absence from all self, hereafter — and admire, even if it condemn ?”

Buoying himself with these reflections, and exciting the jaded current of his designs once more into an unnatural impetus, the unhappy man ceased and paced with rapid steps the narrow limits of his chamber ; his eye fell upon something bright, which glittered amidst the darkening shadows of the evening. At that sight his heart stood still for a moment : it was the weapon of intended death ; he took it up, and as he surveyed the shining barrel, and felt the lock, a more settled sternness gathered at once over his fierce features and stubborn heart. The pistol had been bought and prepared for the purpose with the utmost nicety, not only for use but show ; nor is it unfrequent to find in such instances of premeditated ferocity in design a fearful kind of coxcombry lavished upon the means.

Striking a light, Wolfe reseated himself deliberately, and began with the utmost care to load the pistol ; that scene would not have been an unworthy sketch for those painters who possess the power of giving to the low a force almost approaching to grandeur, and of augmenting the terrible by a mixture of the ludicrous. The sordid chamber, the damp walls, the high window, in which a handful of discoloured paper supplied the absence of many a pane ; the single table of rough oak, the rush-bottomed and broken chair, the hearth unconscious of a fire, over which a mean bust of Milton held its tutelary sway ; while the dull rushlight streamed dimly upon the swarthy and strong countenance of Wolfe, intent upon his work, — a countenance in which the deliberate calmness that had succeeded the late struggle of feeling had in it a mingled power of energy and haggardness of languor, — the one of the desperate design, the other of the exhausted body ; while in the knit brow, and the iron lines, and even in the settled ferocity of expression, there was yet something above the stamp of the vulgar ruffian, — something eloquent of the motive no less than the deed, and significant of that not ignoble perversity of mind which diminished the guilt, yet increased the dreadfulness of the meditated crime, by mocking it with the name of virtue.

As he had finished his task, and hiding the pistol on his person waited for the hour in which his accomplice was to summon him to the fatal deed, he perceived, close by him on the table, the letter which the woman had spoken of, and which till then, he had, in the excitement of his mind, utterly forgotten. He opened it mechanically; an enclosure fell to the ground. He picked it up; it was a bank-note of considerable amount. The lines in the letter were few, anonymous, and written in a hand evidently disguised. They were calculated peculiarly to touch the republican, and reconcile him to the gift. In them the writer professed to be actuated by no other feeling than admiration for the unbending integrity which had characterized Wolfe's life, and the desire that sincerity in any principles, however they might differ from his own, should not be rewarded only with indigence and ruin.

It is impossible to tell how far, in Wolfe's mind, his own desperate fortunes might insensibly have mingled with the motives which led him to his present design: certain it is that wherever the future is hopeless the mind is easily converted from the rugged to the criminal; and equally certain it is that we are apt to justify to ourselves many offences in a cause where we have made great sacrifices; and, perhaps, if this unexpected assistance had come to Wolfe a short time before, it might, by softening his heart and reconciling him in some measure to fortune, have rendered him less susceptible to the fierce voice of political hatred and the instigation of his associates. Nor can we, who are removed from the temptations of the poor,—temptations to which ours are as breezes which woo to storms which “tumble towers,”—nor can we tell how far the acerbity of want, and the absence of wholesome sleep, and the contempt of the rich, and the rankling memory of better fortunes, or even the mere fierceness which absolute hunger produces in the humours and veins of all that hold nature's life, nor can we tell how far these madden the temper, which is but a minion of the body, and plead in irresistible excuse for the crimes which our wondering virtue—haughty because unsolicited—stamps with its loftiest reprobation!

The cloud fell from Wolfe's brow, and his eye gazed, mus-

ingly and rapt, upon vacancy. Steps were heard ascending; the voice of a distant clock tolled with a distinctness which seemed like strokes palpable as well as audible to the senses; and, as the door opened and his accomplice entered, Wolfe muttered, "Too late! too late!"—and first crushing the note in his hands, then tore it into atoms, with a vehemence which astonished his companion, who, however, knew not its value.

"Come," said he, stamping his foot violently upon the floor, as if to conquer by passion all internal relenting, "come, my friend, not another moment is to be lost; let us hasten to our holy deed!"

