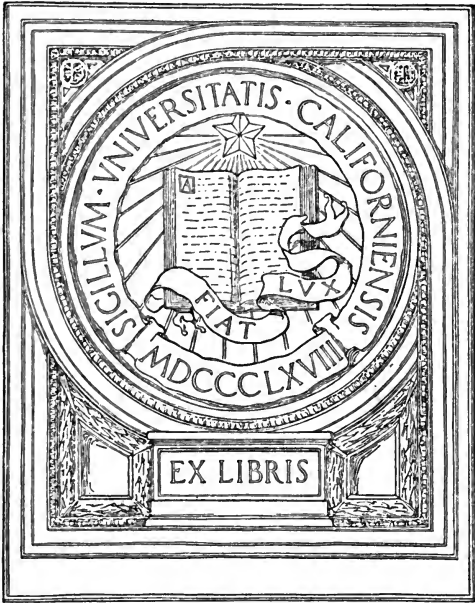



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FATHER EUSTACE:

A TALE OF THE JESUITS.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

“THE VICAR OF WREXHILL,” “THE BARNABYS,”

“THE ATTRACTIVE MAN,”

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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FATHER EUSTACE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are few spectacles more impressive than the death-bed of a Roman Catholic, when attended by all the forms appointed by his picturesque and hieroglyphic faith, and accompanied by enough of ecclesiastical splendour to atone to the imagination, or rather to the senses of the spectator, for superseding the tragedy of nature, by the pomp and solemnity of ceremonious rites.

Such was the scene presented at Cuthbert Castle, when Richard Randolphe de Morley, its wealthy and long-descended owner, was about to breathe his last.

The chamber was one of considerable magnificence, both from its dimensions and the stately and massive style in which it was fitted up; but neither the lofty crimson velvet bed, nor the hangings of the same gorgeous material which adorned the walls, though with much rich gilding to set them off, would have produced the effect they did, had not a pair of folding doors, now thrown widely open at the bottom of the room, displayed to view a small, but highly decorated, Romish chapel, the altar of which, resplendent with gems, was illuminated by a multitude of tapers.

The sick man, though avowedly beyond hope of recovery, had been declared by his physician to be likely to survive for some hours; upon receiving which assurance he had exerted his failing strength in requesting Father Ambrose, his domestic chaplain and confessor, to indulge him during his last moments by permitting him to enjoy a privilege which few could claim, and which had been through life a source of equal gratitude and pride.

Permission had been accorded by Rome to

the family of De Morley, that midnight masses might be performed in the chapel of Cuthbert Castle, above two hundred years before the period at which the present narrative commences. Some collateral affinity to a long departed Pope had furnished a plea for the privilege, which, perhaps, had been the more readily granted to the English branch of the De Morley race, from the hope that a ceremony so every way impressive might produce the happiest effects, by inducing the surrounding heretics to be present from curiosity at a solemnity but rarely within the reach of any, and which was of a nature to be contemplated with indifference by none.

Father Ambrose, who had for nineteen years been the resident chaplain and confessor of Cuthbert Castle, was now performing this midnight mass, while two little boys, converts from the neighbouring village, were doing their best towards enabling their popish patron to die in the odour of sanctity, by diligently flinging rich clouds of incense into the air.

Strange to say, it was the wife of the dying man who, as she watched the scene, was the

most awake to the picturesque character of the circumstances by which it was attended. Yet Lady Sarah de Morley was not without feeling, and the time had been when she had loved the man whose dying hour she now watched with so much speculative composure, with a degree of passionate devotion, which, in such a character as hers, would have been likely to endure for more years than they had lived together, had not some untoward circumstances which attended their union proved more powerful than love in influencing their destiny.

The origin of these circumstances was the fact that Lady Sarah was a Protestant, with as much deep sincerity as her husband was a Papist.

People talk of the ardent feelings of youth, and, doubtless, there are some feelings more ardent in youth than in age; but it is not *such* that have the strongest influence on our destinies. When Mr. de Morley married the Lady Sarah Hartley, they were mutually enamoured, to a degree that, in both of them, seemed to absorb every other faculty; and, as

neither appeared deficient either in the firmness of character or purity of feeling which is likely to produce constancy in attachment, a happier lot might have been anticipated for both, than that which afterwards attended their married years.

There are probably many married couples besides Mr. de Morley and Lady Sarah, who, after living together for a few years, might find, if they subjected themselves to a strict self-examination, that they were not so perfectly sure of the faultless perfection of each other, on all points, as they were on their wedding-day; but rarely has this species of discovery led to less outward interruption of domestic tranquillity than at Cuthbert Castle.

In truth, this diminution of enthusiastic admiration had not operated suddenly or violently in any way, and it is likely enough that, after a fair trial of half-a-dozen months of matrimony, the very worst that Lady Sarah would have said of her husband—or rather, thought, for assuredly she would have said nothing on the subject—but the very worst she would have thought might have been ex-

pressed in these words—"I had no notion, when I married Mr. de Morley, that his mind was so trammelled by his faith."

While, on his part, the severest of his matrimonial discontents would only have amounted to a grave but silent feeling of regret at the obstinate heresy of so very charming a woman.

There was, however, in after years, another point on which the want of sympathy between them was quite as complete as on the subject of their religious faith, and productive of more painful consequences. By their marriage contract, all the sons born to them were to be educated as Roman Catholics, and all the daughters as Protestants. For the first few months after the marriage, Lady Sarah wished as earnestly that the babe about to be born might be a male, as her husband did; but ere it had seen the light, her mind was changed, and the learning that she had borne a daughter had caused just about as much joy to her as sorrow to him.

These mutual feelings, however, strong as they were, never, on either side, led to any very vehement demonstrations of estrangement.

No bitter words ever passed between them; no sour looks; there was nothing like discord, either audible or visible. No human eye, except, perhaps, that of Father Ambrose, could have discerned anything to create a doubt that their union was one of very peaceful and exemplary harmony. Their days appeared to glide on with a degree of tranquil stillness, which might have been envied by many a wrangling pair, between whom there was infinitely less estrangement, and more affection.

There was as little mixture of vice in the character of either as could reasonably be expected in mortals; nor were they, either of them, subject to the miserable malady of bad temper. But both found themselves, by degrees, living in an atmosphere which seemed turned into ice when they conversed together, and never did either yield to their strongest feelings, except when the other was absent.

The strongest feelings of Mr. de Morley were his wish for a male heir, and his reverence for the church of Rome. The strongest feelings of his wife were a sort of abstract love

for common sense and simple intelligible truth, and a passionate tenderness for her daughter.

The same law, relative to religion, which regulated the education of their children, regulated also the selection of their household; the men-servants were all Romanists, the women all Protestants; and at the solemn hour which the opening of this narrative records, the anteroom to the chamber of death was almost filled with serving-men, who came thither to be present, though at respectful distance, at the midnight mass; but not a female was to be seen, save the wife and the young daughter of the dying man. There was, indeed, an old housekeeper, who stood at the head of the bed, but she was so nearly enveloped in the curtains as not to be very easily visible.

Lady Sarah, with her arm resting on that of the pale and greatly agitated Juliana, stood at the foot of the bed, fixedly contemplating the countenance of her dying husband, as his raised hands convulsively grasped the image of the Saviour, while the half-told string of amber beads fell upon his painfully heaving breast.

“His life has been unstained by guilt, and he has been faithful and observant to the faith in which he was bred,” thought Lady Sarah, as she gazed upon his troubled features. “Then why should his poor face express so much of terror, and so little of hope?” And unconsciously pressing the arm of her daughter to her side, she breathed a fervent prayer, that, at the same solemn hour, the faith which it had been the dearest object of her life to instil into that innocent heart, might produce firm, though humble hope, and not such doubting, trembling fear, as she now witnessed.

The mass was ended, and the favourite servant of De Morley rose from his kneeling position beside the bed, and wiped the moisture from his master’s brow. The sick man’s voice murmured in his ear as he did so, a wish that he might be left alone with his confessor.

With a quick, but noiseless movement, the valet Philip approached Lady Sarah, and, in a low whisper, but in a tone of deep respect, repeated his master’s words, and then returned to his side.

Lady Sarah, as it seemed, was at that moment in deep reverie, for she started as the man addressed her; but, immediately laying her hand upon that of her daughter, which rested upon her arm, she hastened from the room without reply.

Father Ambrose, having completed his duties at the altar, and having received a silent sign from Philip, approached the bed-side of his penitent.

“Are we alone, father?” said Mr. de Morley, with more distinctness than he had spoken for some hours past.

“There is no one present, my son, but your faithful Philip and Mrs. Hardwood,” was the reply.

“But even they must not remain now,” replied De Morley. “Say it kindly, father; but let my poor Philip and dear Hardwood understand that we must be alone.”

The priest raised himself from his penitent’s pillow, and approaching the servants, who now both stood at a respectful distance, looking with loving eyes upon the master they were about to lose, said—“Confession, my good

friends, must be sacred and secret, even from those most valued. Go, therefore, my good fellow; go, Hardwood, and restore yourselves by a short interval of rest and refreshment, while your master unburdens his spirit to his confessor."

Without pronouncing a word in reply, Philip and the housekeeper reverently quitted the room, and Mr. de Morley and Father Ambrose were left alone.

CHAPTER II.

“FATHER! are we quite alone?” said the penitent, as he heard the door close upon Philip.

“We are, my son,” replied the confessor, bending affectionately over him.

“My wife! my wife and daughter! have they left the place where they have been so long standing? I see them no longer; but, perhaps, my sight grows dim. Have they left the room? Poor, lost, unhappy ones!”

“They are no longer here,” replied Father Ambrose. “I presumed that you meant to include them, when you desired that all should go.”

“I did, holy father, I did. It is of them—chiefly of them—next after my own sinful soul, that I would speak. Oh, father! my sin, the heavy, crushing sin of my life, lies like burning

iron on my heart! I married with a heretic! I have given being to a heretic! and already, ere yet life has passed, and death succeeded, I feel the scorching fire that must feed upon that tortured heart for ages! ages! ages! Oh, save me, holy Virgin! Father Ambrose, save me! I repent, and have repented!"

And here the dying man, groaning with exceeding agony, turned convulsively in his bed, and buried his face on the pillow.

"Masses must be said, my son," said the priest, solemnly. "Masses must be said," he repeated, as he bent over him, and endeavoured to change his position, so that the air might reach him.

"Mistrust not the power of the blessed faith in which you have lived," he resumed—"mistrust not the all-saving power of that holy church in whose bosom you have lived, and in whose bosom you are about to die, despite the one great and terrible sin that has blasted your peace on earth, and shaken your hold on heaven."

The dying man uttered a fearful groan, and murmured, "How dare I hope?"

“Nay, distrust not the power of the church, my son, at the awful moment in which you have most need of it. Blessed, yea, for ever blessed, be its healing ordinances, which, despite the long years passed in rebellious perseverance in that terrible sin, have still the power to save your soul alive!”

“But how can I hope that blessed power can be used for me?” cried the trembling penitent, in a low hoarse voice, that showed both agony and weakness. “How can I hope it, father? how can I dare to hope it, when I know that the child, whose existence I have to answer for, is doomed to live and die a heretic, and that her young voice, as it shall daily breathe her impious appeals to Heaven, shall call down judgment on me? How dare I hope? how dare I speak of hope? Oh, Father Ambrose! could that child be saved!”

For a moment the confessor remained silent, and the miserable De Morley lay gazing up to him with an expression of agony on his dying features that was in every way pitiable.

“The sin has been great, my son,” said Father Ambrose, solemnly. “The saints for-

bid that I should deny this awful truth, or seek to quiet your troubled conscience, save by the lawful absolution of the church. The sin has been great, and great must be the expiation for it! Let these last precious moments of your life be devoted to the two-fold duty of arranging such means as you have for providing for this expiation, and in devout thankfulness for the merciful provisions of a faith which renders the doing so a sure and certain means of safety. The prayers of the church must be secured to you, my dear son."

"What means have I?" murmured the sick man, with another piteous groan — "what means have I of providing expiation adequate to my sin? Am I the master of my wealth? Will it not, in a few short moments, pass away from me, even as my last breath will do, and leave my soul naked and destitute to all the tortures and torments that avenging Heaven can inflict? Oh, Father Ambrose! did not the entail that carries my long-descended acres to a heretic daughter—did this not tie my hands, and prevent the act which my repentant soul dictates, I should not lie here

groaning thus helplessly, but would nobly pay the all-merciful church for such ceaseless prayers as would turn the terrors that now rack me, into hopeful, ay, triumphant gladness! But is not my estate entailed? And know you not, Father Ambrose, that even the small revenue of one poor thousand a year, over which I had once entire control, was madly settled by my own most sinful hand upon my heretic wife? Then how can I make atonement? how can I obtain those precious masses which alone can save my soul from torture? How? how? how?"

"Even the wish, the true and earnest wish to make such expiation, will do much towards justifying the voice that shall breathe hopes of mercy in your dying ear," returned the priest, kindly; "but it cannot justify the least delay in doing all you yet can do towards lawfully propitiating the all-availing prayers, which the tender mercy of the church permits repentant sinners to secure by the sacrifice of their worldly wealth. It cannot be, my son, but that you have personalities at your command, which if all, yea ALL, be freely given,

may yet avail you much. Bethink you, sir! The jewelled crucifix that now lies upon your breast; these richly-wrought beads of amber; your watch; your rings. There must still be much, my beloved son, the dedication of which to holy church no heretic voice can challenge. Let this thought comfort you, and let no time be lost."

"Nay, blessed father! All, all, all, you see! Oh, take it all! while I have yet breath to speak the words—yes, you are right; there still is something. My thoughts, long fixed upon the noble property that my repentant spirit has so long wished to dedicate as atonement to the church, have taken no heed of lesser things. But blessed, for ever blessed, be the voice which has recalled to my failing spirit the little that I still hold at my command. Alas! it is little. Oh! very little for such a work. And yet—and yet—it is more, father, than you——"

But here his voice failed him. His eyes closed, and the startled priest believed that he had breathed his last. But it was not so, and Father Ambrose perceiving that, although

failing fast, the spirit of his penitent had not yet sunk into that last deep sleep, which must render even the voice of a Jesuit confessor unavailing, hastened to repair the error he had committed in permitting the precious moments which might have been employed in action to be wasted in discussion.

The holy man poured out a cordial draught that stood ready upon the table, and applying it to the lips of the trembling patient, said—
“This was entrusted to me by your wise and careful physician, my dear son, to be administered if nature seemed failing at a moment when strength was needed. This is such a moment. Swallow this draught, if you have still the power to do it, and instantly employ the vigour it will bestow in finishing what you were about to utter when this faintness seized you. Remember, that a few moments well employed may yet avail you much!”

Weak as he was, there was no faltering in the grasp with which the dying De Morley seized the cup, and swallowed its contents. The very consciousness that the feeble fluttering at his heart was produced by the last

sinking effort of expiring nature, gave him intensity of will, which, with the good drug's aid, seemed for a while to baffle and keep at bay the tyrant death.

“There lies my watch,” he said, in accents as audible as those of Father Ambrose himself; “a small key is attached to it, which opens the drawer of yon writing desk. In that drawer lies another key; it is that of the strong closet opening from my dressing-room. All title deeds are there, and much massive plate, but, alas! each piece an heir-loom. But there is also a casket—a heavy casket! Take it! I give it to the church! I give it to buy masses for the repose of my most sinful soul! Father Ambrose, that casket contains—it is—the holy Virgin be praised!—it is a large casket, and it is full of splendid unset jewels, purchased at Vienna a month before my sinful marriage, for the purpose of adorning the fatal beauty, sent by the fiend to destroy me. But ere they reached me, a gleam of holy light had seemed to fall upon me from the image of our blessed Lady—that image, before which I implored her to

kneel, and she refused. It was that refusal, Father Ambrose, that saved my soul from hopeless and eternal destruction, for it taught me to fear that her firmness might master mine. But go, father—go where I tell you, and seize upon this well-remembered treasure. There is no time to lose. Get it into your possession ere I die!”

Father Ambrose took the watch, and, detaching from it the little key, walked across the room, and having opened the desk, took from it not only the key he had been desired to seek for, but also materials for writing. With these he approached the bed, and having deposited them on the little table that stood close beside it, he addressed his penitent in a tone of awful solemnity, and said, taking him in his arms as he spoke, and raising him up, till, with the support of pillows, he had placed him in a sitting position—

“ My son, you have declared with your dying breath, that it was your wish to leave to the church all the property, free from the control of former settlements, of which you shall die possessed. Rouse up your failing

strength. The holy Virgin and the blessed spirit of our founder saint will sustain you. Write on this paper the words, 'I give and bequeath to Father Ambrose, *in trust for the holy company of Jesus, to which he belongs*, all property, real and personal, without reserve, of which I die possessed.' Do this, and instant absolution shall follow, as full as if all the masses thus purchased were already said. Delay not! Write these words!"

The dying man looked dimly at him for a moment, as if not fully understanding his purpose, and during this moment a pen was placed in his hand. The act by which this was done seemed to rouse him. The light of life again gleamed from his eye, and with eager haste he commenced the task enjoined; but ere he had written three words, he sank back, exclaiming, "Oh, Father Ambrose, I have no power to guide the pen."

"Compose yourself; rest, rest for a moment," replied the priest; and moving with a rapid step into the anteroom he rang a bell, which immediately brought Philip and another male attendant to his side.

“ You may return into your master’s room, Philip, and you also, William. I think that he requires a last act of faithful service from you both.”

Without further preface, or loss of time, the priest and the two servants returned to the room, when Father Ambrose, finding upon examination that the pulse of his penitent had not ceased to beat, although his eyes were closed, had once more recourse to the stimulating mixture which had produced such excellent effect before. But this second attempt was made too late; the patient had no power to swallow the drug which the holy man presented to his lips.

Father Ambrose perceived that the important object which for a moment he believed possible, had eluded him.

One more last desperate effort he made to impart a few drops of the powerful cordial, but in vain; and then he proceeded, with all possible solemnity and decorum to administer extreme unction, and had the satisfaction of believing that the ceremony had been completed before the last breath of life had passed De Morley’s lips.

But except this satisfaction, nothing remained that could greatly console him under the heavy loss he had sustained. Had even the casket, so cordially given, been at that moment safely deposited in his pocket, the mind of the priest would have been relieved from a heavy weight of self-reproach.

Not that he had anything like indifference or neglect with which to reproach himself, but could he be acquitted of indiscretion? Had he been wise, with such wisdom as those of his order are expected to display on all occasions? He had been vigilant; but had he been discreet? While taking means to secure an uncertain good, had he not suffered that which was certain to escape him?

Had his order been one which resorts to penance and scourging, in order to settle accounts of conscience, Father Ambrose would most assuredly have retired from the chamber of death to his own solitary cell, and dyed its pavement with repentant drops of blood.

But it is not thus that the children of Loyola are instructed to atone for sin, or propitiate favour, either on earth or in heaven.

Instead of turning his thoughts towards fasting, penance, or prayer, Father Ambrose, as he watched the servants arrange the limbs of their departed master, meditated earnestly on the means which were still within his power, for obtaining the casket which had been bestowed upon him, in trust, by his departed penitent.

The code by which he regulated his actions was far too independent a one to suggest to him any doubts as to the righteousness of secretly taking possession of what the laws of the land might oppose his taking openly. But there were many things to be thought of besides the getting possession of the casket. The mission of the Jesuit confessor at Cuthbert Castle ended with the life of Richard Randolph de Morley, but the beneficial results of that mission might depend upon something more important than a casket of jewels.

Notwithstanding the firm Protestantism of Lady Sarah de Morley, which had by this time pretty well extinguished even the sanguine reliance on his own power as a resident Jesuit confessor, Father Ambrose was far

from having abandoned all hope that the De Morley property might still, at some future day, be converted to the uses of that church, to which its last male heir was so faithfully devoted.

The foundation of this hope rested upon the observations which the watchful priest had been making for the last fifteen years on the character of the young heiress.

In Juliana de Morley, he thought he had found a being as yielding and malleable as her mother was the reverse. To him her manner had been ever gentle, ever respectful; and for her father, she had evidently entertained a feeling of reverence, which was, in the opinion of Father Ambrose, utterly irreconcilable with the belief that she held his faith in the same abhorrence that her obstinately heretic mother had done.

These observations, as well as the hopes he had founded upon them, had been constantly and faithfully transmitted to his superiors; and most reluctant would he have been when returning to them—which it was his purpose to do as soon as the last obsequies of De Mor-

ley were over—to lessen the hopes he had thus created, by avowing that, in order to secure a paltry casket of the value perhaps of a few thousand pounds, he had secretly withdrawn it from the treasure chamber of the castle, at the obvious risk of leaving behind him the character of a thief, instead of that of unblemished honour, and of a purity of moral conduct which not even the eye of prejudice could misconstrue.

The ten minutes of solemn meditation thus spent at the foot of his departed patron's bed sufficed to decide the line of conduct he should pursue. And having knelt before the altar of the little chapel for a few minutes more, while the two servants knelt reverently on the floor behind him, each one covering his eyes with his hand, he rose, and addressing himself to Philip, gave some necessary orders as to the manner in which the last duties were to be provided for, and then added, "It is you, my good Philip, who must see to all this; the other men-servants must watch the body in succession. I go to the Lady Sarah. It is my duty to announce this event to her."

CHAPTER III.

THE priest found Lady Sarah de Morley and her daughter sitting side by side, on a sofa in the young lady's dressing-room. Her mother had been endeavouring to prevail on her to go to bed—advice, which not only the lateness of the hour, but the extreme paleness of the poor girl's countenance rendered more than reasonable; but hitherto it had been resisted, upon the plea that sleep at such a moment was out of the question.

“It is all over!” exclaimed Lady Sarah, the instant Father Ambrose appeared.

For a moment she, too, covered her face with her hands, and during that moment the long-chilled and almost forgotten thoughts of her early love rushed back upon her mind with a freshness of emotion which nothing

less startling than death itself, and the consciousness of eternal separation which accompanied it, could have produced.

But there was a strictness, I might almost say a sternness of truth, in the character of Lady Sarah, which rendered the idea of appearing to feel a sorrow, which in fact was foreign to her heart, detestable; and immediately recovering her self-possession, she said, "I presume that I am not mistaken as to the nature of your errand, Father Ambrose? I presume that you come to announce the death of my husband?"

"Even so, madam," replied the priest, at once reproaching both her heresy and want of feeling, by dropping his eyelids in mournful guise, and signing himself with the figure of the cross.

"My daughter is a minor," resumed Lady Sarah, "and till the will of Mr. de Morley shall have been opened, I know not on whom devolves the authority that must regulate her affairs till she becomes of age. In the meantime, however, I am sure that I cannot do wrong in trusting to you, sir, for ordering

everything necessary for the ceremony of interment. And I will summon the friend to whom, in the absence of all my daughter's nearest of kin, I think it best to apply, in order to assist you in seeking for a will. I know not if any such document exists; but it is probable, and of course it must immediately be sought for. I will despatch a messenger to our clergyman, Mr. Wardour, immediately."

"I have reason to believe that there is no will, madam," replied the priest, fixing his eyes steadily on her face, "save that expressed verbally by Mr. de Morley to me in his last moments. Your husband, lady, was still young, still in the prime of manhood, when this fatal malady seized upon him. That it was his wish and purpose to have bequeathed all his personalities to the church, for the purchase of masses for his soul's repose, I know. The very last words he uttered were to that effect. All that was not entailed, he declared it to be his purpose thus to consecrate, but ere the pious work was completed, the spirit had fled."

I know not if there be any word correctly

descriptive of the movement of the lips which was visible on the countenance of Lady Sarah as she listened to these words. To say she smiled would be utterly untrue; neither could the term sneer, in its ordinary sense, have been correctly applied to it. But there was some feeling within her that so strongly

“wrought,

That one might almost say her body thought,”

as she steadily returned the steady gaze of Father Ambrose. It was, in truth, a searching glance that she gave him; but his eye fell not before it, nor was there in his countenance the slightest trace of any expression that could be construed into either shame or fear. But he remained silent, and seemed to expect that she would reply to what he had just spoken.

She did so, after a short pause, by saying—
“If there be no will, sir, my daughter will become a ward in chancery, and the property she inherits, whether entailed, or as heir at law, will of course be under the management and protection of that court. Meanwhile, I will request you, sir, to turn your attention

wholly to superintending the performance of the last duties to the body of Mr. de Morley. You must be aware that in this there should be no delay."

"Nor shall there, madam," replied Father Ambrose, solemnly. "But ere I quit your presence," he added, "I hold it to be my duty to enforce upon your understanding, madam, and upon your conscience, as a responsible human being, though unhappily an alien to the true faith, that your husband's dying lips bequeathed to the church of Rome the whole of the unentailed property of which he died possessed. Is it your intention to resist the fulfilment of this most solemn purpose of your departed husband's dying will?"

It was really a smile, though a very faint one, which now moved the lips of Lady Sarah, as she replied, "Though educated, as I believe, entirely at Rome, Father Ambrose, you are still an Englishman, and I should have thought it impossible, I confess, that you could be so completely ignorant of the laws of your country as your words prove you to be, had I not myself heard you utter them. Are you really

unaware, sir, that I have no more power either to resist, or to fulfil, the spoken will of my husband, than you have?"

"At any rate, madam, you have as much. And permit me to say, that were your reverence for your departed husband as great as mine for my departed friend, it would suffice to prevent so dreadful an outrage to his memory, as the refusing obedience to his dying words would testify."

"This is no moment for discussion of any kind," replied Lady Sarah, with dignity. "Permit me to remind you, sir, that I have assigned a duty to you, which must be performed by myself, if you decline it. Let me request you to summon Mr. Morris, the steward, that he may immediately receive your orders, and see that their immediate execution be attended to."

"Trust me, madam, I know my duty, and will take care, very sufficient care, that it shall not be neglected. That everything connected with the funeral obsequies of my honoured friend should be attended to with the utmost reverence, affection, and solicitude, I am as

much aware as it is possible your ladyship should be. But let me tell you, madam—with all the authority which ought to rest upon me from the remembrance of the holy functions performed by me for the spiritual benefit of the honoured dead, through so many years of his exemplary life—let me tell you, madam, that these funeral obsequies, upon which you seem inclined to direct such all-absorbing care, are as nothing when compared to the awful responsibility which attaches to you, and to me, and to your young daughter also, respecting this solemn bequest, intended to secure the assistance of our holy church in obtaining a mitigation of the sufferings which his earthly sins may have deserved. Whatever mistaken and soul-destroying heresies may have been inculcated on your own mind, madam, and on that of your daughter, I will not believe it possible that you should contemplate with indifference the idea that your departed husband, having lived and died in the belief that such atonement for sin was efficient as a peace-offering in the eyes of God, should go to his account without its being made, or that such

being his belief, you can hesitate to confirm a bequest having such an object in view."

"No power, either to confirm or negative such a bequest, have I, Father Ambrose," replied Lady Sarah, gravely; "if I had, be assured, sir, that it should be used to the very utmost to confirm the last wishes of Mr. de Morley. But nothing can be more completely visionary than the idea that any such power is vested in me. I should think, sir, that a little reflection would show you that I speak truly in saying this; but if you still doubt the fact, I must refer you to the opinion of Mr. Harding, who, I believe, you know to be too good a lawyer to render it possible for any one to question his authority on such a point."

"Having no doubt, whatever," replied the priest, "that your ladyship's *law* is perfectly correct, it is unnecessary for me to apply to Mr. Harding on the subject. But it is not on the law of the case that I would plead to you, madam, nor to Miss de Morley either. There are other laws than those made by man, which, at such a moment and in such a case, must surely supersede all that jurisprudence ever

invented. Surely the law of nature will teach Mr. de Morley's daughter, if it fail to teach you, madam, that if he died in the belief that this bequest might save his sinful soul from ages of torment, it must be an impious outrage to his memory to refuse compliance with it."

Juliana de Morley had sat during the whole of this conversation with her hands clasped together on her knees, and her eyes steadfastly fixed upon the carpet, as if fearing that interference on such a subject, even by a look, might be misinterpreted by the priest, whom she had ever considered as a sort of mysterious being, too completely apart from her, and from all things upon which it would be seemly for her to give an opinion, for it to be decorous for her to seem to listen to him, with any appearance of wishing to comprehend what he said. But now, this species of mental abstraction failed her, and her two companions were perhaps equally astonished by her suddenly exclaiming, "I do beseech you, my dearest mother, to comply at once with the wishes of Father Ambrose! Do it for my sake, mother!

Never shall I sleep or wake in peace if this demand be refused."

Lady Sarah looked fondly in the face of her daughter, and reading there a degree of solemn earnestness, such as her young features had never expressed before, she threw her arm round her, and pressed her to her bosom with the sort of petting and indulgent fondness which often leads to compliance with the wishes of an only and too dearly loved child, even when such wishes are more wilful than wise.

"I hardly know what it is that the priest asks of us, my love," she replied, "but if it be your wish that he should be gratified, you need fear no opposition from me. State specifically, my good sir, the amount of what you demand."

Father Ambrose did not immediately answer her. For one short moment he lost that perfect and entire self-command, in the practice of which he had been educated, and in the use of which he felt more pride than in any other accomplishment that he had ever acquired. From the moment Juliana had begun to speak, his eyes were not only fixed upon

her, but seemed gifted with the power of seeing much that was 'not yet in sight,' and that too of an interest so absorbing, as for a moment to prevent his having the power of attending to anything else.

But this unusual sort of forgetfulness did not last long, nor was the shortness of its duration caused alone by his habitual propensity to '*mind what he was about*;' its duration was shortened also by his feeling that his attention might now be given to the question propounded by Lady Sarah, without his losing anything by withdrawing his observation from her daughter.

It was not then, nor was it there, that the light which he had seemed to catch from Juliana's tearful eyes could avail him; he therefore replied, with equal firmness and respect, "Madam, I demand nothing. No reasonable man in this worldly-wise country would dream of making any *demand* upon property, unless such demand could be enforced by law. I do not therefore demand, but I would earnestly request you to deposit in my hands whatever valuables there are within

your reach, which belonged to your late husband, and which, to the best of your knowledge and belief, are not subjected to the entail by which his estates became the property of his daughter."

Lady Sarah de Morley almost smiled again, as she replied, "To the best of my knowledge and belief, Father Ambrose, all the furniture, all the plate, and all the books in the castle are unentailed. I think I have heard that the pictures, or at least some of them, are heirlooms, and therefore of these we will not speak; but as to the rest—the furniture, plate, and books, I mean, are you really of opinion that either I or my daughter (being a minor) have the power of putting you in possession in any manner that could make their value available either to you or your order?"

Father Ambrose took a moment for reflection before he replied, and then said, "I fear not, madam. There can be no doubt but that the Court of Chancery will demand for the interests of its ward that strict account should be given of all the property of which her father died possessed. Nor can the pious

feelings of the daughter avail the departed father, so long as she remains a minor. The transfer, therefore, of furniture, plate, and books to me as the agent of my order is, for the present, obviously impossible, or at least unavailing. But if I am able to prove to you, madam, that your husband, a few moments before he breathed his last, confided to me the existence of a secret treasure—a treasure of the existence of which there is probably no living being aware but myself; if I prove to you that at this solemn parting moment he not only confided to me the secret of its existence, but the means by which to find it, while his last accents breathed his fervent entreaty that it might be converted into money to be expended in masses for the repose of his soul; would you, I say, in that case refuse me your permission to avail myself of the instructions I have received, for the purpose of getting possession of it?"

"You have really contrived to puzzle me, Father Ambrose," replied the lady. "The wish which you have just heard so strongly expressed by my daughter, has so much influ-

ence with me, that could I venture to consult my inclination, I should immediately request you to take possession of this secret treasure, be it what it may. But should I not, by doing so, make myself a party to an act which the law of the land declares culpable?"

"It may be so, madam," returned the priest. "But what will that other law, of which we have spoken, whisper to the heart of your unhappy daughter, when she lies down to rest, and remembers that the walls of her father's castle still contain that which, though useless to her, he died in the act of bequeathing for the purpose of saving his offending soul from torture? It is idle to attempt sheltering your consciences behind the law. *This* is the question that both mother and daughter must answer. They must answer it to me, they must answer it to themselves, they must answer it to God! Widow and orphan of De Morley! do you give, or do you refuse your consent to my taking possession of the treasure, the existence and the position of which he has with his dying breath confided to me?"

"Oh! give it, dearest, dearest mother!"

exclaimed Juliana, strongly agitated. "If the property be mine, surely there can be no dishonesty, no dishonour, in giving it up. Let me implore you to make no opposition. Tell Father Ambrose to do with this hidden treasure exactly what my father desired might be done with it."

"It cannot be more your wish than it is my own, dearest Julia," replied Lady Sarah, "that this treasure, which the father talks of, should be disposed of according to the wishes of my husband. The difficulty lies in my want of any legal power to authorize it."

"After all, madam," said Father Ambrose, "this treasure, as my dying penitent avowed with bitter regret, is comparatively but of little value. It consists in precious stones, if I understood him rightly, which are contained in a small casket, the key of which he gave me; and whether you decide that I should obey his dying command, and take it, or that you refuse your consent to my doing so, and that I depart without it, in either case it is fitting that your ladyship should know what it is you grant or what it is that you refuse. Here is

the key, madam, and if you will command a servant to accompany me, I will teach him where to find the casket, so that he may place it in your hands."

"I will not mix myself in the transaction at all, Father Ambrose," replied Lady Sarah, after giving a moment to silent meditation on the subject.

"In your presence I am ready to assure my daughter that I should make no objection to her complying with her father's wish, as stated to us by you, were she authorized to do so, either by the authority of those appointed by law for her guardians, or by her own judgment, she being of age to exercise it. I have no more power in this matter than you have yourself, sir, and therefore I must request that you will waste no more time in repeating this idle application to me."

"Quarrel not, lady, with the respect paid to you," returned the priest, meekly. "It is this feeling, and no other, which has led me to refer to you. The knowing that you were without authority sufficed not to conquer this

feeling. But I will endeavour to annoy you, madam, no more."

This was said with an air of so much humility, that Lady Sarah, despite her habitual distrust as to the sincerity of Father Ambrose, when professing at all kindly feelings towards a heretic became conscious that it was possible she had treated him harshly during their conference; and she now replied to him in a friendly accent, with an assurance that she was very far from feeling any inclination to quarrel with him, and on his part he received this assurance with an appearance of more gratitude and gladness, perhaps, than it deserved.

"Then I shall leave the honoured roof which has so long sheltered me with resignation," he replied, with a benignant, and almost happy smile. "Had it been otherwise, my departure would have been bitter indeed!"

How deeply these words affected Lady Sarah may be doubtful; but they sank deeply into the heart of Juliana. All that she had not, and could not have felt for her gloomy

father during his life, seemed now to swell her heart almost to bursting; and she would gladly have given years of life to have possessed power at that moment to comply with every wish expressed by Father Ambrose in her father's name; and, as if he had read her heart, the priest turned to her, and said—

“Did my word, solemnly pledged, require proof, which I trust it does not, I have given it, by repeating the information, unknown to all others, which was communicated to me by your dying father. Your mother states, and truly, that she has no authority. You, young lady, though you, as yet, have no legal rights, have most assuredly, in the sight of Heaven, the more important real right of disposing of what is your own. Will you authorize me to use those keys in the execution of your father's last command by all the right you have?”

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed Juliana, eagerly. “Mamma, I am sure, cannot object to this. Can you, mamma?”

“I will not object to your saying anything, my beloved child, that your good heart dictates,” replied Lady Sarah. “You have

already heard me tell Father Ambrose that you have, as yet, no right to dispose of your property. It was my duty to make both you and him understand thus much; but I do not feel called upon to interfere further."

"Then I will beg of you, Miss de Morley, to accompany me to the plate closet directly," said Father Ambrose, in an accent which expressed entire satisfaction at what he seemed to consider as the final decision of the question; and he instantly took a lamp with one hand, and opened the door for her with the other, very quietly indeed, but with a promptitude which showed that it was far from his wish to lose time.

He did not turn his eyes towards Lady Sarah; but if he had done so, the look of cold but tranquil scorn expressed by her handsome features, would have produced no visible effect upon him. Yet Father Ambrose too had a proud heart swelling in his breast, and a wakeful and keen intelligence in his eye, which failed not to discover at what value she rated the honour of a man who could thus take advantage of the agitated feelings of a young

orphan girl, in order to get possession of her property.

In truth, not even his averted eye prevented his being perfectly aware of what was passing in her mind, but neither the firmness nor the swiftness of his tread was affected by it; and, ere five minutes had fully elapsed after leaving her presence, he had led the young heiress to her treasure chamber, and received from her trembling hands—trembling, however, as Father Ambrose was quite aware, only from eagerness to complete the business she was upon—the heavy casket containing the precious stones described by the dying De Morley.

The eagerness of Juliana to give this casket sufficed to make her tremble; but the eagerness of the priest to receive it was greater still. Yet if any one who had watched the old man at that moment, had supposed that the grasp with which he clutched that precious casket, and the glance with which his eye seemed to devour it, proceeded from any wish to appropriate its contents to himself, they would have been entirely mistaken.

CHAPTER IV.

THE splendid pageant of Mr. de Morley's funeral was over; the widowed lady and her daughter resumed their former occupation of walking, riding, and driving in the park, and reading, working, talking, and practising on harp and piano, in the house,—the only difference being that their dresses had become more dismal, and their fair faces less so.

Yet still Father Ambrose lingered.

Nevertheless, his intention of returning to Rome had not only been announced by himself, but the power of putting it in execution very liberally supplied by the lady. Nay, sundry boxes, containing his books and other effects, might be seen, canvassed and corded, and placed conveniently ready for removal.

Yet still Father Ambrose lingered.

The men-servants being, from the house-steward to the stable-boys, all Roman Catholics, had received their mourning and their wages, and one by one had disappeared, while their successors, of the Protestant faith, and about one-third in number, quietly succeeded them.

Yet still Father Ambrose lingered.

“What can the priest be waiting for?” said Lady Sarah to her daughter, after she had been expecting every day for more than a month that he would take his departure. “He has got all he is likely to get, nay, positively all he has asked for, yet still he goes not. What are we to do, Julia? I shall not feel quite at my ease till he is gone.”

“I believe, mamma, that the poor man only stays because he feels that the saying farewell for ever, will be painful. There never has been any very great intimacy or familiarity between us, certainly, but I think that now the parting is come, he feels a greater interest in me, as the child of his patron, than he ever did before. He has been in the habit of seeing

me daily almost ever since I was born, and as I do not think I ever ventured to be naughty in his presence in my life, I suppose he thinks I am a very good sort of a heretic, and feels something approaching to affection for me accordingly."

"Has he ever spoken to you on the subject of religion, since your father's death, Julia?" demanded Lady Sarah.

"Never, mamma!" was the reply. "But, nevertheless, he certainly seems to take more interest in me than formerly. He talks to me a great deal more, as you may perceive; though, to be sure, that may only be because he has got nothing else to do. But he looks in my face, sometimes, as earnestly 'as he would draw it,' as Ophelia says; while formerly, he took so little heed of me and my face, that I doubt if he could have conscientiously deposed to the fact of my having two eyes or one."

"Well, dearest, I hope this earnest perusal of your face will speedily enable him to carry away the pretty features by heart, for, in honest truth, I weary of the sight of him.