"I trust," said Wolfe's companion, when they were in the open street, "that we shall not have our trouble in vain; it is a brave night for it! Davidson wanted us to throw grenades into the ministers' carriages, as the best plan; and, faith, we can try that if all else fails!"

Wolfe remained silent: indeed he scarcely heard his companion; for a sullen indifference to all things around him had wrapped his spirit,—that singular feeling, or rather absence from feeling, common to all men, when bound on some exciting action, upon which their minds are already and wholly bent; which renders them utterly without thought, when the superficial would imagine they were the most full of it, and leads them to the threshold of that event which had before engrossed all their most waking and fervid contemplation with a blind and mechanical unconsciousness, resembling the influence of a dream.

They arrived at the place they had selected for their station; sometimes walking to and fro in order to escape observation, sometimes hiding behind the pillars of a neighbouring house, they awaited the coming of their victims. The time passed on; the streets grew more and more empty; and, at last, only the visitation of the watchman or the occasional steps of some homeward wanderer disturbed the solitude of their station.

At last, just after midnight, two men were seen approaching towards them, linked arm in arm, and walking very slowly.

"Hist! hist!" whispered Wolfe's comrade, "there they are at last; is your pistol cocked?"

"Ay," answered Wolfe, "and yours: man, collect yourself: your hand shakes."

"It is with the cold then," said the ruffian, using, unconsciously, a celebrated reply; "let us withdraw behind the pillar."

They did so: the figures approached them; the night, though star-lit, was not sufficiently clear to give the assassins more than the outline of their shapes and the characters of their height and air.

"Which," said Wolfe, in a whisper, — for, as he had said, he had never seen either of his intended victims, — "which is *my* prey?"

"Oh, the nearest to you," said the other, with trembling accents; "you know his d—d proud walk, and erect head: that is the way he answers the people's petitions, I'll be sworn. The taller and farther one, who stoops more in his gait, is mine."

The strangers were now at hand.

"You know you are to fire first, Wolfe," whispered the nearer ruffian, whose heart had long failed him, and who was already meditating escape.

"But are you sure, quite sure, of the identity of our prey?" said Wolfe, grasping his pistol.

"Yes, yes," said the other; and, indeed, the air of the nearest person approaching them bore, in the distance, a strong resemblance to that of the minister it was supposed to designate. His companion, who appeared much younger and of a mien equally patrician, but far less proud, seemed listening to the supposed minister with the most earnest attention. Apparently occupied with their conversation, when about twenty yards from the assassins they stood still for a few moments.

"Stop, Wolfe, stop," said the republican's accomplice, whose Indian complexion, by fear, and the wan light of the lamps and skies, faded into a jaundiced and yellow hue, while the bony whiteness of his teeth made a grim contrast with the

glare of his small, black, sparkling eyes. "Stop, Wolfe, hold your hand. I see, now, that I was mistaken; the farther one is a stranger to me, and the nearer one is much thinner than the minister: pocket your pistol, — quick! quick! — and let us withdraw."

Wolfe dropped his hand, as if dissuaded from his design: but as he looked upon the trembling frame and chattering teeth of his terrified accomplice, a sudden, and not unnatural, idea darted across his mind that he was wilfully deceived by the fears of his companion; and that the strangers, who had now resumed their way, were indeed what his accomplice had first reported them to be. Filled with this impression, and acting upon the momentary spur which it gave, the infatuated and fated man pushed aside his comrade, with a muttered oath at his cowardice and treachery, and taking a sure and steady, though quick, aim at the person, who was now just within the certain destruction of his hand, he fired the pistol. The stranger reeled and fell into the arms of his companion.

"Hurrah!" cried the murderer, leaping from his hiding place, and walking with rapid strides towards his victim, "hurrah! for liberty and England!"

Scarce had he uttered those prostituted names, before the triumph of misguided zeal faded suddenly and forever from his brow and soul.

The wounded man leaned back in the supporting arms of his chilled and horror-stricken friend; who, kneeling on one knee to support him, fixed his eager eyes upon the pale and changing countenance of his burden, unconscious of the presence of the assassin.