He never had the bad taste to obtrude his influence upon me openly, in any way, but I am greatly mistaken if my past years did not owe much of their heartless gloom to him. However, there is nothing for it but patience, I believe; for as we have gone on with such admirable forbearance on both sides, during so many long years, it certainly would be a pity to conclude the acquaintance by his being turned out of doors at last."

"Oh, do not name such a possibility, even in jest, mamma!" replied Juliana. "I dare say it will soon be over; and we shall enjoy ourselves the more when he goes, because we have been wishing for it with a little impatience beforehand. He is, I suspect, a little sentimental about leaving the country, as well as about leaving the castle; for I see him from my window constantly, every morning, walking across the park towards the West Lodge, with his hands behind his back, his hat pulled over his eyes, and his head bent forward; always and ever the same pace, the same attitude, the same direction. I never saw a man who gave me so good an idea of what people

mean, when they say of some one that he is 'lost in thought.'"

"I wish he would be pleased to take his meditative rambles among the seven hills of Rome, instead of selecting the lawns and groves of Cuthbert for them," returned her mother. "But, unless he be very unreasonable indeed, I shall not disturb him. I presume, my dear, that if he remain beyond six months, you will not refuse to accompany me to my dowager-box at Henley. It would be much pleasanter, Julia, for us to watch the silent glidings of Father Thames, than those of Father Ambrose."

"He will not stay six months, mamma, take my word for it," said Juliana. "If he does, we will leave him in possession of the castle, and tell the Lord Chancellor all about it."

"Exactly so," said Lady Sarah, nodding her very cordial assent. "But here are our ponies. In which direction shall I drive you to-day, Julia?"

"Don't you think, mamma, that we might venture to change the scene a little to-day?"

Are you not almost tired of park, park, park? which, by the way, considering the abundance of birds, very naturally reminds me of *perdrix*, *toujours perdrix*. I am tired of seeing the very hares themselves looking in our faces without budging an inch. They know so very well, the cunning things, that we shall do them no harm, and that no other human beings are likely to come near them. Truly, mamma, their 'tameness is shocking to me.' Let us drive out of the park, if it be only for one mile. We shall be certain of meeting no one, if we drive to Langley Knoll. An empty house is not likely to attract visitors."

This proposal was agreed to. Lady Sarah placed herself in the low phaeton, in which the mother and daughter took their almost daily drive; but instead of following, as they had lately done, one of the pretty sheltered rides cut through the fine old plantations which surrounded the park, they trotted along the broad gravel road which led to one of the lodges, and from thence, by a gentle ascent, to a small but very pretty residence, now vacant,

and advertised for letting, from whence one of the most expansive views in the neighbourhood might be seen to great advantage.

Lady Sarah stopped her ponies when they had reached the level platform upon which the principal gates of the little domain opened, and turning round in the carriage, exclaimed,

“You were well inspired, dear Julia. The view looks beautiful to-day. I never saw those distant peaks to such advantage.”

“Let us get out, mamma,” cried Juliana; “only for five minutes, just to have one look from the terrace. The air is so deliciously clear that we shall see the castle, and the river, and the oaks, and everything, most charmingly!”

The groom who was in attendance on them was ordered to dismount and stand at the heads of the ponies; and in another moment the prophecy of Juliana was fulfilled, by their looking down from the terrace of Langley Knoll over a landscape, the foreground of which was embellished by their own noble residence, and the whole scene set off to great advantage by an atmosphere which is often

enjoyed in England, when rain is coming after an interval of some hours.

This beautiful terrace was but of short extent, being not more than four times the length of the house before which it stretched itself; but it was of the very finest turf, which the gardener left in charge of the place still kept with great care, rendering it, in conjunction with the view which it commanded, one of the prettiest spots it was possible to stand upon. A porch of Gothic stonework marked the middle of this beautiful little parade, and the middle of the house also; but it gave access only to a window in one of the sitting-rooms, the house door being approached from the platform where the pony carriage was waiting.

Juliana's five minutes had been more than doubled before either of the ladies had gazed their fill upon the scene before them; and then, though Lady Sarah said, "Now, Juliana, I think we must go," she added, "but certainly, as long as the place is untenanted, we must drive up here every time the air is as clear as it is to-day."

"I will go this moment, mamma," replied

the young lady, "if you will only go with me for half a moment into the porch. Was there ever anything half so beautiful as that choice medley mixture of roses and woodbines? I must some day make a sketch here, mamma, and this flowery wreath shall be the frame of it."

The porch was furnished, as such a porch ought to be, with very comfortable seats; and while the "half moment" was stretching itself very pleasantly into half an hour, Lady Sarah, established in the "best corner," as her daughter declared when she placed her there, and Juliana herself making experiments upon every aperture which presented itself, in order to select the point most favourable for her projected sketch, the figure of Father Ambrose suddenly appeared at one of the angles of the terrace, which he had approached, in company with another man, from a part of the garden which communicated with it.

"Don't move, mamma!" said Juliana, in a whisper; "there is Father Ambrose talking with the gardener, I believe, at the end of the terrace. Though we are such prodigiously

good friends, I do not want him to join us now. Father Ambrose and this bright heavenly view have nothing in common. If you speak, speak in a whisper."

But Lady Sarah did not speak at all. She contrived, however, to change the position of a leaf or two, so as to permit her to watch the movements of the reverend father, and she was rather surprised at the evident earnestness with which he conversed with the man who accompanied him.

"Do you suppose that man is a Romanist?" whispered Juliana in the ear of her mother.

"No," replied Lady Sarah, in the same tone; "I know the man perfectly well. It is John White, who used to live with the Luttwoods as their head gardener. Mrs. Luttwood told me, last summer, that he had left them because he had been offered higher wages here. He is not only gardener, but bailiff, I believe. He is no Papist, however, for I see both him and his wife constantly at church."

"At any rate, he has found favour with our Father Ambrose," whispered Juliana; "for, mark you, the priest's finger is on the gar-

dener's sleeve, and the touch is repeated again, and again, and again, each touch evidently intended to enforce something that is too important to be forgotten. I wish he would take himself off. It is very odd how completely my rapturizing view has been crushed by the sight of the holy man. I do not care a farthing, now, whether I ever make the sketch or not. I wish we could get away, mamma, without being seen by him."

"Hush, hush, hush—there he goes!" said Lady Sarah; "luckily enough, by the same path, I presume, by which he came, which must have been by the steps from the lower garden—so there is no danger of our meeting him. I trust that he will soon take himself off altogether, and then we may go where we please, without having our joy extinguished by the sight of him."

They still, however, waited for a moment, to see if he would return, but they saw no more of him; and in a few moments they were again trotting briskly on their way home, which they reached without having been perceived by Father Ambrose, excepting at the

moment that they drove up to the principal door of the castle.

He was himself about to enter the building by an obscure entrance, not often used, which led into the offices; but, on seeing the ladies, he changed his purpose, and approached the principal door himself. He paused on the steps, to hope they had enjoyed their drive; and then, standing respectfully aside to let them pass, but without assisting them in leaving the carriage, he followed them in silence into the mansion, and they saw him no more till he made his appearance at the dinner-table.

He looked flushed and fatigued; but when he spoke, it was in a voice, if possible, more gentle than usual; he ate little, and when spoken to by either of the ladies, his answer was preceded by a sigh.

At length all this was explained by his saying—"There are few things more painful to the mind of man than the necessity of leaving a dwelling-place which has long been familiar as a pleasant home. But I must submit to it; and at length I have summoned

sufficient courage to announce to you, madam, and to you, my good young lady, also, that I shall leave your noble roof, your hospitable board, and your amiable society, on Friday. It is ever a day of fast and penance, and therefore well suiting the feelings with which I shall go hence."

"Now, Heaven be praised that I have not quarrelled with him!" mentally exclaimed Lady Sarah.

And then she said exactly everything that it was most proper she should say, and in the most precisely proper manner.

But there is something so beautifully tender in the unworn, unexercised feelings of a young girl, that not even the departure of a gloomy-looking old priest, whom she believed to be a most bigoted adherent to a faith she had been taught to despise, could be announced to her as the end-all of a life-long acquaintance, without her feeling something like sorrow at her heart.

"On Friday, Father Ambrose? That is very soon, indeed!" And she had very nearly added the expression of a wish for his staying

a little longer, when the recollection of what she well knew to be her mother's feelings concerning him, suddenly stopped her; and then, after a moment's pause, she added—"If you must go, Father Ambrose, I hope you will have fine weather and a pleasant journey."

He thanked her by a smile that was almost affectionate in its condescending gentleness, and replied—"To those who only stay, and only go, at the command of duty, my dear young lady, all accidents, whether of pleasure or of pain, are nearly indifferent. Nevertheless, I thank you for your kindness, and if my prayers can avail, your fate, both in life and death, shall be happy."

It had never been the custom of Father Ambrose to join the ladies at Cuthbert Castle in the drawing-room.

Of late years, nearly every evening of his life had been passed *tête-à-tête* with his patron, in the old monastic-looking library; for Mr. de Morley, though still almost a young man, had gradually withdrawn himself from all familiar association with the neighbouring

families; all of whom were as firmly Protestants as he was firmly a Papist.

It may easily be imagined, therefore, that after Mr. de Morley's death, his widow and orphan had not been accustomed to see him after the hour of dinner; and now, as usual, the bow he made as he opened the dining-room door for them to pass through it, was accompanied by the words "good night."

The mother and daughter had often before traversed the hall arm in arm; but never before had Juliana felt the caressing pressure so gaily given—never before had she been conscious of such an elasticity of step in her dear companion—never before had the first words that reached her ears as they entered the apartment appropriated to their evening use been uttered in a voice that so plainly expressed health, hope, and gladness.

"Did the butler drug my goblet, Julia, when I called for wine?" said Lady Sarah, as they walked up the drawing-room together.

"What do you mean, mamma?" replied her daughter, laughing. "Do you feel as if you had been poisoned?"

“No, my dear; but I feel very much as if I were intoxicated. Do say something sober, and very rational to me, Juliana, that I may be brought back to a sense of my human condition, and not fancy that I am actually in the very act of entering the gates of Paradise. Oh! Ju! Ju! Ju! my pretty little Ju! is it a sin to feel so exquisitely, so unspeakably happy as I do at this moment?”

Juliana stared at her mother for a moment in silence. Never before had she heard her speak, had she seen her look, as she did then. But this moment of sudden wonder past, she threw her arms around her, exclaiming—
“Dearest, dearest mother! is it a sin to make your child the happiest being in existence? Oh! how often have I looked in your dear face, my mother, and thought that if your eyes, still so bright and so beautiful, did but look laughingly at me, instead of always whispering, as it were, some secret sorrow that your lips would not speak, how often have I thought that if this could be, I should have everything in the world that my heart wished for! And now that the blessing is come, you ask if it be a sin!”

“ Well, Julia, I will then permit myself to be happy without reproaching myself for it,” replied her mother. “ But I certainly do feel a lightness of heart that appears scarcely reasonable. The old man never did me any harm that I positively know of, and therefore it seems as if it could hardly be right for me to feel so inexpressibly delighted at his departure.”

“ Is it possible, mamma, that it can be the certainty of Father Ambrose’s speedy departure which has thus delighted you?” said Juliana.

“ I fear it is so, my dear,” replied her mother, while a vivid blush mounted to her very temples; “ and your astonishment is the severest reproach you could express; and, moreover, it is so involuntary, so spontaneous, that it must perforce be natural, and therefore just.”

“ You mistake me, mother, you mistake me entirely,” replied Juliana, eagerly; “ my astonishment arises solely from remembering how forbearingly—and oh, how long!—you have endured the presence of a person so distasteful

to you. I cannot, I have no power to tell you, how many things rush back upon my mind, every one of which increases my admiration for you. I cannot tell you all this; but, at any rate, do not fancy that I can blame you."

"Most willingly, my darling, will I drive such a fancy from me, for it is one exceedingly calculated to neutralize the happiness of which I have been boasting. You say, Julia, and I easily believe you, that you have in your memory much that you cannot tell me. And on my side, dear girl, I have much that I cannot tell you—not now at least. Perhaps when you are a great, great deal older, dearest, I may indulge myself by completely opening my heart to you; but as yet it could do neither of us any good."

Lady Sarah was right. It could have done nothing but harm had she attempted to describe to her young daughter all that she had endured in mind from the hour in which she discovered, as she thought, that the idol of her heart, the hero of her imagination, the husband of her choice, and the lover of her

youth, who had taught her to feel a passion as vehement as that which he himself displayed, was, instead of the bright, highly-gifted being she had imagined him, a stern, narrow-minded bigot, the abject slave of the community of which he gloried in calling himself a "temporal coadjutor," and a puling penitent for life, because he had yielded to a passion for her, which she had returned with all the undoubting confidence and warm sincerity of her young and fervent nature.

It could have done nothing but harm to trace back, step by step, the progress of the cold blight that had fallen upon and cankered to the very core every hope of happiness, every sensation of enjoyment in her heart. Nor would there have been more profit had she taxed her memory to show how the deep, but smooth-gliding policy of the priest, appointed by the Jesuit general as her husband's confessor, had filled her cup of sorrow to the very brim, by teaching her to know more completely, day by day, that instead of her being the beloved of her husband's heart, she

was looked upon as a sort of living curse, permitted to remain at his side, perhaps, only as his earthly meed of punishment for the sin he had committed in marrying her.

* * * * *

At the moment when the certain departure of the priest inspired the sensation of enjoyment described above, a natural repugnance to the disturbing it by gloomy narrative had impelled Lady Sarah to the reserve she had practised. And afterwards, though there was not the same sort of trembling dread at the idea of disturbing a state of mind so delightful, and so recently recovered, her exceeding love of truth would, as she well knew, have rendered it impossible for her to have entered upon a detailed description of her married life to Juliana, without betraying herself into drawing such a picture of her husband, as it was not fitting that his child should contemplate. So that the confession thus more than half promised was never made.

* * * * *

Father Ambrose kept *his* promise better. Friday arrived, and the priest departed, hav-

ing received such a farewell from both mother and daughter, as left him no reasonable cause of complaint against either, though his feelings for the two differed as widely as light from darkness.

CHAPTER V.

LADY SARAH DE MORLEY'S sanguine hope that future years of happiness were destined to atone for past years of misery, now appeared to be in the fairest possible train for being realized.

Everything relative to her daughter's splendid inheritance was promptly arranged, without a shadow of difficulty, or annoyance of any kind, and the young lady became a ward of the Court of Chancery, with the liberal allowance of three thousand a-year, so long as she should continue to reside in, and keep up, Cuthbert Castle. Her mother was appointed her personal guardian; and the only restraint laid upon her, was an injunction that, during her minority, she was not to reside permanently abroad.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a more perfect contrast, both as to feeling and appearance, than the drawing-room of Lady Sarah de Morley before her husband's death and after it.

There were several families in the immediate neighbourhood of Cuthbert Castle who "*visited the De Morleys,*" and among these families were some, whose ancestors had gone on "*visiting the De Morleys*" for several generations. But whatever might have been the case in former days, these visitings had made but very slight approaches to anything like social intimacy during the lifetime of the late possessor of that noble domain.

The mere fact of his having been a Romanist would by no means have sufficed to account for this; many English families of this persuasion living, as we all know, among their countrymen professing the established national faith, without a trace of estrangement or restraint being perceptible on either side.

Had Richard Randolphe de Morley been only a Roman Catholic, the situation of his family would have been perfectly different

from what it was. The events I have to record would never have occurred, and these pages would never have been written.

But Richard Randolphe de Morley was something more.

He had been educated at a seminary in Belgium, conducted by Jesuits. The principal of the establishment was a near blood relation of the general of the order; and the education of De Morley, instead of being considered as completed when he returned from the seminary to the home of his father at Cuthbert Castle, was looked upon by his preceptor and his coadjutors as having only commenced under their auspices, and as requiring, from his distinguished position, the continued and unceasing attention of the fraternity of the company of Jesus.

This continued and unceasing attention had been most scrupulously and effectually supplied by the appointment, as his confessor, of John Paul Macfarline, who, under his conventional name of Father Ambrose, had made part of his household from the month at which

his father's death had put him in possession of Cuthbert Castle.

Had his marriage been fixed for a day that should have occurred three months after, instead of three months before, the death of his father, it would, in all probability, never have taken place at all.

But although Randolphe de Morley, the father of Richard Randolphe, was a staunch Romanist, he was not a Jesuit; and although he had been persuaded to send his son to the above-named Belgian seminary, chiefly on the ground of its being more easy for him to return, during the holidays, from thence to Cuthbert Castle, than from any place of education in the Roman States, the Society—who have, each and every of them, more eyes than are fabled in the head of a spider, and who weave webs of more delicate and wide-spreading texture, and of threads more nicely vibrative, than all the spiders in the world—knew that the said Randolphe de Morley was not of or belonging to them; and therefore the said Society determined to abide their time, and not to exert the power which they had acquired

over his son, Richard Randolphe, till his father was at rest in his grave.

No race, or rather no society, congregated on the surface of the earth, understand their own concerns better than do the inheritors of the power of Ignatius Loyola; and those who, under any circumstances, presume to suspect them of doing less for the advancement of their power than they can do, are altogether blunderers and ignorami. Let it, therefore, be taken for granted, that the superintendent watchfulness of Father Ambrose would have been earlier bestowed upon Richard Randolphe de Morley, could his marriage with a heretic have been prevented thereby.

A promise, which the young man was very solemnly bound to conceal from his father, enforced upon him the receiving into his home, as his domestic chaplain and confessor, as soon as he should be entire master of his own actions, whomsoever the general of the Jesuits might choose to appoint. This appointment, when falling upon John Paul Macfarline, secured to the order a watchful sentinel upon a post that *might be* of great importance.

But the killing a king is not the only affair of which it might be said—

“The attempt without the deed confounds us.”

And it was, probably, the practical knowledge of this truth which prevented John Paul Macfarlane from using any very strong measures for the conversion of Lady Sarah de Morley.

He was, in fact, sufficiently sagacious to perceive, at an early period of their acquaintance, that she was not a subject upon which any of the moral engines at his command could take such effect as to make of her a Roman Catholic and a Jesuit. And for this, greatly more than for the unconquerable reserve with which she treated him, he hated her—hated her with that resolute, concentrated, unexpansive species of hatred, which, perhaps, no one but a foiled Jesuit can feel. But she never had reason to complain of him as a busy meddler with her creed.

Nevertheless, his influence upon her destiny had been very great, and she guessed, though she could not be said to know it.

Mr. de Morley's cold austerity of manner

to his Protestant acquaintance was such as to have greatly estranged them; and though *openly* making an acknowledged breach in hereditary friendships of long standing is not in the Jesuit style of doing business, the ultimate result of John Paul Macfarline's influence at Cuthbert Castle was to leave Lady Sarah, at the death of her husband, with the furniture of her principal drawing-room, which had been splendidly fitted up upon her marriage, but little the worse for wear, and her intercourse with her neighbours restricted entirely to morning calls, by no means frequent in any direction, and in most not exceeding one visit made, and one received, in each year.

But, notwithstanding these seemingly strong impediments to the finding friendly and agreeable intercourse in a neighbourhood so long estranged, there was so powerful an impulse given to the spirits of Lady Sarah by the departure of Father Ambrose, that she looked forward with the most undoubting confidence to the future. There was a healthful elasticity of spirit in her character, which had

prevented the wearisome sort of passive resistance in which she had passed the last eighteen years of her life, from destroying her constitution, either physical or moral, and she now felt as if a tremendously heavy weight, which she had borne with equal pain and patience, was at once and for ever removed; and so exhilarating were the sensations produced thereby, that though she knew there were some difficulties to be overcome before her manner of life could be arranged as she wished it to be, the surmounting them seemed to promise more pleasure than pain.

Some people, perhaps, may think that this sort of exceeding happiness, upon the loss of a husband who had never positively ill-used her, was by no means commendable; and probably there are but few women true-hearted enough, even when *tête-à-tête* with their own consciences, to acknowledge to themselves as frankly as Lady Sarah de Morley did, how very glad she was that the period of her wifehood was over.

In truth, many a worse husband than Mr. de Morley has made his wife less miserable;

and it must not be forgotten, either, that she had mourned the wretched monotony of the life they had led more for her daughter's sake than her own. Therefore, at least a portion of the involuntary, inexpressible, but undeniable relief which she experienced, might fairly be set down under the head of maternal affection.

But in what manner were things to be set right again with the half-forgotten neighbours?

Some half dozen, or more, well-mounted grooms in livery had been seen to trot soberly towards the castle, within a day or two after the performance of the funeral rites, each one bearing a card, or cards, inscribed with good country names, and making civil inquiries after the health of the surviving De Morleys.

This was all very well, and quite as it should be; but what was to be done next? A moment's reflection suggested to Lady Sarah the course which, after some little meditation upon it, she determined to pursue.

Amidst the many neighbours residing sufficiently near Cuthbert Castle to have permitted frequent and very easy intercourse with its

inhabitants, there was but one solitary individual bachelor who had continued to avail himself of it, despite the many circumstances which occurred, from time to time, calculated to render his doing so exceedingly disagreeable to him.

This persevering individual was the rector of the parish in which Cuthbert Castle was situated.

Being not only the rector of the parish, but, moreover, the younger son of a baronet residing in a distant part of the county, whose race was as ancient and well-descended as that of De Morley itself, he had been constantly among the dining visitors of the castle, as long as such worldly-minded matters as dinner parties were permitted there. But when they ceased, as cease they did, within a year after the husband of Lady Sarah succeeded to his estate, the morning visits of Reginald Wardour did not cease in consequence.

He was but twenty-five years of age when Cuthbert Castle became the permanent residence of its late possessor, and had himself inhabited his newly-acquired rectory but a few

months when Mr. de Morley and his bride arrived there. When a very handsome young clergyman of good family comes to take up his residence in a comfortable mansion, upon a rich family living, he is generally very well received by the surrounding neighbourhood, even though it *is* usually asserted, during the first six months, that he is engaged to a cousin, or at any rate going immediately to be married to somebody or other.

But when it happens, as it did in the case of the Rev. Reginald Wardour, that the new incumbent is observed to pay much more attention to the furniture of his library, than to that of his drawing-room, and that he is known to have at least three good horses in his stable, though repeatedly heard to declare that he did not consider a carriage as at all necessary to his establishment, he unquestionably becomes more popular still; and so popular under exactly these circumstances did Mr. Wardour become, that his dining now and then at home was entirely his own fault; nay, had such been his pleasure, he never need have slept in his

house oftener than was necessary to establish the fact of his residence.

Yet notwithstanding all this, Reginald Wardour was certainly not intended by nature to be a popular man, and though his neighbours never seemed to find this out, he made the discovery himself, and profited perhaps as little by the profuse and unwearying hospitality offered him, as it was possible to do without giving offence. To go beyond this would in his estimation have been inconsistent with the neighbourly duties of a Christian clergyman, and, wonderful to say, he never offended any one, though by slow degrees the successive hopes of a vast number of very pretty and agreeable young ladies withered and died away, without its being possible for any of them to assign the slightest rational reason for her not having become Mrs. Reginald Wardour.

Perhaps the not having been under the necessity of refusing any invitations, of any kind, to Cuthbert Castle, was one reason why Mr. Wardour liked to make a morning visit

there, better than anywhere else. During the first few years of his residence in the neighbourhood this was really very likely to have been the case, but by degrees his visits were made with different feelings.

Young as Reginald Wardour was when he took possession of his living, he had already felt and suffered much. An early, a strong, and a mutual attachment had existed between himself and the youngest daughter of a noble Duke, whose pedigree was more splendid than his rent-roll. No objection whatever was made by their respective families on either side, and Lady Isabella Mordant was engaged to marry Reginald Wardour as soon as he should have taken possession of his living, and have put the rectory house in a proper condition to receive her.

But lo! just three months before her clerical lover had attained the fitting age for holding the preferment that awaited him, the Lady Isabella was coaxed into jilting him, by her mamma, two brothers, and three sisters, who all greatly preferred seeing her a viscountess than a country clergyman's wife.

The blow was a severe one, and the forsaken lover was shaken to the centre by it. But his mind was of no common order, his character had much firmness, and his intellect great resources. He felt that he had been knocked down, but he felt also that he had strength to rise again; and he did rise, and no one who had never known him previously, could have guessed that at twenty-five he was a very different man from what he had been at twenty-four.

He made an excellent parish priest, but he was a reader and a thinker besides. There were some features in the group which formed the domestic circle at Cuthbert which excited his curiosity and interested his feelings greatly; but it was not till several years had passed over the young head of the beautiful bride of De Morley, that Mr. Wardour began to suspect that she was profoundly unhappy; and even when this conviction at length reached him, the cause of her unhappiness was still a profound mystery.

Sometimes he suspected that the marriage had been forced upon her; and then the

thought (not wholly wrong) that his lost Isabella might even then be as wretched, from yielding to the unrighteous influence of her family, recurred to him; and unconsciously he blended the two so much together in his thoughts, that while watching, year by year, the pallid cheek and heavy eye of Lady Sarah, he learned to look with more pity than anger on the broken vows which had cost him so much suffering. But although the very evident want of sympathy between De Morley and his wife could not fail of suggesting itself as one cause of the sadness which seemed to rest on both, Mr. Wardour's speculations as to the cause of it perpetually varied. Though never suspecting, for a moment, that there had been a time when they were mutually and passionately attached to each other, he still felt persuaded that so well regulated a mind as that of Lady Sarah would have better resisted an evil, now inevitable, had there not been freshly-recurring circumstances calculated to render her life a wretched one. But what these were he knew not.

Never, perhaps, did so much high esteem

and sincere friendship exist, joined with so total an absence of confidence. Had Lady Sarah suffered less, she might have been tempted to talk about it more; but the subject was one upon which she dared not trust herself to speak. Conscious that her bigot husband might almost be said to hold her in abhorrence, she was conscious also that her toleration of him and his dogmas was not much greater than his for her. And much more willingly would she have prepared herself to die, than to have spoken to any human being the thoughts which tortured her.

Nevertheless, she valued Reginald Wardour as he deserved; and it is hardly possible that a stronger feeling of friendship could have existed between them, had the nature of their intercourse been as confidential as it was the reverse.

Concerning the personal qualities of Mr. de Morley, Wardour really knew little or nothing. His address and appearance were in the highest degree aristocratic and gentlemanly; and no accounts which had ever reached the Protestant rector respecting the religious observances of

his Papist parishioner had tended to produce an unfavourable impression. On the contrary, indeed, the Protestant clergyman was quite ready to allow that, as an hereditary adherent to the ancient faith, his secluded habits of life might proceed from a genuine religious feeling, which, while it did not obtrude itself on others, could not be reasonably objected to by any one.

Yet, notwithstanding all these impediments to intimate intercourse between the castle and the rectory, enough existed to render it perfectly natural that Lady Sarah should turn her thoughts towards Mr. Wardour, when considering what would be the best manner of making it known to the neighbourhood that the mother of the heiress of Cuthbert wished that she should be introduced into society as soon as the first few months of deep mourning were over.

Had Lady Sarah been more capable of "seeming," she might easily have led Mr. Wardour to suppose that she considered it as her duty to sacrifice the further indulgence of her taste for retirement, for the sake of her daughter. And this would have been per-

fectly true, had it been qualified by the avowal that she thought the doing so might be beneficial to herself also; but instead of this, she frankly told him that she wished to mix more in society than she had done of late years, and that she should be much obliged if he would make this known in such a manner to the families in the neighbourhood, as might lead them to admit the hermits of Cuthbert into their circle.

CHAPTER VI.

It will be easily believed that no great difficulties occurred in accomplishing this wish.

In addition to the inclination pretty generally felt in all neighbourhoods to be admitted into the society of the most distinguished family belonging to it, there was, in this case, the stimulant of curiosity. There was not only a new young heiress to be seen, and a noble dwelling to be entered, which few of the younger inhabitants of the county had ever entered before, but there were a multitude of interesting speculations on foot, as to what sort of neighbours people would make, who, for the last seventeen years, had been very nearly as inaccessible as if their castle had been during the whole of that time in a state of blockade.

Some declared that they were quite sure it

would be charming, and that they had never been so delighted in their lives; while others confessed that they suspected the whole thing would turn out to be a horrible old-fashioned bore.

Between these opposite opinions there were about as many shades of difference as there were individuals to form them; but there was one point on which all agreed, namely, that it would be perfectly savage, and extremely wrong in every way, not to comply with the wishes so unexpectedly expressed by Lady Sarah de Morley.

“Well, my dear lady!” said Mr. Wardour, entering Lady Sarah’s drawing-room with the unceremonious intimacy which seventeen years of acquaintance, and six months of almost daily intercourse, had now made habitual, “I think that, on Monday next, your castle will be regularly besieged. For not only have the cards by which you returned thanks for inquiries been duly received by all our little world, but I have done your bidding so effectually, that each card seems now to be considered as a ticket of admission to the castle, by every

family who has had the honour of receiving it. So you must really prepare yourselves for a full levee."

"It will appear strange to us at first, Juliana, will it not? And who knows if there be anybody who will like us, or anybody that we shall like?" said Lady Sarah, looking half frightened. "But, at any rate," she continued, "I must feel something like pleasure at seeing Mrs. Curtis again. I can never forget the sweetness with which she endeavoured to conceal from me the deep displeasure felt by Mr. Curtis at the coldness of his reception at the last visit they ever made us. I had not known her very long; but she was a charming person, and I really believe she felt inclined to love me."

"Nor has the inclination left her yet," replied Mr. Wardour. "Of all the people with whom I have conversed on the subject, she is the one who seems to anticipate the greatest pleasure from seeing you; and, moreover, I have the satisfaction of telling you that she is a charming person still. Mr. Curtis looks quite like an old man; and

when you see them, you will think that she looks much more like his daughter than his wife; and her son might easily pass for her brother, for he is very like her, and really does not look much younger."

"Her son!" cried Lady Sarah, shutting her eyes, as if to turn the sense of seeing backward upon the past—"her son! He was a magnificent boy of nine or ten years old when I saw him last—William! Is not his name William? Good Heaven, how odd it is! The name of 'William Curtis' seems to bring back the days that are past, as if there were a conjuring charm in it."

"Well! there he is still, the same magnificent William Curtis," returned Mr. Wardour. "He is decidedly one of the finest young men I ever saw. He would be an invaluable model either for a painter or a statuary—and he is a very good fellow into the bargain."

"He is the only child, is he not?" demanded Lady Sarah.

"Yes. They lost two beautiful girls within a few hours of each other, in the scarlet fever, eight years ago," replied Mr. Wardour.

“Oh, yes! I have not forgotten it. My heart bled for poor Mrs. Curtis! Their boy must have become a thousand times more precious after their dreadful loss! Do they not indulge him?”

“Something a little like it,” replied Mr. Wardour, laughing. “In this case, however, it is the father, and not the mother, who displays the greatest propensity to breaking the second commandment.”

“Poor man! I shall not like him the worse for that,” said Lady Sarah. “I used to think him exceedingly stern and ill-tempered; but the loss of his little girls softened his heart, I suppose.”

Mr. Wardour again laughed. “Why, as to the softness of Mr. Curtis’s heart, I have but little to say. To judge by his general manner, I should not think that he was greatly subject to any weakness in that organ. As to his son, he seems to consider him as something rather deserving adoration than love, and he conducts himself accordingly.”

“And now, Mr. Wardour, tell me something for my own particular amusement,” said Ju-

liana. "Are there any especially charming young ladies with whom I can at once enter upon an eternal friendship?"

"Especially charming young ladies?" he replied, musingly. "I protest to you, my dear Miss de Morley, that I am at a loss how to answer you. Were I to say that I know none such, I should be guilty at once of a cruel injustice, and a very considerable falsification of truth. Yet were I to reply by naming any one as likely to respond to your wishes of running up an eternal friendship, I think I might lead you into error."

"Did you ever, mamma, hear anything so cruelly unkind, not to say savagely rude, as the words now spoken by our reverend minister?" said Juliana, addressing her mother. "Did he say that there were no charming young ladies, I could bear it; but to hear him avow that there are such, but that in all human probability they will not be desirous of forming a friendship with me, is really almost more than I can bear."

"It does sound rather savage, I must confess," returned Mr. Wardour "But let me

explain: first, I do not think our neighbourhood is particularly abounding in young ladies of any description; at least, at this present moment, I can only remember five with whom you are likely immediately to come in contact. The first in order must, of necessity, be the two Lady Lechmeers: the eldest, Lady Margaret, is afflicted with a species of intermitting uncertainty of vision, that renders it always a matter of doubt, to her most intimate acquaintance, whether they will be recognised by her or not. The younger, Lady Louisa, is, doubtless, from some similar, though varied, constitutional peculiarity, precisely in the same predicament respecting the sense of hearing, as her elder sister respecting that of seeing. In both cases you must be aware that difficulties will probably arise in the rapid formation of friendship, for every step you may advance with either in one interview, may be retrograded in the next; and yet both these young ladies are extremely handsome, and are reputed to possess talents of a very high order. Let us come next to the daughter and niece (I think it is) of the Honourable Mrs. Stan-

berry. What the niece is, in point of personal appearance, I really cannot tell you, for I have scarcely seen her; for, from another unhappy constitutional peculiarity, she is perpetually suffering from violent colds, and is always so wrapped up, as to defy the most curious glance to decide what she is like. I have found out, nevertheless, that she has a pair of singularly fine eyes, and very considerable skill in music, so that I do not see how I can honestly refuse to acknowledge that she is charming: and yet, how can I recommend to your sudden, yet eternal friendship, a young lady living under the infliction of perpetual mumps? As to her brilliant cousin, the only daughter, and, indeed, the only child, of the widowed and Honourable Mrs. Stanberry, I will refer you to her mother as to the question of her being charming; but in respect to her answering your purpose, Miss de Morley, as an intimate friend, I am bound in truth to confess that I think she would not."

"And why so, Mr. Wardour?" returned Juliana. "I must particularly request that you will give me your reasons for this cruel exclusion.'

“On the whole,” returned Mr. Wardour, “I think you must acknowledge that I have answered your inquiries in a spirit of candid frankness that must entitle me to your entire confidence; but in this one particular instance I decline to state my own reasons for the exclusion of which you complain, and beg to refer you to the young lady herself.”

“As if I could ask her point blank for what reason she is unfit to be my particular friend! Fie upon you, Mr. Wardour!—but complete your catalogue, I beseech you. Who is the fifth young lady on your list?”

“The fifth young lady on my list is Miss Raymond; she too, like the last named, is an only daughter, and an only child. Her claim to the epithet of *charming* rests on her universally acknowledged talents, which are considered to be of the very first order; and the reason why I doubt her fitness to become the object of your particular affection is, that I think it possible you may feel afraid of her.”

“On account of her too decided superiority, I presume?” said Juliana.

Mr. Wardour paused for a moment, and

then replied—"Yes, Miss de Morley, on account of her too decided superiority."

"How excessively mortifying, is it not, mamma? What! out of five charming young ladies, not one that I may hope to make a friend of? I shall like to prove that you are mistaken, Mr. Wardour. I have a particularly strong inclination to convince you that your last-mentioned young lady, Miss Raymond, is exactly the sort of person for me to sympathise with. Think of our fine old library! I intend immediately to begin reading all the books in it, and only imagine the delight of having such a friend as your Miss Raymond to shut myself up with there, from morn till dewy eve, a summer's day. Yes, I feel convinced that Miss Raymond is the person whom my heart pants to find. What is her Christian name, Mr. Wardour?"

"Selina," he replied; "her name, at least, is of the most approved kind for the purpose required."

"Selina Raymond!" exclaimed Lady Sarah, "there again is a name that recalls the first year of my residence at Cuthbert. But if the

lady in question, Mr. Wardour, be the same as I remember, the difference in age between her and Juliana is rather more than befits the sentimental friendship she talks of. *My* Selina Raymond must be a year or two past thirty."

"It is just possible that such may be the fact," replied Mr. Wardour, gravely; "but these chronological accuracies are, I believe, considered as rather pedantic in unmarried men of any age, and I therefore avoided all allusion to it."

"And her father," resumed Lady Sarah, smiling; "is he still as enthusiastic an advocate for the enlargement of the human mind as when I dined with him, and the quiet little wife he has since lost, in their pleasant old-fashioned manor-house at Pebbleford? I remember the whole thing as if it had happened but yesterday. It was almost the last time I ever dined from home: I can scarcely believe it can be more than seventeen years ago, and then this Miss Selina that you talk of was old enough to dine at table with us. She was a great, tall, handsome-looking girl, with black hair, and very large white teeth."

"The black hair and white teeth still re-

main unchanged," said Mr. Wardour, "and she decidedly is very tall; but I doubt if Miss de Morley is quite candid with me in appearing to feel no interest excepting for the young *ladies* of the neighbourhood. Is it possible that she can be wholly indifferent respecting the young gentlemen?"

"I am not at all indifferent respecting the young gentlemen," replied Juliana, laughing; "and if you happen to have any interesting observations to make on that subject, I beg that they may not be withheld, from any such mistaken idea. Are there any more young sons and heirs as superlatively handsome as Mr. William Curtis? You perceive that the name of such a personage makes a lasting impression on me."

"I am happy to observe it," replied Mr. Wardour; "for any contemptuous forgetfulness in that quarter might endanger the safety of your castle. But though I cannot promise you a second Mr. William Curtis, I have the pleasure of informing you, that in one house, at the distance of only five miles from Cuthbert, there are to be found no less than four bro-

thers in one family, the shortest of whom is rather above six feet two; while the youngest, into the bargain, is blessed by Heaven with such unvarying sweetness of temper, that, as his mother frequently observes, he is more like an angel than a man."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Sarah, laughing. "Such a family must be a treasure in a remote country neighbourhood like this. But they must be of late importation, Mr. Wardour: I never heard of them before. Pray tell me the name of these invaluable new comers, and whereabouts they have found a dwelling."

"Their name is Rowley," replied Mr. Wardour, "and it is more than probable that your ladyship never did hear of it before; neither is it likely that their residence is much better known to you than their name. But, to avoid mistakes, it is proper that I should inform you, before I proceed to describe them further, that they are more than well received at every house in the county, and would be so, did they stretch their visitings to all the other counties in the three kingdoms. Their father was a manufacturer, and one of the most suc-

cessful that England has ever known. The fortune he left at his death, which happened about five years ago, was colossal; and the name of their house is Eagle Crag Hall."

"Eagle Crag Hall!" repeated Lady Sarah, "Eagle Crag Hall! where is that, Mr. Wardour? I never heard the name before."

"Yet I can, with perfect truth, assure your ladyship," he replied, "that beyond the sheltering walls of your own castle, few people in the neighbourhood have for the last eighteen months heard much of anything else. The place has risen as if by magic, and I am persuaded that it must have been reared by steam, though the apparatus has been concealed underground."

"But *where* is it?" reiterated the puzzled Lady Sarah. "We have not, as far as I know the country, anything in the whole district deserving the name of a crag. *Eagle's Crag* sounds as if we were in the Highlands."

"But crags may be made, Lady Sarah, though eagles may not immediately find them out; and as the experiment has probably never been made before, it is impossible to say whe-

ther the stupendous crag recently erected upon a part of the land formerly known by the name of '*Butcher's Marsh*,' may not, in the course of time, become the resort of eagles. At any rate, it is perfectly clear to the meanest capacity that it ought to be so."