"Speak, Mordaunt, speak! how is it with you?" he said.

Recalled from his torpor by the voice, Mordaunt opened his eyes, and muttering, "My child, my child," sank back again; and Lord Ulswater (for it was he) felt, by his increased weight, that death was hastening rapidly on its victim.

"Oh!" said he, bitterly, and recalling their last conversation — "oh! where, where, when this man — the wise, the kind, the innocent, almost the perfect — falls thus in the very prime of existence, by a sudden blow from an obscure hand, —

unblest in life, inglorious in death, — oh! where, where is this boasted triumph of Virtue, or where is its reward?"

True to his idol at the last, as these words fell upon his dizzy and receding senses, Mordaunt raised himself by a sudden though momentary exertion, and, fixing his eyes full upon Lord Ulswater, his moving lips (for his voice was already gone) seemed to shape out the answer, "*It is here!*"

With this last effort, and with an expression upon his aspect which seemed at once to soften and to hallow the haughty and calm character which in life it was wont to bear, Algernon Mordaunt fell once more back into the arms of his companion and immediately expired.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

COME, Death, these are thy victims, and the axe
 Waits those who claimed the chariot. — Thus we count
 Our treasures in the dark, and when the light
 Breaks on the cheated eye, we find the coin
 Was skulls —

.
 Yet the while

Fate links strange contrasts, and the scaffold's gloom
 Is neighboured by the altar. — ANONYMOUS.

WHEN Crauford's guilt and imprisonment became known; when inquiry developed, day after day, some new maze in the mighty and intricate machinery of his sublime dishonesty; when houses of the most reputed wealth and profuse splendour, whose affairs Crauford had transacted, were discovered to have been for years utterly undermined and beggared, and only supported by the extraordinary genius of the individual by whose extraordinary guilt, now no longer concealed, they were suddenly and irretrievably destroyed; when it was ascertained that, for nearly the fifth part of a century, a system of villany had been carried on throughout Europe, in a thousand different relations, without a single breath of suspicion, and

yet which a single breath of suspicion could at once have arrested and exposed; when it was proved that a man whose luxury had exceeded the pomp of princes, and whose wealth was supposed more inexhaustible than the enchanted purse of Fortunatus, had for eighteen years been a penniless pensioner upon the prosperity of others; when the long scroll of this almost incredible fraud was slowly, piece by piece, unrolled before the terrified curiosity of his public, an invading army at the Temple gates could scarcely have excited such universal consternation and dismay.

The mob, always the first to execute justice, in their own inimitable way took vengeance upon Crauford by burning the house no longer his, and the houses of his partners, who were the worst and most innocent sufferers for his crime. No epithet of horror and hatred was too severe for the offender; and serious apprehension for the safety of Newgate, his present habitation, was generally expressed. The more saintly members of that sect to which the hypocrite had ostensibly belonged, held up their hands, and declared that the fall of the Pharisee was a judgment of Providence. Nor did they think it worth while to make, for a moment, the trifling inquiry how far the judgment of Providence was also implicated in the destruction of the numerous and innocent families he had ruined!

But, whether from that admiration for genius, common to the vulgar, which forgets all crime in the cleverness of committing it, or from that sagacious disposition peculiar to the English, which makes a hero of any person eminently wicked, no sooner did Crauford's trial come on than the tide of popular feeling experienced a sudden revulsion. It became, in an instant, the fashion to admire and to pity a gentleman so *talented* and so *unfortunate*. Likenesses of Mr. Crauford appeared in every print-shop in town; the papers discovered that he was the very fac-simile of the great King of Prussia. The laureate made an ode upon him, which was set to music; and the public learned, with tears of compassionate regret at so romantic a circumstance, that pigeon-pies were sent daily to his prison, made by the delicate hands of one of his former

mistresses. Some sensation, also, was excited by the circumstance of his poor wife (who soon afterwards died of a broken heart) coming to him in prison, and being with difficulty torn away; but then, conjugal affection is so very commonplace, and — there was something so engrossingly pathetic in the anecdote of the pigeon-pies!