"But I never heard of any land called *Butcher's Marsh*," said Lady Sarah. "I wish you would condescend to the level of our lamentable local ignorance, and tell us, in a plain matter-of-fact style, what it is you are talking about. All jesting apart, you know that we have lived so completely like hermits here, that the whole face of the country might be metamorphosed without our knowing anything about it."

"It is very true, Lady Sarah," replied Mr. Wardour, solemnly, "and that is precisely the reason why I feel reluctant to enter upon a theme to which I feel incapable of doing justice, unless assisted by some trifling degree of previous information on the part of your ladyship; and in that previous information, I am obliged to confess it, I suspect both your ladyship and Miss de Morley to be perfectly deficient."

“Does he not treat us most abominably, mamma?” exclaimed Juliana. “What can his words mean but that he considers us as being too low, too absolutely imbecile in intellect, to be capable of receiving instruction?”

“I see not how we can construe his words otherwise,” replied her mother.

“Ladies, you overwhelm me with your displeasure, and interpret most unfairly my timid consciousness of my own defective powers of description,” said Mr. Wardour, with great humility. “All I can say is, that if you will either of you be pleased to put questions to me on the subject of this truly remarkable crag, I will answer them to the very best of my power, but without having any very sanguine hope that my words will enable you to comprehend its nature.”

“At least, we will endeavour to understand you. But, remember, you are to speak not only *truly*—that we must consider as a matter of course—but also in the most simple and unpoetic style possible,” said Lady Sarah.

“Agreed,” said Mr. Wardour. “Now then. It is yours to speak, and mine to——”

“Not only hear, but answer,” said Lady Sarah, interrupting him. “In the first place, Mr. Wardour, be pleased to tell us in what part of the county this Butcher’s Marsh, that you talk of, is situated.”

“In the parish of Ripple,” replied Mr. Wardour.

“And whereabouts is the parish of Ripple?” was the next question.

“It is at the distance of about three miles from the market town of Stockington,” replied the rector, with obedient meekness.

“And the market town of Stockington,” resumed her ladyship—“whereabouts is that?”

“If your ladyship would be pleased to set off from the gate which forms the northern exit from Cuthbert Park, and, without having the fear of broken bones before your ladyship’s eyes, were to proceed in a somewhat zigzag direction by the cross-road upon which it opens, the market town of Stockington would be reached—barring accidents—at the distance of about seven miles.”

“Then it is quite clear that I know nothing about Stockington,” replied Lady Sarah. “But

you have already told us that this Eagle's Crag is only at the distance of five miles from Cuthbert. Then why should you take us thither by so roundabout a way?"

"In order to convey your ladyship to the market town nearest to the Butcher's Marsh," replied Mr. Wardour.

"Is he not provoking?" cried Juliana. "Do not ask him any more questions, mamma; but let us throw ourselves upon his generosity. As you are great, be merciful, Mr. Wardour," she continued, turning her bright and beautiful face laughingly towards him; "and if your wit can devise any means by which you can convey to our dark intellects some notion of this Eagle's Crag, employ them."

"Ah! you have found the way to touch me now, Miss de Morley! No questionings, however ingenious, suggested either by your honoured mother or yourself, could possibly do any good. But you have thrown yourselves upon my mercy, and I will neglect no means that I think may by possibility be made to enlighten your understanding."

Having said this, he rose from his chair,

and disembarrassed the middle of the room from all furniture, and then, looking sharply about him, he perceived a piece of white linen, of about four feet square, that was thrown over the embroidery-frame of Lady Sarah to protect her work from dust.

“Permit me,” he said, seizing upon it, without waiting for an answer. “It is somewhat longer than necessary; but it will do.” And then, placing himself upon all-fours, he stretched the linen smoothly upon the carpet, and, springing to his feet, exclaimed,—“There! there is the Butcher’s Marsh. It is square, and it is flat, and the surrounding carpet being flat also, it represents Butcher’s Marsh extremely well.”

He then paused for a moment or two, during which every article of furniture or ornament in the room appeared to be carefully examined. At length he fixed upon a fine old china jar, narrow, but lofty, and saying, in gentle accents, “Have no fears for it,” he caught it in his arms, and placed it at the extremity of one of the corners of his Butcher’s Marsh.

And now again his eyes wandered about

the room, and more than once fixed themselves upon the poker; but again and again he shook his head, and withdrew them. At length a sudden thought seemed to suggest something more satisfactory, for he ran out of the room, and presently returned with one of the cues from a neighbouring billiard-table.

His next manœuvre was to seize upon six or eight rather small unbound volumes which lay upon the table, and these he arranged with great care and skill upon the top of the china jar, in such a manner as considerably to increase its height, and at the same time to permit his setting the cue, to the end of which he had fastened a scrap of muslin, stolen from the table, upright in the middle of it.

This done, he contemplated the towering fabric with evident satisfaction, and then proceeded in his work.

His next selection from the materials around him was an enormously large, low footstool, made for the convenience of serving two or more ladies employed at the little work-table under which it stood. This he drew forth, and placed upon the white linen, which it more

than half covered; at its corners he constructed, with great skill and caution, four little edifices, the material being the pieces of a set of very large chessmen; four pawns forming the foundation of each, and a king or a queen the superstructure. This done, he gazed upon the whole with such very evident self-applause, that both his companions burst into hearty laughter.

“Now then,” he said, “I think I have discovered the means of making you in some degree comprehend the general features of the most—for the time being, decidedly the most—celebrated place in the neighbourhood. You now see before you, Lady Sarah—you now see before you, Miss de Morley, the miniature presentment of Eagle’s Crag. The history of its erection I will give as briefly as I can. About five years ago, or it may be rather longer, a certain individual of the name of Rowley departed this life, leaving a widow, aged about fifty, and four stalwart sons, whose ages range from twenty-three to thirty. But this widow and these sons were not all he left. He left, also, a greater number of thousands of pounds

than any man, originally penniless, ever left before. I am not much addicted to finance, and will therefore beg you to excuse my entering into particulars as to the amount—all that I will pretend to vouch for is, that it was enormous. It is well known, however, (for the will was published in all the papers) that he bequeathed to each of his sons the sum of three hundred thousand pounds. So far, I can satisfy any curiosity you may feel on this very interesting subject. The part which I must leave in doubt is that which relates to the amount of property bequeathed to his widow, it being only stated that she was left residuary legatee. On this subject, opinions are various, though none can doubt that her wealth is very great. It is generally supposed that old Mr. Rowley did not himself know the value of all the various property he possessed, and, therefore, that he had recourse to this mode of bequeathing it, in order to save himself the trouble of ascertaining its amount. Be this as it may, the widow appears to be considered, both in her own family and out of it, as THE great personage, and it is she who has

projected and executed the splendid residence which I will now have the honour of describing to you, by the assistance of the model I have thus fortunately been able to construct. The extent of property purchased by the widow Rowley in this county is not great, in fact it does not exceed twenty acres. It is said, that her reasons for fixing herself here, in preference to selecting some part of England where she might have made purchase of a larger domain, are two-fold; being made up of a strong preference to the various funds in which her wealth is now vested, over any landed property whatever, and the knowledge, accidentally acquired while on a visit in this neighbourhood, that the meadow commonly called 'the Butcher's Marsh' was the richest ground in England, and therefore calculated to make the most flourishing kitchen garden—a species of luxury, for which she is reported to have a peculiar predilection. Having fortunately succeeded in making the acquisition of the Butcher's Marsh, she set to work with that wondrous power which nothing but wealth can give, and constructed the paradise

which, about four months ago, became the principal residence of herself and her family. For, greatly to their honour, as I think, the whole family continue to reside together, though each, if preferring it, might of course command a separate home; but their domestic arrangements are quite patriarchal. It is probable that the grand idea which generated the principal feature of the place was the result of the combined imaginations of the whole family when assembled in council, for it seems too mighty to have been produced by one spirit alone. It should seem that, having yielded to the temptation offered by the rich character of the soil of Butcher's Marsh, they one or all of them became aware that, though fertile, it was flat. To most persons, this defect would have appeared as irremediable as it was obvious; but it was not so with the Rowleys. It had already, as I am told, been decided that the mansion should be constructed of the stone furnished by Ipsom quarry, which is at a very convenient distance from the canal, the towing path of which forms the boundary line to this valuable bit of land, and it was

probably the facility with which stone to any amount could be conveyed to the spot, which suggested the idea of constructing a lofty rock, both for the purpose of giving a picturesque air to the premises, and of affording an elevated point from which to view the country round. This noble idea having been executed by a structure somewhat of the proportions and form that I have represented here by the help of your china jar, it received the appellation of the Eagle's Crag, which has subsequently become that of the whole domain. I trust that I have now succeeded in explaining the name, which, without explanation, must naturally have sounded strangely to your ladyship's ears. As to the residence itself, its form, and the proportion which it bears to the property on which it stands, I must do myself the justice to say, that it is by no means unaptly represented by your ladyship's footstool and chessmen."

"Mercy on us, mamma! what superlatively absurd people these Rowleys must be!" exclaimed Juliana. "I really think that, if I were you, I should try to avoid making any acquaintance with them."

“Oh, no!” cried Mr. Wardour; “pray do not avoid making acquaintance with them. The young men are excellent in many ways. Pray do not let my foolish diagram deter you from making their acquaintance.”

“Most assuredly it shall not; on the contrary, I really think such a family as you describe will furnish us with subject for a great deal of philosophical speculation,” said Lady Sarah. “We have been living for nearly the fifth part of a century in such complete seclusion, that all we know of our fellow-creatures is by records of days that are past. It is very proper, not to say necessary, my dear Juliana, that you should see something of the world as it is.”

The conversation then went rambling on upon the different individuals composing the more immediate neighbourhood of the castle, till Lady Sarah declared herself fully prepared for the reception of them all.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WARDOUR'S prophecy was very accurately fulfilled. On the Monday morning following the day on which the above conversation took place, the unusual spectacle of many gay-looking carriages, driving through the park, became visible from the castle windows. Notwithstanding all Miss de Morley's gay jestings, she certainly felt a little nervous as the moment approached at which, for the first time in her life, she was to find herself in the society of persons who were to converse with her as companions.

Nor, to say truth, was Lady Sarah herself altogether free from the same feeling of shyness. She had asked Mr. Wardour the evening before to afford them the support of his presence, but he laughingly declined the office of

gentleman-usher, promising, however, to make his appearance at their dinner-table, in order to hear how the business of the morning had passed off.

The first group of the expected strangers who appeared upon the scene was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis and their son. This was fortunate for Lady Sarah; for, notwithstanding the many years which had passed since last they saw each other, the two ladies met like old friends, and before they had been ten minutes together, nothing seemed to be remembered by either but the pleasure of being once again in each other's company.

The tall stern-looking Mr. Curtis amused himself by looking, from under the heavy grey curls that hung closely over his forehead, at all that the old park, which stretched before the windows, had to show. It was so many years since he had last seen it, that he found some interest in observing how the timber had prospered.

The young gentleman and the young lady, thus left *tête-à-tête*, as it were, entered rather shyly at first into conversation; but

by degrees found themselves talking of the rides, and the drives, and the hills, and the dales, in the neighbourhood, till they began to think each other very agreeable.

Before they had nearly come to the end of all they could find to say on such themes, and long ere their two mothers had uttered a thousandth part of what they had to communicate to each other, nay, even before Mr. Curtis had done more than grunt once or twice, as he walked from window to window, the scene was changed by the entrance of the Dowager Lady Setterton and her two beautiful daughters, Lady Margaret and Lady Louisa Letchmeer.

Lady Setterton placed herself in the chair next Lady Sarah, without taking the slightest notice of Mrs. Curtis, who had risen from it on her entrance. The two Lady Letchmeers made miniature courtesies to Lady Sarah, nodded familiarly to William Curtis, and then sat down, one on each side of Juliana, apparently determined to conquer their constitutional defects for a few minutes, in order to discover, with as little delay as possible, what

sort of a person their newly-found young neighbour might be.

The business, however, was soon accomplished. Both the noble young ladies speedily became convinced that Miss de Morley was too tall and too thin to be beautiful; that her complexion was too pale, her eyes too long, her upper lip too short, her hair too dark, her teeth too small, and her nose too straight, to permit her being considered as anything at all beyond what might perhaps be called tolerably well looking; and that her manner was fifty times worse than her person, for that she positively looked agitated and frightened when they began to talk to her.

So they speedily brought the experiment to a conclusion, and both, almost at the same moment, addressed William Curtis with an inquiry as to what he had been doing with himself for the last hundred years, and whether he had shot out any more bull's eyes since their archery match on Tuesday last.

But notwithstanding this flattering notice of the son, they took no more notice of his

father and mother than if they had been two individuals of the canine species.

Their lady mother, meantime, had the condescension to continue her conversation with, or rather her examination of, Lady Sarah much longer.

What the manners of Lady Setterton might have been in the presence of any person or persons whom she found it *possible* to consider as equal or superior to herself, it is impossible to say, meeting her as we now do in the country; for there was no single individual in the county she inhabited whom she did not class as her inferior in point of rank; and she was unquestionably right, being the daughter of a duke, and the widow of an earl.

As to the rest, she was poor, ugly, ignorant, and narrow-minded, with a coarse insolence of manner that would have been quite intolerable, had it not so often become ludicrous as to cause more amusement than offence. But in her own estimation this unbridled insolence of demeanour stood in the place of all the goods of fortune in which she was so lamentably deficient.

The conversation she was now carrying on with Lady Sarah de Morley was in this wise—

“You must be lost in this wild old place, Lady Sarah! Why, in Heaven’s name, don’t you contrive to manage your affairs so as to be able to afford to leave it, and get into a decent sized place, fit for a Christian lady to live in? I would as soon live in an old church as in Cuthbert Castle.”

“The property being entailed upon my daughter,” replied Lady Sarah, “renders her residence here convenient.”

“Convenient!” exclaimed the Dowager, laughing very vehemently; “that *is* the worst word you could have chosen, if you had gone over the whole dictionary. The idea of two ladies living together in this wild old place by way of having a *convenient* house is quite too good! But I suppose, as far as you are concerned, you live rent free?”

Lady Sarah smiled, and replied, “You are quite right, Lady Setterton. My daughter charges me nothing whatever for rent.”

“Why, to be sure, it would be absurd if she did, you know, because everybody must see,

well enough, that if she were to advertise the old place in every paper in England, every day in every year for the next century, she would never get a tenant, poor child! So if any part of her dependence rests on that chance, she is but badly off, I can tell her. And a great piece of good nature it was on your part, Lady Sarah, to consent to stay with her here. But that, you see, is what the daughters of noblemen get, when they marry commoners! Why, in the world, did not you look about, and try to get a coronet? *I* found it the easiest thing in the world. I dare say I might have had a dozen. But to be sure I was a duke's daughter, and the being of the first order makes a difference. I know it does, and so it ought, for that matter. Take my word for it, that it will be up with England when that is forgotten. But come, tell me something about yourself. You know we are near neighbours, and I assure you that I pity you for being left in this sort of way so much, without any home or house of your own, poor soul! But you will always find me ready to do anything

I can for you. As for my daughters, Lady Margaret and Lady Louisa Letchmeer, you see how wonderfully beautiful they are, and being, as everybody knows, so thoroughly noble on both sides, I dare say that you, like everybody else, will be reasonable enough to feel that they ought to be excused if they do now and then give themselves airs. I dare say that you will generally find them very civil to you, for they have a monstrous deal of good nature at the bottom. Do just look at them now, Lady Sarah! Did you ever see anything more perfectly amiable and condescending than their manner of letting that young Curtis talk to them? The fact is," she continued, lowering her voice, "that the poor young man is positively dying for love of Lady Margaret! But don't fancy, now, that she would ever listen to him for a single moment. The young fellow, they say, will have ten thousand a-year. But if I could believe that any daughter of mine would dare for a moment to think of money, in comparison with blood, I never would speak to her again. No! My beautiful Margaret is incapable of

that. But do you know, Lady Sarah, I do sometimes think that the devoted attachment he feels for her, may lead her, some day or other, dear creature! to forget that one of her grandfathers was a duke, and the other an earl. It would be shocking, wouldn't it? But, do you know, I could forgive that a great deal better than I could her marrying for money. *That* I never could forgive! I despise money with all my heart and soul! Don't you? What is your jointure, Lady Sarah? Not that I shall treat you in the least degree differently, whether it is great or little. But I feel some interest for you, naturally, because you know, after all, you *are* the daughter of an earl. How much have you got a-year?"

Lady Sarah looked at her with such unfeigned astonishment, that Lady Setterton fancied she had not made her question sufficiently intelligible, and with an air of friendly condescension repeated, "I mean, my dear, how much have you got to live upon, independent of anything your daughter may do for you? What an odd chance it was, to be sure, poor thing, your having no son! And think

of me, with seven! But of course you know all about that from the Peerage."

"Unfortunately, I have not got a Peerage," replied Lady Sarah, smiling.

"Gracious Heaven! Lady Sarah—is that possible? I suppose you are the first peer's daughter that ever lived, that had not got a Peerage! But to think of the meanness, the horrible stinginess of your husband! Poor dear creature! What you must have suffered! We have heard that he was a horrible monster. Some people said he was a Bluebeard; and others, that he pretended to be a sort of Peter the Hermit. But now the whole mystery is as clear as light; he was a regular curmudgeon, my dear, and nothing else. I don't wonder now that you don't like to answer my question about your poor miserable little income. I'll venture to say, that you would not have bread to eat, if it were not for your daughter. Horrid! How I do pity you, poor soul! And you an earl's daughter! What a lesson! And just look for a moment at the difference between your position and mine; *my* daughters are dependent upon me, instead of my being

dependent upon them ; they have not a shilling in the world, thank Heaven ! but what they receive from me ; and they know well enough, nevertheless, that with their rank—on both sides, observe—it would be the deepest of degradations if they ever thought of *money* but with feelings of the utmost contempt. I am sure I hope we shall be good neighbours, Lady Sarah, for you *have* good blood in your veins ; but it is as well that I should tell you, once for all, my dear, that your daughter Miss de Morley, must not be constantly expecting that the Lady Letchmeers should do her *honour* on account of her acres ; she will be monstrously disappointed if she does. So you wont tell me, then, how much you have got a-year ? How different you are from me ! I confess I am a great deal more proud of having a small income, than ashamed of it, as you seem to be ; you ought to comfort yourself as I do, my dear, by remembering, that in these days there is nothing so hatefully vulgar as wealth.”

And having at length come, accidentally as it seemed, to a full stop, Lady Setterton rose

to take leave, greatly to the relief of Lady Sarah, who had felt as much overwhelmed by the ceaseless flow of words which she had poured upon her, as if she had been sitting the whole time under a copious shower bath.

The relief was great, though not so complete as she had anticipated; for, just as the Dowager approached her daughters, with the intention of putting a stop to the tripartite conversation going on between them and Mr. William Curtis, the door of the drawing-room opened, and the ample person of Mrs. Rowley became visible, followed by her three elder sons.

Whether the entrance of these offensively rich plebeians, and still more offensively plebeian rich, would have sufficed to induce the Dowager Countess to prolong her visit, had she had no will to consult but her own, may be doubtful, for it appeared that she was neither seen nor heard by either of her daughters when she endeavoured to make them understand that it was time to go.

Nor was it only the conversation in which they were actually engaged that detained

them. No sooner had the three Mr. Rowleys met their eyes, than the two sisters each held out a hand to be caught by either of them, as fate or fortune might ordain, and when the third approached, instead of being punished for his momentary delay, he found himself blessed by having a hand of each sister immediately clasped in one of his; and then followed a sort of social arrangement for which the ladies Letchmeer were celebrated, that is to say, the two sisters sat down side by side upon a sofa, while the four young men ranged themselves in a semicircle before them.

This group, however, was not formed till after the three Mr. Rowleys had been introduced in succession by their mother, to Lady Sarah de Morley and her daughter, a ceremony which took considerable time, for it was performed rather at length. Her sons indeed had often requested her to shorten this form; but nothing they could say would induce her to do it; and as the residuary legatee of the late Mr. Rowley was not the sort of mother whom such very clever sons were likely to treat with disrespect, the following form continued

in use in the Rowley family, and, if the residuary legatee still survives, doubtless continues so to the present day. Upon this occasion, it ran thus—Mrs. Rowley loquitur:—

“My son, Mr. Rowley, Lady Sarah de Morley.

“Lady Sarah de Morley, my son, Mr. Rowley.

“My son, Mr. Stephen Rowley, Lady Sarah de Morley.

“Lady Sarah de Morley, my son, Mr. Stephen Rowley.

“My son, Mr. James Rowley, Lady Sarah de Morley.

“Lady Sarah de Morley, my son, Mr. James Rowley.”

And then, wheeling round to the point where Juliana was now sitting in conversation with Mrs. Curtis, she began again:

“My son, Mr. Rowley, Miss de Morley.

“Miss de Morley, my son, Mr. Rowley.

“My son, Mr. Stephen Rowley, Miss de Morley.

“Miss de Morley, my son, Mr. Stephen Rowley.

“My son, Mr. James Rowley, Miss de Morley.

“Miss de Morley, my son, Mr. James Rowley.”

Had the youngest son, Samuel, been there, the ceremony would have been somewhat lengthened, but then it would have been varied also, for *he* would certainly have said, according to his unvarying custom, “Oh! don’t, mother!” when his turn came; to which *she* would as certainly have answered, “I must, my angel!”

This, however, upon the present occasion was omitted, for the obvious reason that Mr. Samuel, the cadet of the family, was compelled to remain at home, a misfortune consequent upon his having strained his ankle.

While this voluminous introduction was going on, the Dowager Lady Setterton held council with herself, as to whether she should strenuously enforce the departure of her daughters, or yield to the inclination which, strange as it may appear, she always felt upon meeting Mrs. Rowley, to enter into conversation with her.

Had either of these two ladies been asked to say whom they considered as the most disagreeable person of their acquaintance, each (if speaking sincerely) would unquestionably have named the other. Nevertheless, there were few things which either liked so well as coming in contact with the other.

They could not deny to their own hearts that this mutual feeling arose from a mutual longing to chastise, rather than to cherish, their neighbour; but any self-reproach which might be supposed to have arisen from this consciousness, was neutralized by the conviction on both sides, that it was a positive duty to employ every power bestowed by Heaven in the correction, and, as they might hope, the cure, of the lamentable mental delusion to which their respective castigations were addressed.

Lady Setterton knew perfectly well that Mrs. Rowley not only despised her poor nobility, but actually considered herself as decidedly the most distinguished lady in the county, because she was decidedly the richest.

Mrs. Rowley, on the other hand, knew per-

fectly well that Lady Setterton gloried in the dead dukes, her ancestors, to a degree that made her apparently unconscious of the absurdity of being a countess without a rent-roll, and of having nothing to support the illustrious rank to which she so incessantly alluded, but a miserable little life-rent, not sufficient in amount to defray the expenses of the second table kept for the favoured menials of the manufacturer's widow.

Had the *passion forte* of either lady been of a nature to render her independent of, or indifferent to, the opinions and feelings of the rest of the neighbourhood, there would have been less of vivacity in their mutual detestation; but although each, in her sphere, considered herself sufficiently distinguished to command the homage of all around, both felt that the other was a rival whose pretensions, however ridiculous, it was her especial duty to expose to the contempt of the whole world.

And yet, notwithstanding all this hostile feeling, it is a fact no less true than strange, that both ladies secretly but vehemently desired a family union of the closest kind.

Devoutly as she worshipped the shade of the coronet which still rested on her brow, and, more devoutly still, as she revered the yet fainter shade of the strawberry leaves that twined around her heart, Lady Setterton was not quite insensible to the inconvenience of being always deeply in arrears with her butcher, baker, etc., etc., etc. And as, amidst all her noble kindred, she did not know one who would help her with a little of that most vulgar of commodities called cash, she did now and then condescend to pass a few hours in consultation with her fair daughters as to what was to be done in case the said butcher, baker, etc., etc., etc., should happen to run restive, and refuse any longer to take their right honourable names as security for the payment of their ever increasing bills.

These consultations were by no means of a pleasant nature, and were always carefully avoided by the young ladies; but when they did and would arise, they supported their own courage under the disagreeable circumstances they were sure to elicit, and, in some degree, that of their mother likewise, by their strong

confidence in their own power of "*marrying somebody or other*," whenever matters came to such a pass as to render it necessary.

The great prize of the neighbourhood in which they lived was William Curtis. He was of an old and highly respectable country family, was extremely handsome, extremely agreeable, and extremely beloved by rich and poor, old and young, gentle and simple. In addition to all which, he had the comfortable assurance of inheriting a perfectly unencumbered estate of about ten thousand a year; and so well known, moreover, was his absolute and unlimited power over his (to all others) stern father, that no fair maiden, let her destitution of cash or ancestry be what they might, could have any obstacles to fear, could she but succeed in captivating his heart.

That such a young man, so situated, should be the frequent waking thought, and the frequent sleeping vision, of the great majority of the young ladies of his acquaintance, cannot surprise any one; and were it to be added, that he also occupied a considerable portion of the thoughts of some of their mammas also, there

would be nothing extraordinary in the statement.

In the particular instance of the Dowager Lady Setterton and her two daughters, it is certain that for the last few months he had been the hero of every general conversation, of every separate *tête-à-tête* consultation, and almost of every solitary meditation amongst them.

But as yet, little or nothing had come of it.

William Curtis had been heard to declare, many dozen times, that he thought both the Lady Letchmeers exceedingly pretty; but nothing of a tenderer nature had ever been attributed to him, even by the ladies themselves, save that Lady Margaret confessed that she thought she had seen him press her glove to his lips, when she had taken it off in the tea-room of a public ball; and that Lady Louisa was almost sure that upon one occasion he had sighed deeply while he pressed her hand.

But this was not enough to exclude the rest of the masculine unmarried world from the thoughts of either; and, accordingly, the possibility of their ever being able to endure the idea

of marrying a country clergyman was not unfrequently canvassed between the noble sisters, when the name of Mr. Wardour was made the text of their discourse; and as to the four well-endowed Rowley brothers, themselves and their hundreds of thousands might truly be said to be familiar in their mouths as household words.

To say the truth, these Rowley brothers were, both to mother and daughters, the rock on which rested all the more prosaic and substantial of their matrimonial hopes; and there really was some reason for the sanguine confidence with which it was argued that it would be strange indeed if, out of the four, *two* could not be had, if ever they seriously made up their minds to take them.

In this opinion they all agreed completely, and it certainly was one that was productive of very considerable satisfaction to them all, frequently sustaining their spirits under a dun, and always giving them courage to purchase rather more commodities, of many sorts, than they exactly knew how to pay for.

In fact, all four of the Mr. Rowleys were exceedingly well inclined, at all times and

seasons, to make love to the two Lady Letchmeers.

Had any quite disinterested looker-on been asked his opinion as to the profundity of the impression made by the charms of the noble young ladies upon the hearts of the plebeian young gentlemen, it is probable that, if an acute observer, he might have replied, that the least encouraging feature in the case was the perfect good fellowship which evidently continued to exist between the four brothers.

The contempt felt by Mrs. Rowley for the house, establishment, and general manner of living of the Dowager Lady Setterton, was very great indeed; nevertheless, she was not insensible to the gratification of having to write to her sister, the wife of a clothier in Gloucestershire, that the Countess had dined with them on Monday, and that John, Stephen, James, and Sam, had been waltzing with those pretty girls, Lady Margaret and Lady Louisa Letchmeer, on Tuesday. In short, with all her thousands, she was still capable of being tickled by a title, and dearly as she loved to plague her noble neighbour, she would have been

almost as sorry as that noble neighbour herself, had any of their sparrings gone the length of breaking off all intercourse between them.

This explanatory digression has been a long one, and it is time we return to the drawing-room at Cuthbert Castle, where we left the Dowager Countess in a state of doubt as to whether she should depart in peace, or remain to have a little sparring with that vulgar old fool, Mrs. Rowley.

She looked at her daughters, saw that they both appeared occupied and animated; and while Lady Sarah de Morley changed her place, for the purpose of again finding herself next Mrs. Curtis, she seated herself on the sofa she had left, on the other corner of which the massive person of Mrs. Rowley was deposited.

“So, my lady!” began the fabricator of the Eagle’s Crag, to the Dowager Countess, “I thought we should find you here, though how your one horse in that heavy old carriage of yours ever does the work, is more than I am able to guess. Why, there’s our John—I mean my eldest son, you know—he won’t let my long-tailed set go out above three days following,

let what will happen. He made me have his pair of bays to-day for that very reason, though I hate to make a first visit without four."

"I should not think it mattered much, Mrs. Rowley, whether you were drawn by four or by one, provided there was no *jibbing* as you mounted the hill," returned the Countess, looking over her expansive person, as if she were calculating its weight. "Luckily for the present state of my stud, my girls and I are not very massive. We do not require four, nor even one elephant to draw us."

"Why, it would not be very convenient if you did," returned Mrs. Rowley, with a broad grin.

"You are quite right, Mrs. Row—ley," replied Lady Setterton, pausing between the syllables of the unharmonious name, while she drew forth a smelling bottle and applied it to her nose; "but there is a providence over us all."

"God forbid I should deny that, my lady; and there is a comfort in thinking of it, I am sure. For, but for that, there is no knowing

what dismal downfalls we might be looking for every day," said Mrs. Rowley, with a sigh.

"At any rate, madam, your spirits must be greatly sustained, let the vagaries of fortune be as capricious as they will. When looking at your four stout, healthy-looking sons, and remembering the industry of their father, you may almost set the uncertainties of life at defiance."

"There certainly is a comfort, my lady, in having something more solid to trust to than a name, that is but a word and a sound. I am one of those who like to have something really solid to trust to—I could not sleep in my bed at night if I had not. It is quite wonderful to me, sometimes, how people get on as they do. Don't you find a considerable difference in the price of sugar at Stockington, Lady Setterton? I am afraid high prices must be very inconvenient to some people. I assure you I am often very sorry, and quite out of spirits when I think of it. But yet, after all, you know, it is not *our* fault. Let people be as rich as they will, it is quite out of their power to do anything to help it."

“To help what?” returned Lady Setterton, yawning.

“To help in lowering the price of sugar.”

“My dear good woman! How old recollections seem to cling about you! I dare say, now, if the truth were known, you seldom go to bed without praying to God that the spinning jennies may answer.”

“*I pray for spinning jennies!*” returned Mrs. Rowley, with a short convulsive little laugh. “That is capital! *I* that never saw the inside of a factory in my life!”

Lady Setterton had very large eyes, which she now opened to their widest extent, and turning them full upon Mrs. Rowley, exclaimed, “Is it possible? How very different our tempers must be about things in which we are interested! I scarcely ever passed a season in London in my life without contriving to be at the House of Lords before the end of it!”

“Only think of your remembering all that sort of thing so long after it is all over,” returned Mrs. Rowley. “It must be years and years, I should think, since you could have felt any great interest in the House of Lords.”

“It is very natural that you *should* think so, my dear woman; I dare say, that some day or other, by way of a show, you may have been taken to see the House of Lords yourself, and that the gold lace upon the throne was probably the only thing that made any great impression upon you. It was very pretty looking, was it not? But I dare say you do not think of it very often. To me, you know, the sight of the old walls is like looking at the long inherited dwelling of my ancestors. I assure you, Mrs. Rowley, there is something very interesting in entering the room where our forefathers have worked at their factory of laws, for so many generations; at least, I found it so; and that was the reason why it appeared probable to me that a factory of cotton might have been interesting to you.”

“Well then, my lady,” replied Mrs. Rowley, “you were just mistaken, that’s all.”

And concluding this sharp encounter of their wits, as she had often done before, namely, by giving an invitation that she well knew could neither be returned nor rejected, she said, “You and the young ladies must come,

my lady, and meet the Cuthbert Castle folks at Eagle's Crag. I shall fix this day week for it. It is not very likely they should be engaged, but if they are, I will let you know."

Mrs. Rowley was right. The invitations to the Eagle's Crag were never refused by the Dowager Countess; but upon this occasion, as upon many others, the acceptance was only signified by an inclination of the head; sometimes this was performed in the manner of a stiff bow, and sometimes by a condescending nod. It was now the latter, as being most in keeping with what had gone before.

"Well, then," said Mrs. Rowley, rising, "I'll go and settle the matter at once. Our grooms will be spared a deal of galloping about the country, for most of the folks that I shall ask are here at this very moment."

And so saying, the great lady, great in so many ways, rose from her seat, and conveyed herself slowly, and not without what seemed to be rather a painful degree of exertion, across the room.

Mrs. Curtis, who, as might already be very plainly seen, was likely again to become Lady

Sarah's favourite neighbour, had nevertheless been once more forsaken, in consequence of the arrival of Mrs. Stanberry and her daughter, between whom she was now sitting.

“Now, then,” said Mrs. Rowley, having stood before them for an instant to recover her breath—“now, then, I can kill two birds with one stone. Will you give me the honour of your company, Lady Sarah de Morley, together with the beautiful young lady, your daughter, on Monday next, the 25th instant, at six o'clock?”

Lady Sarah smiled, and after pausing for half a moment, replied, “We shall have great pleasure in waiting upon you, Mrs. Rowley.”

“That's well,” rejoined the lady of Eagle's Crag, adding, as she turned herself towards Mrs. Stanberry, “and you too, honourable madam, and *your* beautiful daughter, will you also be pleased to give me the honour of your companies at the same place, on the same day?”

Mrs. Stanberry did not smile, but neither did she hesitate replying, gravely but promptly,

that they would wait upon her with much pleasure.

“AT SIX O’CLOCK,” said Mrs. Rowley, distinctly and almost solemnly—“at six o’clock precisely. I intend to give you a good dinner, ladies, but I do not mean it shall be spoiled by being kept waiting. When I take the trouble of sending to London for the finest turbot that can be found in Billingsgate market, it is not at all agreeable to see it come to table either boiled to a rag, or as cold as ice. Therefore, six o’clock, ladies, if you please.”

“I will endeavour to be very punctual,” returned Lady Sarah, bestowing another very sweet smile on her odd-looking visitor.

“I never keep any one waiting,” said Mrs. Stanberry, stiffly.

“And, I say, Mrs. Stanberry,” resumed the inviter, “I wish you would bring Miss Fanny this time. Or, as the distance isn’t much over a mile, perhaps you would not mind sending the carriage back for her to come in the evening?”

Before Mrs. Stanberry replied, she directed an inquiring glance to the face of her beautiful

daughter, and having read an answer there, she repeated it to Mrs. Rowley in these words, "You are very obliging, ma'am; but Fanny Clarence must stay at home with her mother."

"Well, if she must, she must," returned Mrs. Rowley, "and it is no good to say any more about it; only I thought, with so many young people, we might have contrived to let them dance in the evening, if we could have had Miss Fanny to play. William Curtis does so enjoy a waltz, and so do my dear boys too. But if it can't be, it can't. There's nobody but Miss Fanny can play waltzes, they say, fit to be danced to."

While this was being spoken by Mrs. Rowley, Mrs. Stanberry had received a sign-manual upon her arm from her daughter, which induced her to make this rejoinder:

"If my niece can be useful, Mrs. Rowley, neither my sister nor I would wish to keep her at home. I will send the carriage back for her. It is better that she should come in the evening, because her mother will not miss her so much."

"Well, now, that's charming! William

Curtis will be delighted, and he is such a favourite with us all!" And then, waddling her way to Mrs. Curtis, who was engaged in what seemed a very earnest conversation with Miss de Morley, she broke in upon them by saying, "Now, I think I have settled my party beautifully. You have promised me already, my dear Mrs. Curtis, you know; you all promised me to come, whatever day I fixed, with Lady Sarah, and that is Monday. And we are to have Fanny Clarence to play waltzes for you, Miss de Morley. I must send a message to Wardour and to the Raymonds," she added. "Miss Raymond is never tired of dancing; and as Mr. Raymond is reckoned the learnedest man in the county, I always think it is right to invite him with the clergyman. And the clergyman *must* come, because he is the only person that has got intimate here at the castle, as yet. I hope we shall be all intimate by and by, my dear Miss de Morley; but Rome was not built in a day, you know."

Miss de Morley bowed, and smiled very good-humouredly; and Mrs. Curtis having stepped to the table, where her husband was

by this time very completely absorbed by a book, obtained permission from him to answer the invitation in the affirmative.

In fact, let the tempers and peculiarities of her neighbours be what they might, there was not one of them who ever refused a dinner invitation to Eagle's Crag if they could help it. In short—it is a folly to deny it—everybody likes a good dinner; and the dinners of Eagle's Crag were incontestably extremely good, so that even the stern brow of Mr. Curtis relaxed into something that almost resembled a smile, as he replied to the words whispered to him by his wife, "Yes, if you will."

This important business having been thus satisfactorily arranged, Mrs. Rowley and her three sons departed. Lady Setterton and her fair daughters immediately followed; but not before Lady Margaret had found time to whisper to William Curtis, "Will the waltzing bore you?" To which he replied, without wasting a moment, "Not if you will be my partner."

She gave him a gentle look, and then he added, "For the second waltz, remember!"

Whereupon she looked at him again, and then followed her mamma out of the room.

His first waltz was always with Adelaide Stanberry.

Mr. Curtis having been thus disturbed in his reading, sufficiently to make him aware that he was not in his own library, soon made his wife understand that he thought it was time to go home; and, accordingly, they also departed, but not till Lady Sarah and Mrs. Curtis had declared to each other, with mutual warmth and mutual sincerity, that it was long since they had enjoyed anything so much as the meeting each other again, and that they looked forward to a renewal of their former intimacy with the greatest delight.

As the Curtis party passed through the hall, they met Mr. Raymond and his daughter approaching Lady Sarah's drawing-room.

"What! all going away?" exclaimed the young lady.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Curtis; "we are the last. You are very late, Miss Raymond."

"Why, you did not suppose I should give up my morning's ride for any visit in the

world, did you? See!" she said, exhibiting the skirt of her riding-habit, which was heavily laden with mud—"see! Does not that look as if I had been enjoying a delicious gallop? And so I have, never doubt it; and we shall find time to make our visit into the bargain, if you don't stay here talking to us till it is dark. Good-bye!—Good-bye!"

And with these words, Miss Raymond collected her splashed habit, and wrapping it tightly round her, passed on into the drawing-room.

Juliana, who had probably never talked so much in her life before within the same space of time, had already thrown herself at full length upon the sofa, and seemed greatly disposed to go to sleep; while Lady Sarah, who, as well as her daughter, felt no doubt but that the business of the morning was over, had very comfortably settled herself in a deep arm-chair, with a footstool at her feet. Her eyes were closed, and though only wrapped in meditation, she certainly looked as if already fast asleep.

The two servants stationed in the hall, while speeding the parting guests, had neglected to

announce the coming ones, expecting, probably, that their services would be waited for; but they were mistaken. Miss Raymond walked straight forward, and herself threw wide the drawing-room door.

“Fairly done to death, upon my honour!” she exclaimed, stopping short after she had made one or two steps into the room. Then turning round to her father, she said, “It is almost a shame to wake them, papa! isn’t it?”