It must be confessed that Crauford displayed singular address and ability upon his trial; and fighting every inch of ground, even to the last, when so strong a phalanx of circumstances appeared against him that no hope of a favourable verdict could for a moment have supported him, he concluded the trial with a speech delivered by himself, so impressive, so powerful, so dignified, yet so impassioned, that the whole audience, hot as they were, dissolved into tears.

Sentence was passed, — Death! But such was the infatuation of the people that every one expected that a pardon, for crime more complicated and extensive than half the “Newgate Calendar” could equal, would of course be obtained. Persons of the highest rank interested themselves in his behalf; and up to the night before his execution, expectations, almost amounting to certainty, were entertained by the criminal, his friends, and the public. On that night was conveyed to Crauford the positive and peremptory assurance that there was no hope. Let us now enter his cell, and be the sole witnesses of his solitude.

Crauford was, as we have seen, a man in some respects of great *moral* courage, of extraordinary daring in the formation of schemes, of unwavering resolution in supporting them, and of a temper which rather rejoiced in, than shunned, the braving of a distant danger for the sake of an adequate reward. But this courage was supported and fed solely by the self-persuasion of consummate genius, and his profound confidence both in his good fortune and the inexhaustibility of his resources. *Physically* he was a coward! *immediate* peril to be confronted by the *person*, not the *mind*, had ever appalled him like a child. He had never dared to back a spirited horse. He had been known to remain for days in an obscure ale-

house in the country, to which a shower had accidentally driven him, because it had been idly reported that a wild beast had escaped from a caravan and been seen in the vicinity of the inn. No dog had ever been allowed in his household lest it *might* go mad. In a word, Crauford was one to whom life and sensual enjoyments were everything, — the supreme blessings, the only blessings.

As long as he had the hope, and it was a sanguine hope, of *saving* life, nothing had disturbed his mind from its serenity. His gayety had never forsaken him; and his cheerfulness and fortitude had been the theme of every one admitted to his presence. But when this hope was abruptly and finally closed; when Death, immediate and unavoidable, — Death, the extinction of existence, the *cessation of sense*, — stood bare and hideous before him, his genius seemed at once to abandon him to his fate, and the inherent weakness of his nature to gush over every prop and barrier of his art.

“No hope!” muttered he, in a voice of the keenest anguish, — “no hope; merciful God! none, none? What, I, *I*, who have shamed kings in luxury, — I to die on the gibbet, among the reeking, gaping, swinish crowd with whom — O God, that I were one of *them* even! that I were the most loathsome beggar that ever crept forth to taint the air with sores! that I were a toad immured in a stone, sweltering in the atmosphere of its own venom! a snail crawling on these very walls, and tracking his painful path in slime! — anything, anything, but death! And *such* death! The gallows, the scaffold, the halter, the fingers of the hangman paddling round the neck where the softest caresses have clung *and sated*. To die, die, die! What, *I* whose pulse now beats so strongly! whose blood keeps so warm and vigorous a motion! in the very prime of enjoyment and manhood; all life’s million paths of pleasure before me, — to die, to swing to the winds, to hang, — ay, ay — to hang! to be cut down, distorted and hideous; to be thrust into the earth with worms; to rot, or — or — or hell! is there a hell? — *better that even than annihilation!*”

“Fool! fool! — damnable fool that I was” (and in his sudden rage he clenched his own flesh till the nails met in it);

“had I but got to France one day sooner! Why don't you save me, save me, you whom I have banqueted and feasted, and lent money to! one word from you might have saved me; I will not die! I don't deserve it! I am innocent! I tell you, Not guilty, my lord, — not guilty! Have you no heart, no consciences? Murder! murder! murder!” and the wretched man sank upon the ground, and tried with his hands to grasp the stone floor, as if to cling to it from some imaginary violence.

Turn we from him to the cell in which another criminal awaits also the awful coming of his latest morrow.

Pale, motionless, silent, with his face bending over his bosom and hands clasped tightly upon his knees, Wolfe sat in his dungeon, and collected his spirit against the approaching consummation of his turbulent and stormy fate. His bitterest punishment had been already past; mysterious Chance, or rather the Power above chance, had denied to him the haughty triumph of self-applause. No sophistry, now, could compare his doom to that of Sidney, or his deed to the act of the avenging Brutus.