But long before the old gentleman could reply, both the mother and daughter had sprung up, and were hastening forward to meet this fresh arrival.

They approached the strangers with every appearance of wishing to welcome them, but there was something of embarrassment in their manner, naturally arising from their total ignorance as to the names of these new visitors.

Miss Raymond, however, speedily set this to rights by saying, very distinctly, “My name is Selina Raymond. This is my father, John Raymond, the squire of Pebbleford. I am always obliged to introduce him, because he does not know how to introduce himself. He

is a bookworm, and nothing else, as you will find out, I dare say, before you have known him long."

The ice thus effectually broken, the quartette sat down, and conversed very pleasantly together for half an hour, Miss Raymond, it is true, startling the quiet inhabitants of the castle now and then by her *brusquerie*; but, nevertheless, when they had taken their departure, and Mr. Wardour had entered the once more quiet drawing-room, Juliana declared, not, perhaps, without expecting to be contradicted, that she saw no reason whatever why Miss Raymond should not fill the vacuum in her affections of which she had complained, and be invited to accept the post of her particular friend.

"Well, we shall see," replied Mr. Wardour.

That the visits of the morning furnished a copious fund for the conversation of the evening, will be easily believed; but Mr. Wardour refused to enlighten his fair neighbours any further on the characteristic peculiarities of their new acquaintance.

"Some sort of map was, I know, necessary

to prevent your losing yourselves in a labyrinth upon first setting off," said he; "but I have told you quite enough to prevent your getting into any very awkward scrapes, so now I shall leave you to yourselves."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE three or four months which had sufficed to bring Cuthbert Castle and its inhabitants into the pleasant position which has been just described, had not only sufficed Father Ambrose to convey himself from its peaceful walls to the busy arena of Rome, and thence to the convent at thirty miles distance from it—of which, notwithstanding his foreign mission of eighteen years duration, he was still a member—but it had proved long enough to permit his doing a great deal of business before he reached his journey's end.

The quiet-looking old man, though more than sixty years of age, suffered not at all from the fatigue of the long journey; nor did he pause longer than the arrangements of the public vehicles, by which he travelled, rendered

necessary, till he found himself once more within the venerated walls of the papal city.

During the whole route, he had never uttered an expression of fatigue to any human being; nay, it may be doubted whether he ever acknowledged to himself that he was weary. True it is, that his aged limbs trembled more and more, as he got in and got out of all the successive vehicles of little ease in which he stowed himself, in order to be carried onward; but he never uttered a groan; and if a sigh escaped him, he might have said, with all truth, had he been called upon to interpret it, that he mourned because he could not perform his duty more promptly.

It had all along been his purpose, his earnest purpose, during all the meditations which occupied him as he travelled on, to present himself before the General of his order in the very hour he reached Rome, let that hour fall at what time it might.

He well knew that within the walls of the sacred edifice in which that holy man took his post while at Rome, there were those around him who neither slumbered nor slept, and that

he had only to pronounce the words which only the initiated speak, and only the initiated understand, in order at once to be admitted to the presence of the superior.

But on reaching Rome, the poor old man found that human nature was human nature still—not quite the same, perhaps, for Jesuits as for other people, yet still sufficiently imperative in its weakness to oblige even a Jesuit brother to pause and take breath, though only, *bien entendu*, because the business he was engaged in by the command of his superiors could not be performed without it. In short, Father Ambrose, arriving at Rome one hour after midnight, did not present himself before the eyes of the General, in whose presence he was especially commanded to appear, till all the clocks of the town had announced that five hours of the new day were gone.

It was, however, broad daylight, for it was the month of June; and if anything could have refreshed the jaded frame of the over-travelled priest, the bright freshness of that early air might have done it.

But neither the bodies nor the minds of

Jesuits appear to be affected like those of other men; or, rather, the mind of a Jesuit is schooled into having such "sovereign sway and masterdom" over itself and the body it belongs to, that none may guess from any outward sign *what* either mind or body feels.

Father Ambrose moved slowly as he approached the dwelling of the man before whom he gloried to prostrate himself, both body and soul; but none who watched him would have suspected that this slow step was caused by feebleness.

There was a solemn, quiet, impenetrable expression in his features, which gave the idea of such complete abstraction of spirit, that none could suspect him of being conscious of *any* external influence.

Neither was he.

The sun shone; but he saw it not. The birds sung; but he heard it not. Neither did he feel the soft fresh breath of early morning, though it came upon a brow fevered by unwonted fatigue, and furrowed by many years of mental toil.

Those among the Jesuits who have taken

the *four vows* are privileged to have access to the very highest of the order, without being obliged to have recourse to any of the paltry outward ceremonies which form, as it were, the halo of other potentates.

Ceremony is but the symbol and type of power. The glory of the Jesuit is not in the splendour of power, but in the use of it. His light burns, but glitters not.

An humble door, that looked more like the entrance to a small wine-shop than the portal of a palace, yielded before the hand of Father Ambrose, and he entered a passage perfectly dark, but which terminated at the distance of three paces by another door, which, opening with equal facility, admitted all comers to a large and well-lighted room, which presented nothing remarkable in any way.

A table, with a few old-looking books, stood in the middle of it, and three men, very plainly dressed, but not in black, were seated at it. One appeared to be reading; and, from their attitude, it seemed likely enough that the other two might be conversing; but no sound met the ear as the door opened; and the only fact

that would have been made evident by their appearance, to any stranger obtruding himself unwarily, was that, notwithstanding the peculiarly unprotected condition of the doors, no person could penetrate further into the mansion without showing cause for it to these three individuals.

Father Ambrose approached the table at the same pace in which he had approached the house. There was no hurry, no bustle, but neither was there any perceptible feebleness; his countenance also retained the same stillness, the same imperturbable and impenetrable expression that it had worn before he entered.

The three men raised their eyes to look at him, but it was evident that neither of the three had any recollection of having ever seen him before; nor was it very likely they should, as the eldest among them could have been but little more than a child when Father Ambrose left the land in which they were born, and which they had never quitted.

He wore the dress of a priest, however, though not that of any conventual order, and this is a uniform which demands and receives

respect more extensively than any other upon earth.

But Father Ambrose, nevertheless, did not trust to this for obtaining all the privilege he required. He gave a rapid, yet still a very tranquil glance at each of the three men before him, and, approaching one of them, he paused before him for an instant, and then pursued his way, precisely at the same pace, to a door at the opposite side of the room to that at which he had entered, which, yielding like those he had already passed, to a slight touch, he glided through it, and it closed noiselessly behind him.

It is needless to follow him through the various passages, and up and down the various stairs, by which, however, it was necessary that he should pass. But he seemed to know his way well, notwithstanding the length of time which had elapsed since last he traversed it; and it was without having lost a single inch or a single instant, by blundering for a moment between right and left, that he at length found himself in a large and lofty room, the ceiling of which was vaulted, and curiously painted.

But this was the only attempt at decoration which the apartment displayed.

It had, however, the advantage of being fresh and cool, to which the smooth floor of black and white marble contributed; while the open windows, placed at the distance of at least eight feet from the ground, let in from the south-east a breeze as pleasant in its temperature at that hour, as if it had blown over northern meadows of flowery turf, instead of over the arid campagna of Rome.

Had Father Ambrose arrived from his mission in midwinter instead of midsummer, it is probable that he would have found his way to a room as unostentatious in its appearance, but as well calculated to resist the entrance of cold, as this of heat. Not only mental, but physical power is precious to those who know how to use it, and enervating luxury is scarcely more unbecoming an actively great man, than such a neglect of temporal accommodation as may interrupt the action of the mind, by calling its attention to the condition of the body.

In this large and well-ventilated apartment were six men, all dressed in black, but not in

the habit of priests, who appeared to be all of them diligently employed in writing. Three of them appeared to be writing letters, but each of them had a small bit of paper lying on his desk, beside that on which he wrote, and on each of these might be seen a few sentences written in a peculiarly small character. Two others were evidently copying into large manuscript volumes the contents of various open letters which lay before them. The sixth was standing beside a small door, which opened immediately beneath one of the windows.

Father Ambrose bent his head slightly as he passed, in salutation to the persons employed in writing, but varied not his step as he did so, walking straight forward towards the above-mentioned little door, which was immediately opened for him by the man who stood beside it.

The room he now entered was as silent as those through which he had already passed, but, nevertheless, it was full, almost to crowding, with men. Of these, many were in the habit of priests; many others in black, but without any indication of their profession; and a few were in coloured clothes.

The room was low, and very disagreeably heated by the number of persons crowded into it. There were no chairs, nor was there furniture of any kind, except a continuous line of wooden benches which were placed against the walls. Yet in this most uncomfortable and most unceremonious waiting-room might be seen many who bore decidedly the appearance of gentlemen; nevertheless, there were no frowning brows, no fidgetty movements, no looks of impatience, such as may usually be seen in the anteroom of a great man's cabinet.

Every countenance was so placid, so composed, so passionless, that the most skilful physiognomist would have been troubled, had he sought to trace on any one of them the nature of the thoughts which were at work within.

Father Ambrose took his place among the rest, with no more appearance of having travelled post haste from England, with the burden of sixty-eight years upon his shoulders, than the youngest and best-rested man there.

Not that his features were forced into the expression of anything like cheerfulness, con-

tentment, or hilarity of spirit; but there might be seen on his countenance, as on that of every individual present there, a species of stillness and imperturbability which seemed to cover, as with a mask of marble, all the ordinary indications of human feeling, which ordinary human faces are wont to display.

But although apparently there was as little speculation in the eyes of Father Ambrose upon this occasion as it was well possible for living eyes to express, they still had sufficient to permit him to discern one or two individuals who, although in the crowd, were, as he ascertained by some mysterious species of freemasonry, not of it. These, like the persons he had before passed, were too young to make it possible that they could remember him; and yet it is quite certain that, without any audible word or visible sign having been exchanged, one of them—who was stationed near a door through which from time to time an individual of the crowd was seen to glide, selected by some agency that in like manner seemed independent either of word or sign—himself passed through it, and in a moment returned again

with the same look of quiet nothingness as before.

But no sooner had he re-appeared, than Father Ambrose, by a movement noiseless and unopposed by those among whom he passed, reached the same door, and disappeared.

This door, which was lined with thick leather, only displayed, on being opened, a second, at the distance of about two feet; but this too opened at the touch of a finger; and Father Ambrose at length stood face to face with the individual to whom, in his estimation, no autocrat of the wide world might be compared either in point of power or dignity. It may even be doubted whether the sovereign pontiff himself were excepted.

Antonio Scaviatoli, the General of the company of Jesus (for such was the man before whom Father Ambrose now stood), raised his pale grey eye as he approached, and looked at him with the sort of glance which men are wont to employ whose lives have been passed in acquiring the art of reading the thoughts of other men; and notwithstanding the habitual impassibility of the Jesuit confessor's counte-

nance, his chief and his master instantly perceived that he had not returned from his long and far-distant mission, without having something to impart which he considered to be of importance.

When compared with Father Ambrose, the General of the Jesuits was not an old man in appearance.

He might have seen rather more than fifty winters; but endowed with a constitution and a frame of iron, and inured to temperance, constant and well regulated, but unmingled with any strength-exhausting ascetic severity; with vigour of mind and body, unbroken by penance, and unshaken by any terrors of discipline, either of this world or the next; recognising no authority that could make his spirit quail, or paralyse the native energy of his character; no man of any age, or of any perfection of comeliness, could have been found to excel him in impressive majesty of appearance.

Antonio Scaviatoli was of middle stature, thin, but not slightly built. His eye had extraordinary power when it was his will to use it; but, for the most part, it was not his will;

for it was his habit to let his particularly long dark eye-lashes so completely conceal these eyes, that many people having business to transact with him, came and went almost without knowing whether he had any eyes or not.

But when he raised his eye-lids, when he looked up, and darted his pale, but searching glance upon the eyes of the person he was conversing with, it seemed to have the power of penetrating at once to the inmost recesses of his most secret thoughts, rendering every attempt at concealment utterly vain and abortive.

It was such a glance as this that was thrown upon Father Ambrose as soon as the old man had reached the table at which Scaviatoli was sitting.

The individual who had last been honoured with an audience was in the act of passing through a door, which opened upon a staircase leading down to a small shop at the bottom of the flight, which was kept by a perfectly trustworthy tobacconist. The door closed behind him with the same soft silence which seemed to pervade the whole region; and Father Am-

brose almost trembled, despite the conscious purity of his fidelity to the mighty cause, whose redoubted chieftain now sat throned in awful stillness before him, from feeling that the spot on which he stood, despite his easy access to it, was so completely sacred and apart from all the other haunts of men, that nothing, save passing through the valley of death itself, could so wholly cut him off from his fellow-creatures.

There was but one window in the room, and this was placed high in the wall, immediately behind the lofty-backed chair in which Scaviatoli was seated, so that the light from it fell, strong and unbroken, upon those who approached him, while his own head, which reached not, by many inches, to the richly-carved ornaments surmounting the back of his chair, remained in perpetual shadow.

The room itself was small, but richly finished as to its walls and ceiling; yet, though well preserved, every object bore the mark of considerable antiquity. Many heavy cabinets, well calculated to contain records securely, were ranged against the walls, and these, with

the table above-mentioned, the high-backed chair of the General, and two smaller ones standing ready for use immediately opposite to it, composed the whole of the furniture.

But this small and obscure chamber, so remote, and the approach to it so intricate in one direction, while the exit from it was so unexpectedly easy in another, might perhaps have served for centuries the same office that it did now. The fraternity to which it belonged had possessed a portion, at least, of the locale, longer than any who did not belong to it had any idea of; and there was not one of the brotherhood who did not feel an assurance of the perpetuity of their possession of it, which seemed to stand side by side with their faith in the durability of the earth.

Father Ambrose, as we have said, *almost* trembled; but it was more than eighteen years since he had stood in such a presence before; and in the interval he had been exposed to associations and localities so lamentably contrasted with the mysterious sanctity of this almost sacred chamber, that his spirit felt overpowered by the change.

Nevertheless, the searching glance sent from the eye of Scaviatoli, though it seemed to reach to the very marrow in his bones, did not appal him. He believed, fully believed, in its power of reading his heart; yet still it did not appal him, for never did a human conscience stand more free of offence on any given point, than did that of Father Ambrose upon his dutiful and unlimited fidelity to the company of Jesus.

Scaviatoli looked at him steadily for a moment, and then, bending his head with something of graciousness blended with much dignity, he said, "Sit down, brother; you have much to tell me."

Not unwillingly did the old man avail himself of this permission, and having seated himself precisely on the spot which the General dictated very exactly, though by a slight movement of his finger only, he respectfully awaited the interrogatory which he expected.

"Your letters, brother," said Scaviatoli, "have done you honour; for not only have they been written in the faithful spirit which we expect to find throughout the brethren of

the company of Jesus, but they have been marked by sagacity and caution. Your penitent has died at an unfortunate time, brother Ambrose. His yearly donatives will be missed, and every pecuniary loss at this time is more than inconvenient, it is importantly injurious to the interests of the order. We are at this hour engaged in a tremendous struggle. Our holy company have heretofore been, perhaps, more perilously, or rather more openly, engaged in warfare with their enemies, than they are at present, but never was the struggle so vital as it is now. Formerly much depended upon the individual opposition or support of half a dozen sovereigns, with the pontiff at their head. But now it is otherwise. Individual sovereigns may be faithful, or may be false, without having the means of advancing or retarding our power sufficiently to make their patronage of any great importance. Now it is not individuals, but masses, to whom we must address ourselves. The time has been, and that within little more than half a century, when the world was governed by the high-placed few: it is thus no longer. The world

and all its mighty interests, must now be submitted to the preponderating intellect of the many. It is a tremendous, a very awful change! Nevertheless, brother, trust me that the company of Jesus will be able to turn even this new-born, vigorous, but most unwieldy engine to account. The secret of the power so visibly vested in us by the favour of Heaven, rests in the watchfulness with which we mark all things, whether seemingly little or seemingly great, and then make each thing serve as a link in the stupendous chain by which we are permitted to hold the perverse minds of men in subjection to the only code that can protect them from eternal destruction."

Father Ambrose listened to him with a profoundness of reverence that seemed to bring his very soul into an attitude of prostration at his feet. And the unwonted condescension with which the chief of his order thus expressed the thoughts of his heart to him, and dilated upon subjects recognised by every individual of the holy company of Jesus as the most important which can occupy the mind of

man, was felt to be more than an adequate reward for all the years of life which he had passed, both in active and passive obedience to its rule.

Scaviatoli knew this well. He knew that if there were still in the aged man who sat before him so weary and wayworn, one spark of vitality left, the breath he was thus permitting to take the form of friendly and familiar words, would blow it into a flame that might yet be capable of giving useful light.

And in truth it was scarcely possible that, without some such stimulant, the exhausted spirits of Father Ambrose could have been roused sufficiently to give all the lengthened and graphic details which he now communicated respecting the scenes he had left.

It was not Cuthbert Castle only, and all the circumstances that for years had been passing there, which supplied the mass of anecdotes, that the acute questionings of Scaviatoli, and the abounding communicativeness of Father Ambrose now brought forth; nor did the family of De Morley furnish the only agents whose

thoughts, words, and deeds were recorded in them.

The converts among the servants, which easy places and Jesuit eloquence had obtained; the families in the neighbourhood, from which these converts came; nay, even the worldly circumstances of the population of the surrounding district, whether Catholic or Protestant, furnished a theme productive of much close questioning, and much acute and intelligent information in reply.

But though much close and lengthened attention was given to all this, the subject of the highest interest, both to the questioner and the questioned, was Juliana de Morley, the richly-endowed heiress of her lamented father.

On the temperament, character, affections, intellect, and occupations of this young girl, nothing that inquiry could elicit, or overflowing confidence, enriched by long years of the closest observation, could furnish, was omitted. Yet there was in truth nothing in all this, trivial as many of the details must of necessity appear were they recorded, which had not its

value in deciding the conduct of those who were thus interested in her destiny, towards her.

Nothing is too high or too low for the attention of a Jesuit, upon any subject wherein he finds aught that may directly or indirectly affect his order ; and in private life, few occasions could present themselves furnishing matter so deeply deserving the attention of every faithful member of the company, as the character of the young heiress of Cuthbert.

Had this important conversation taken place before the death of her father, there would not only have been much less to tell, but the complexion of what little Father Ambrose might have had to relate, would have been very different.

It must not be supposed, indeed, that the important conversation now referred to, was the first opportunity given by Father Ambrose to the chief of his order, for forming some opinion of Juliana de Morley, and of the chance there existed, that, despite the influence of her obstinately heretic mother, she might be converted to the faith of her father. His written

communications during the whole period of his residence at Cuthbert Castle had been both constant and unreserved. But so little reason had he seen, before the death of his patron, for believing that there was any chance of separating the daughter from the mother in any way, that these communications had almost extinguished every hope of it.

Far different, however, was the result of what he had now to tell. While the ex-confessor was detailing the particulars of the scene which preceded Juliana's placing the casket of jewels in his hands; the eyes of Scaviatoli were raised to his face, over which there passed, as he described her look and manner, something more nearly approaching a feeling of tenderness than the countenance of a Jesuit is often permitted to display.

Not a syllable of any kind was uttered by the General till the old man ceased to speak; and when he did so, the silence remained for some minutes unbroken, the pale eyes of Scaviatoli resuming their usual downward direction, and their piercing power being concealed by their dark lashes.

At length this meditative silence was broken by the low-toned voice of Scaviatoli.

“She is very lovely, then, this daughter of Richard Randolphe de Morley?” said he.

“She is,” replied Father Ambrose, and without adding any comment to the reply; although his thoughts took the rather unusual liberty of wondering a little how his superior had contrived to arrive at this inference from anything he had spoken.

“Is she dark in her beauty, or fair, like the majority of her nation?” demanded the general.