Murder — causeless, objectless, universally execrated — rested, and would rest (till oblivion wrapped it) upon his name. It had appeared, too, upon his trial, that he had, in the information he had received, been the mere tool of a spy in the ministers' pay; and that, for weeks before his intended deed, his design had been known, and his conspiracy only not bared to the public eye because political craft awaited a riper opportunity for the disclosure. He had not then merely been the blind dupe of his own passions, but, more humbling still, an instrument in the hands of the very men whom his hatred was sworn to destroy. Not a wreck, not a straw, of the vain glory for which he had forfeited life and risked his soul, could he hug to a sinking heart, and say, “This is my support.”

The remorse of gratitude embittered his cup still further. On Mordaunt's person had been discovered a memorandum of the money anonymously inclosed to Wolfe on the day of the murder; and it was couched in words of esteem which melted the fierce heart of the republican into the only tears he had

shed since childhood. From that time, a sullen, silent spirit fell upon him. He spoke to none, — heeded none; he made no defence on trial, no complaint of severity, no appeal from judgment. The iron had entered into his soul; but it supported, while it tortured. Even now as we gaze upon his inflexible and dark countenance, no transitory emotion; no natural spasm of sudden fear for the catastrophe of the morrow; no intense and working passions, struggling into calm; no sign of internal hurricanes, rising as it were from the hidden depths, agitate the surface, or betray the secrets of the unfathomable world within. The mute lip; the rigid brow; the downcast eye; a heavy and dread stillness, brooding over every feature, — these are all we behold.

Is it that thought sleeps, locked in the torpor of a senseless and rayless dream; or that an evil incubus weighs upon it, crushing its risings, but deadening not its pangs? Does Memory fly to the green fields and happy home of his childhood, or the lonely studies of his daring and restless youth, or his earliest homage to that Spirit of Freedom which shone bright and still and pure upon the solitary chamber of him who sang of heaven;¹ or (dwelling on its last and most fearful object) rolls it only through one tumultuous and convulsive channel, — Despair? Whatever be within the silent and deep heart, pride, or courage, or callousness, or that stubborn firmness, which, once principle, has grown habit, cover all as with a pall; and the strung nerves and the hard endurance of the human flesh sustain what the immortal mind perhaps quails beneath, in its dark retreat, but once dreamed that it would exult to bear.

The fatal hour had come! and, through the long dim passages of the prison, four criminals were led forth to execution. The first was Crauford's associate, Bradley. This man prayed fervently; and, though he was trembling and pale, his mien and aspect bore something of the calmness of resignation.

It has been said that there is no friendship among the wicked. I have examined this maxim closely, and believe it, like most popular proverbs, — false. In wickedness there is

¹ Milton.

peril, and mutual terror is the strongest of ties. At all events, the wicked can, not unoften, excite an attachment in their followers denied to virtue. Habitually courteous, caressing, and familiar, Crauford had, despite his own suspicions of Bradley, really touched the heart of one whom weakness and want, not nature, had gained to vice; and it was not till Crauford's guilt was by other witnesses undeniably proved that Bradley could be tempted to make any confession tending to implicate him.

He now crept close to his former partner, and frequently clasped his hand, and besought him to take courage and to pray. But Crauford's eye was glassy and dim, and his veins seemed filled with water: so numbed and cold and white was his cheek. Fear, in him, had passed its paroxysms, and was now insensibility; it was only when they urged him to pray that a sort of benighted consciousness strayed over his countenance and his ashen lips muttered something which none heard.

After him came the Creole, who had been Wolfe's accomplice. On the night of the murder, he had taken advantage of the general loneliness and the confusion of the few present, and fled. He was found, however, fast asleep in a garret, before morning, by the officers of justice; and, on trial, he had confessed all. This man was in a rapid consumption. The delay of another week would have given to Nature the termination of his life. He, like Bradley, seemed earnest and absorbed in prayer.

Last came Wolfe, his tall, gaunt frame worn by confinement and internal conflict into a gigantic skeleton; his countenance, too, had undergone a withering change; his grizzled hair seemed now to have acquired only the one hoary hue of age; and, though you might trace in his air and eye the sternness, you could no longer detect the fire, of former days. Calm, as on the preceding night, no emotion broke over his dark but not defying features. He rejected, though not irreverently, all aid from the benevolent priest, and seemed to seek in the pride of his own heart a substitute for the resignation of Religion.

“Miserable man!” at last said the good clergyman, in whom zeal overcame kindness, “have you at this awful hour no prayer upon your lips?”

A living light shot then for a moment over Wolfe’s eye and brow. “I have!” said he; and raising his clasped hands to Heaven, he continued in the memorable words of Sidney, “Lord, defend Thy own cause, and defend those who defend it! Stir up such as are faint; direct those that are willing; confirm those that waver; give wisdom and integrity to all: order all things so as may most redound to Thine own glory!”

“I had once hoped,” added Wolfe, sinking in his tone, “I had once hoped that I might with justice have continued that holy prayer;¹ but —” he ceased abruptly; the glow passed from his countenance, his lip quivered, and the tears stood in his eyes; and that was the only weakness he betrayed, and those were his last words.

Crauford continued, even while the rope was put round him, mute and unconscious of everything. It was said that his pulse (that of an uncommonly strong and healthy man on the previous day) had become so low and faint that, an hour before his execution, it could not be felt. He and the Creole were the only ones who struggled; Wolfe died, seemingly, without a pang.

From these feverish and fearful scenes, the mind turns, with a feeling of grateful relief, to contemplate the happiness of one whose candid and high nature, and warm affections, Fortune, long befriending, had at length blessed.

It was on an evening in the earliest flush of returning spring that Lord Ulswater, with his beautiful bride, entered his magnificent domains. It had been his wish and order, in consequence of his brother’s untimely death, that no public rejoicings should be made on his marriage: but the good old steward

¹ “Grant that I may die glorifying Thee for all Thy mercies, and that at the last Thou hast permitted me to be singled out as a witness of Thy truth, and even by the confession of my opposers for that OLD CAUSE in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which Thou hast often and wonderfully declared Thyself.” — ALGERNON SIDNEY.

could not persuade himself entirely to enforce obedience to the first order of his new master; and as the carriage drove into the park-gates, crowds on crowds were assembled to welcome and to gaze.

No sooner had they caught a glimpse of their young lord, whose affability and handsome person had endeared him to all who remembered his early days, and of the half-blushing, half-smiling countenance beside him, than their enthusiasm could be no longer restrained. The whole scene rang with shouts of joy; and through an air filled with blessings, and amidst an avenue of happy faces, the bridal pair arrived at their home.

“Ah! Clarence (for so I *must* still call you),” said Flora, her beautiful eyes streaming with delicious tears, “let us never leave these kind hearts; let us live amongst them, and strive to repay and deserve the blessings which they shower upon us! Is not Benevolence, dearest, better than Ambition?”

“Can it not rather, my own Flora, be Ambition itself?”

CONCLUSION.

So rest you, merry gentlemen. — *Monsieur Thomas.*

THE Author has now only to take his leave of the less important characters whom he has assembled together; and then, all due courtesy to his numerous guests being performed, to retire himself to repose.

First, then, for Mr. Morris Brown: In the second year of Lord Ulswater's marriage, the worthy broker paid Mrs. Minden's nephew a visit, in which he persuaded that gentleman to accept, “as presents,” two admirable fire screens, the property of the late Lady Waddilove: the same may be now seen in the housekeeper's room at Borodaile Park by any person willing to satisfy his curiosity and — the housekeeper. Of all

further particulars respecting Mr. Morris Brown, history is silent.

In the obituary for 1792, we find the following paragraph :

“Died at his house in Putney, aged seventy-three, Sir Nicholas Copperas, Knt., a gentleman well known on the Exchange for his facetious humour. Several of his *bons-mots* are still recorded in the Common Council. When residing many years ago in the suburbs of London, this worthy gentleman was accustomed to go from his own house to the Exchange in a coach called ‘the Swallow,’ that passed his door just at breakfast-time; upon which occasion he was wont wittily to observe to his accomplished spouse, ‘And now, Mrs. Copperas, having swallowed in the roll, I will e’en roll in the Swallow!’ His whole property is left to Adolphus Copperas, Esq., banker.”

And in the next year we discover, —

“Died, on Wednesday last, at her jointure house, Putney, in her sixty-eighth year, the amiable and elegant Lady Copperas, relict of the late Sir Nicholas, Knt.”

Mr. Trollop, having exhausted the whole world of metaphysics, died like Descartes, “in believing he had left nothing unexplained.”

Mr. Callythorpe entered the House of Commons at the time of the French Revolution. He distinguished himself by many votes in favour of Mr. Pitt, and one speech which ran thus: “Sir, I believe my right honourable friend who spoke last [Mr. Pitt] designs to ruin the country: but I will support him through all. Honourable Gentlemen may laugh; but I’m a true Briton, and will not serve my friend the less because I scorn to flatter him.”

Sir Christopher Findlater lost his life by an accident arising from the upsetting of his carriage, his good heart not having suffered him to part with a drunken coachman.

Mr. Glumford turned miser in his old age; and died of want, and an extravagant son.

Our honest Cole and his wife were always among the most welcome visitors at Lord Ulswater’s. In his extreme old age, the ex-king took a journey to Scotland, to see the Author of “The Lay of the Last Minstrel.” Nor should we do justice to

the chief's critical discernment if we neglected to record that, from the earliest dawn of that great luminary of our age, he predicted its meridian splendour. The eldest son of the gypsy-monarch inherited his father's spirit, and is yet alive, a general, and G.C.B.

Mr. Harrison married Miss Elizabeth, and succeeded to the Golden Fleece.

The Duke of Haverfield and Lord Ulswater continued their friendship through life; and the letters of our dear Flora to her correspondent, Eleanor, did not cease even with that critical and perilous period to all maiden correspondents, — Marriage. If we may judge from the subsequent letters which we have been permitted to see, Eleanor never repented her brilliant nuptials, nor discovered (as the Duchess of ——— once said from experience) “that Dukes are as intolerable for husbands as they are delightful for matches.”

And Isabel Mordaunt? — Ah! not in these pages shall *her* history be told even in epitome. Perhaps for some future narrative, her romantic and eventful fate may be reserved. Suffice it for the present, that the childhood of the young heiress passed in the house of Lord Ulswater, whose proudest boast, through a triumphant and prosperous life, was to have been her father's friend; and that as she grew up, she inherited her mother's beauty and gentle heart, and seemed to bear in her deep eyes and melancholy smile some remembrance of the scenes in which her infancy had been passed.

But for Him, the husband and the father, whose trials through this wrong world I have portrayed, — for him let there be neither murmurs at the blindness of Fate, nor sorrow at the darkness of his doom. Better that the lofty and bright spirit should pass away before the petty business of life had bowed it, or the sordid mists of this low earth breathed a shadow on its lustre! Who would have asked *that* spirit to have struggled on for years in the intrigues, the hopes, the objects of meaner souls? Who would have desired that the heavenward and impatient heart should have grown inured to the chains and toil of this enslaved state, or hardened into the callousness of age? Nor would we claim the vulgar pit-

tance of compassion for a lot which is exalted *above* regret! Pity is for our weaknesses: to our weaknesses only be it given. It is the aliment of love; it is the wages of ambition; it is the rightful heritage of error! But why should pity be entertained for the soul which never fell? for the courage which never quailed? for the majesty never humbled? for the wisdom which, from the rough things of the common world, raised an empire above earth and destiny? for the stormy life? — it was a triumph! for the early death? — it was immortality!

I have stood beside Mordaunt's tomb: his will had directed that he should sleep not in the vaults of his haughty line; and his last dwelling is surrounded by a green and pleasant spot. The trees shadow it like a temple; and a silver though fitful brook wails with a constant yet not ungrateful dirge at the foot of the hill on which the tomb is placed. I have stood there in those ardent years when our wishes know no boundary and our ambition no curb; yet, even then, I would have changed my wildest vision of romance for that quiet grave, and the dreams of the distant spirit whose relics reposed beneath it.

THE END.







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