“Very fair,” was the prompt reply.

“And the hair and eyes light?” rejoined Scaviatoli, interrogatively.

“Her eyes are blue,” replied Father Ambrose, “but cannot be called light, which may in part be owing to the darkness of her eyelashes. Her hair likewise is of a dark brown.”

“Is the general expression of her face that of intellectual strength, or of feminine softness?” was the next question.

“I should say there was a union of both,”

replied Father Ambrose, "or rather, perhaps, that each was visible in its turn."

"As how?" demanded the General; "fear not to be tedious, Father Ambrose. Every circumstance, however seemingly trivial, is important upon such a subject as this."

"The countenance of Juliana de Morley," replied the confessor, closing his eyes as if the better to bring it back, unmixed with any other image, to his memory—"the countenance of Juliana de Morley is a remarkable one, precisely on account of the variety of expression of which it is capable. Her features, in their outline, resemble those of her mother, in their delicate regularity; yet nothing can be much less similar than these two fair faces, when looked at with attention. The countenance of the mother is placid and tranquil, and though not austere at any time, occasionally assumes an expression of firmness, in which may easily be traced the germ of self-willed obstinacy. Moreover, her features have the power of expressing hard incredulity, contempt, and haughtiness. Nor does her countenance belie her. Such is her character."

“And her daughter?” said Scaviatoli, suddenly raising his eyes.

“Her daughter has none of all this,” replied Father Ambrose, meeting the glance of his superior with a look that very plainly said, “You may trust me; you may trust to my knowing what is the truth on this subject, and to my speaking it.”

Scaviatoli slightly bent his head, and said, “Go on.”

“It is, however, only of late,” resumed the confessor, “that I have had either the inclination or the opportunity of paying much attention to this young girl.”

“How?” said the General, suddenly raising his eyes, with a look of mingled surprise and displeasure, not to be mistaken — “how? No opportunity of making observations on the character of a girl residing with the family of whom you made one? No inclination to observe all that concerned a person whose position renders her of such immense importance to us?”

Father Ambrose crossed his hands upon his breast, and cast down his eyes, with that un-

speakable air of meekness and submission which we sometimes see represented in monkish heads, when painted by those marvellous masters of expression who flourished in the palmy days of Papist patronage. We see such submission there, if our exclusion from this species of sanctity prevents our seeing it anywhere else. It sufficed to soften the look of austerity which had taken possession of the fine firm features of Scaviatoli, and once more veiling his searching eyes, he said again, "Go on;" adding, after a moment, "Explain yourself, my good brother."

"It is only of late," resumed Father Ambrose, in a tone of deep humility, "that I have ever seen Juliana de Morley under circumstances capable of eliciting her character. While her father lived, I never saw her but in his presence. The unhappy man, deeply conscious of the appalling sin committed in marrying a heretic, and feeling the presence of the heretic offspring which Providence in its wrath allotted to him as his only heir, as a living reproach, never greatly affected the company of his child; and thus my opportuni-

ties of studying her early character were few. The inclination for making the attempt was doubtless in some sort palsied from the difficulty of achieving it; but more still, by the short-sighted persuasion that the life of her father, who had but just attained his forty-second year, was likely to endure longer than that of her mother, and therefore, that in all human probability, he might yet atone for the grievous sin of his first marriage, by forming another, which might obviate all the most deplorable consequences of it."

"I comprehend you, Father Ambrose, but can never approve, under any circumstances, the postponement of a duty connected with the interests of our order. Better that ten thousand active, nay, painful efforts should be made in vain, than omit *one* that might by possibility be found available. Remember this, through all the years which may yet remain to you, and on every occasion which may arise for impressing this most important truth on younger brethren, fail not to use it. And now, recover yourself, and proceed with your narrative."

Again the old man bent his head, and crossed his hands in deep humility, and then said, "No sooner had Richard Randolphe de Morley breathed his last, than I felt fully and most deeply sensible of the importance of everything connected with the character of his daughter; and it was for the purpose of hourly watching every indication that might assist the counsels of the brotherhood upon the subject that I delayed my return to Rome."

"In doing so you were wise. Now, then, for the result of this delay," said Scaviatoli.

"The result of it, holy father, is the conviction that Juliana de Morley is not, like her mother, so constituted as to resist the influence and power of truth. Her imagination is impressionable, her feelings easily excited, her temper tender and gentle, and her memory of her departed father strongly mingled with a feeling of self-reproach for not having honoured him sufficiently during his life. She is fond of reading, and her taste leads her to poetry. She is fond of music, but the airs she oftenest repeats are rather tender and plaintive, than sprightly and gay. She is kind-hearted and

open-handed; and my belief is, that if once brought to believe that her father's soul is in danger of perdition from his heretic marriage, and that his punishment may be lessened were she to sacrifice her estate to propitiate the prayers of the Church, every acre might easily be obtained for the purpose; for her mother, to whom she is evidently much attached, though by no means, I think, agreeing with her on all points, is handsomely jointured, and perfectly independent of her."

Here Father Ambrose ceased, and a silence of some minutes followed, Scaviatoli retaining unchanged the attitude in which he had listened to him. At length, however, he spoke; and once again raising his eyes, and fixing them upon the face of the confessor, he said, "Fond of music? Fond of plaintive music?"

"Yes, father," replied the confessor; "trust me that it is so."

"She is imaginative, tender-hearted, and generous?" demanded the General.

"Assuredly she is all this," replied Father Ambrose.

“And given to the reading of verses?” added Scaviatoli.

“Yes, holy father,” was the confessor’s undoubting reply.

“And this casket, Father Ambrose?” said the General, after another pause. “It is an afflicting thought that a society so almost miraculously self-sustaining as the company of Jesus has proved itself to be, should still be forced from time to time to turn its attention from the stupendous objects committed to its charge, in order to insure a sufficient supply of that lowest of all agencies—money. But so it is, and so it must be. Though our mission be no less than the holding an universal superintending rule, spiritual and intellectual, over all the nations of the earth, even as vicegerents of the Holy Spirit of God; and though the means we use to accomplish our Heaven-allotted task be for the most part of the very highest and noblest order, namely, the power of mind acting upon mind, yet still the pitiful aid of money is often and absolutely necessary. The brethren must live; for, despite their high calling, they are as yet but men.

Yet our personal wants, as we all know, my good brother, are among the very least of the cares to which our thoughts are turned. No man can accuse us of paying undue attention to the earthly tabernacle in which the immortal spirit abides. We neither waste our time and strength in macerating our flesh nor in pampering it, and herein is one mark of our high calling that cannot be mistaken. Yet still, my good brother, we must have money."

"Reverend father, I know that this, in some sort degrading, but not the less essential requisite for carrying forward the work we are upon, is not less needful to us than the air we breathe; and any one of our most holy company who, under any circumstances, permits himself to lose sight of an interest so essential, because it wounds his feelings as degrading, is not a faithful servant. Here, holy father, is the casket, which I thought it not unworthy either of me, or of the cause I serve, to obtain; and with it I bring the conviction, infinitely more important still, that the hand which gave it—though now, with its carnal but powerful weapon of great wealth, it is enlisted with our

worst enemies—may, *if properly attended to*, be brought to use all its power for us.”

The General of the Jesuits bowed his head in a way that seemed to indicate both attention and respect; and receiving in his hand the key of the casket, which Father Ambrose had deposited on the table, he dismissed him with the welcome words, “For the present, brother Ambrose, farewell. But take with you the assurance that we hold you to be a good and faithful servant, and worthy of the noble work to which you have been called.”

CHAPTER IX.

ALL the visits which have been recorded as having been made on the same day at Cuthbert Castle, as well as many others from persons more distant, and therefore less likely to appear frequently on the scene, were all returned in very proper style by the umwhile hermit, Lady Sarah, and her daughter.

The driving about a country neighbourhood for the purpose of making morning visits, will not, to most people, suggest the idea of great dissipation or of very exhilarating gaiety, but most surely it appeared to our recluses as productive of both. Yet the mother and daughter did not enjoy it equally.

Lady Sarah, notwithstanding the gentle quietness of her ordinary manner, had never been insensible to the pleasures of good society ;

she had great talents for conversation, and greatly enjoyed it; nor was she by any means insensible to the amusement derivable from studying character, whether sublime or ridiculous. She had suffered deeply, and that without ever seeking consolation from complaining of her situation, or even alluding to it; but she felt the relief which the death of her husband, and the removal of his austere and gloomy attendants produced, with a degree of enjoyment which was not checked by any scruples of conscience. She would, moreover, have scorned herself had any consideration tempted her to affect a grief which she did not feel. She knew that she had been a very gentle, uncomplaining wife, to an estranged and austere husband; and there was a sort of honest indignation awakened in her heart when she remembered the sternness with which, of late years, she had been made to understand that her presence in her own house was considered as nothing short of contamination, not only by her husband and his confidential friend and confessor; but even by the menials who waited on her, which left her no wish to con-

ceal the fact that her present mode of life was more agreeable to her than the past.

And unquestionably it was more agreeable to her young daughter also, but by no means in the same degree. Juliana had never suffered from the enforced stillness of the castle as her mother had done; for, "being to the manner born," it had scarcely been felt as an evil, and she had learned to vary her existence by so many occupations, that the change, though amusing, was by no means so full of unmixed gratification to her as to her mother. And when above a week had passed without affording her one single morning of unbroken leisure to pass in her own little turret-chamber study, she certainly confessed to herself that she hoped they should not go on *for ever* being so very dissipated and gay as they were at present.

But she breathed no such hope to her mother. She saw with delight that she enjoyed the change, and that the renewal of her former intimacy with Mrs. Curtis was a source of peculiar satisfaction to her; and therefore, far from betraying anything like distaste to-

wards any of the new engagements forming for them, Juliana determined to be very much amused and very happy while keeping them all, and only secretly indulging the hope that such very absorbing dissipation could not last.

In truth, the report made by Father Ambrose to the General of his order showed that the old man had discernment, as well as zeal and fidelity. Juliana de Morley *was* given to the reading of verses; she *was*, moreover, fond of music, of plaintive music especially; and she was likewise, as he had said, imaginative, tender-hearted, and generous.

A girl of this kind was less likely than one of merrier mood might have been, to welcome with unmixed satisfaction the sudden change which had taken place in their manner of life. She found, too, greatly to her disappointment, that Mr. Wardour was quite right in thinking that she was not likely to find any particularly charming young lady who would suit her as a dear friend.

The dinner party at Mrs. Rowley's was exactly everything that Mrs. Rowley herself wished it to be. The dinner was pompously

magnificent; and this being taken into consideration, it was neither so cold nor so comfortless as might have been expected, and as most pompously magnificent dinners usually are. Nor was the evening one that could be reasonably found fault with. There was a comfortable whist-table and a comfortable rubber, and four or five couple of waltzers, who laboured in their vocation, with wonderfully little remission, from nine o'clock to twelve.

The last-named enjoyment might have been more keenly relished by Miss de Morley, had it not been the first time she had ever danced in the presence of any one, save her dancing-master and her mother. It was not that the exercise fatigued her; it was not that she positively disliked dancing; but she felt painfully embarrassed.

It is more than probable that every one present did look at her more than at any one else, because she was new; and also, perhaps, because she was both beautiful and rich. But forgetting her claims to attention, and absolutely unconscious of their being such as to render

the gaze of many eyes flattering, she only perceived that she was stared at; and, conscious of her own embarrassed feelings, doubted not for a moment that her ignorance of all usage in such scenes was leading her into absurdity of some kind or other, though she knew not what.

She endured this idea, for a little while, with more genuine philosophy than would have been within the reach of most young ladies, but at length she began very much to wish that it were over; and after having looked at the fine jewelled timepiece on the chimney, every time she was whirled past it, till it was much past eleven o'clock, without perceiving the slightest indication that anybody thought it was time to leave off, she suddenly withdrew herself from the circle, assuring Mr. William Curtis, who was at that moment her partner, that she was too tired to dance any more.

Now it happened that Mrs. Rowley's exertions to get together five couples of waltzers had been perfectly successful—the four tall Mr. Rowleys and young Mr. Curtis furnishing the required number of cavaliers; the two

Ladies Letchmeer, Miss Stanberry, Miss Raymond, and Miss de Morley, the necessary contingent of ladies, so that the withdrawal of one couple was a serious loss.

“Are you not cruel, Miss de Morley!” exclaimed Miss Raymond, with the brusque vivacity for which she was celebrated; “you first take possession of the waltzer of waltzers, THE waltzer, *par excellence*, despite the groans of mothers, the sighs of daughters, and the hostile looks of both. And then you sit down, leave him *planté là*, and say that you are tired!”

As she named the various parties alluded to in this speech, Miss Raymond contrived, by the aid of her large, expressive, and singularly wandering eyes, to point them out to Juliana with sufficient precision to prevent any danger of mistake.

“I am very sorry,” replied Miss de Morley, colouring slightly, and smiling as gaily as she could; “but what can I do, if I am *really* so tired that I cannot dance any more?”

“How very extraordinary,” returned Miss Raymond. “Tired of waltzing!”

“Even so, Miss Raymond. But, at any rate, you know, the waltzer of waltzers is released by it, and that surely is some atonement for my deficiencies,” said Juliana, laughing as merrily as she could.

“But what good will that do us, my dear?” said Miss Raymond, tartly. “Where is he to get a partner for this identical waltz? Don’t you perceive that we have no spare lady? And less than five couple looks so ridiculous, and so like the fag end of the evening, that everybody will be ordering their carriages directly. What a bore!”

Instead of replying to this not very civil remonstrance, Miss de Morley approached the pianoforte, and addressing the very odd-looking person who had been playing, but who was now waiting for a signal to recommence her labours, she said,

“Will you have the great kindness to let me take your place? I can play waltzes much longer than I can dance them; and if you would but have the goodness to stand up in my place everything would be right again.”

This was said rapidly and eagerly, but in a

manner to prove that the speaker was so much in earnest, as to make it a matter of good nature, as well as of politeness, not to refuse her.

But the person thus addressed was very painfully at a loss how to reply. She looked up into the face of Miss de Morley, who, with one hand resting on the back of her chair, and the other on the pianoforte, hung over her, so as to make their conversation very strictly a *tête-à-tête*. Fanny Clarence, for so was the odd-looking player called, looked up in her face as she thus hung over her, and, considerably to her surprise, displayed, while doing so, a pair of violet-coloured eyes, of such exceeding beauty, that Juliana looked at her, after she had ceased to speak, with a degree of earnestness which caused a naturally pale cheek to assume a very bright carnation.

But this deep blush was not the only symptom of embarrassment displayed by the poor girl, while listening to this application from Miss de Morley; and those same beautiful eyes which had so strongly fascinated Juliana's gaze, spoke, as plainly as eyes could speak, a

very great degree of distress from not knowing how to answer her.

“I beg your pardon!” added the heiress of Cuthbert, blushing in her turn. “I fear I have proposed to you what is disagreeable.”

“Disagreeable—only because I dare not, I cannot comply,” was the answer.

These words were uttered very eagerly, and in a low whisper, and had not Miss de Morley, during this short moment of intercourse, produced upon the odd-looking Fanny Clarence an effect somewhat analogous to that which Fanny Clarence had produced on her, it is probable, that this short answer would have been shorter still, and assuredly the words, “dare not,” would not have made part of it.

There are two facts, which, if the reader will be pleased to remember them here, may help to make what follows intelligible.

Firstly, there is such a thing as sympathy. Secondly, the action of the imagination is *sometimes* very rapid. The first of these facts may account for Miss de Morley suddenly feeling considerable interest for the odd-looking waltz player. The second may explain how it

happened that she instantly suspected that there was something of mystery connected both with her odd looks, and her *not daring* to leave her post at the instrument.

“Then forget that I have made such a request!” she cried; and, without waiting for any further reply, Juliana instantly returned to the dancers, who stood suspended by the ceasing of the music, as if they had been struck by a conjurer’s wand, and offering her hand to Mr. Curtis, she said, with a smile beautiful enough to have made a worse caprice forgiven, even if she had not been the heiress of Cuthbert Castle, “I am quite ready to dance again now, if you are still willing to be my partner.”

“If it depends on that,” said the young man, gaily, and gracefully seizing her offered hand, and leading her into the circle, which the sound of the piano had already restored to life and motion—“if it depends on that, these inveterate waltzers will, for once in their lives, have enough of it.”

But Juliana was really very tired; of which fact her partner soon became so seriously aware, notwithstanding her endeavours to conceal it,

that, without consulting her on the subject, he waltzed her to a distant sofa, and placing her upon it, seated himself by her side.

“We must not quite kill you, by way of proving that we are the most enthusiastic dancers upon earth,” said he. “I am so used to see the set assembled here go on *à l’envie l’un de l’autre*, that it never occurred to me, in the first instance, that you were really and truly tired. You positively must dance no more to-night, Miss de Morley.”

There was something so really friendly in the tone with which this was said, that Juliana felt encouraged to take him at his word, and to believe, moreover, that she might do so, without being considered as so sad a kill-joy as Miss Raymond had led her to believe. But no sooner had she frankly accepted this reprieve, and found herself quietly seated at a convenient distance from the rest of the company, than she determined to seize the opportunity for asking a few questions about the mysterious waltz-player.

“Who is Miss Clarence?” said she, rather abruptly, her head being really too full of

curiosity on the subject to permit her inventing any preface to the question.

“Who is Miss Clarence?” repeated Curtis, laughing. “Could you not be so obliging, Miss de Morley, as to question me concerning any other individual of our rustic society? I should feel so excessively proud could I be able to convince you that you could not possibly have chosen better than you have done, in selecting me as a brief chronicle of all men and all things appertaining to this neighbourhood—women, of course, included. But you have chosen a theme upon which I am in honour bound to confess my very particular ignorance. I really know nothing whatever of Miss Clarence, save that her name is Fanny; that it is presumed throughout the neighbourhood that she is bald; and that she is suspected of being—but this is a very great secret, I believe, because it is so rarely alluded to—but she *is* suspected of being rather more nearly related to the Honourable Mrs. Stanberry than that lady or her beautiful daughter think it always discreet to acknowledge.”

“Discreet,” repeated Juliana, “what can you mean?”

“Nay, for Heaven’s sake, do not misunderstand me! I have not the slightest intention of insinuating any nearer relationship than the law allows, or than people in general acknowledge, without any repugnance whatever. But the truth is, that Miss Fanny Clarence—we all know that her name is Fanny—the truth is, that Miss Fanny is strongly suspected of being neither more nor less than the niece of the Honourable Mrs. Stanberry, and cousin-german to her beautiful daughter.”

“Her beautiful daughter is not one half so lovely as her beautiful niece,” said Juliana.

Mr. William Curtis here took the liberty of staring at Miss de Morley with very unfeigned astonishment, a rudeness which must be pardoned, on account of the extremity of his surprise, which really left him without the power of knowing what he was about. But, together with its great rudeness, there was something so comic in his look, that Miss de Morley laughed heartily; and having waited for at

least a whole minute in vain for an answer, she said—

“Why do you look so very much astonished, Mr. Curtis?”

“Forgive me, Miss de Morley!” he exclaimed, with great solemnity; “I feel that I am not conducting myself as I ought to do. No man, while in the very act of making the acquaintance of a young lady, ought to express any other opinion concerning all the other young ladies of his acquaintance, save that they are all a great deal too ugly and uninteresting to mention. And here am I, not only confessing that I think Miss Stanberry superbly beautiful, but bursting with curiosity to know what it is you have discovered in Miss Fanny which can have led to your uttering the astounding opinion to which I have just had the honour of listening.”

“I have discovered her eyes,” replied Juliana, very gravely; “and I do assure you, that I am not speaking with any exaggeration when I declare that I never saw any eyes before that can compare in beauty to them.”

“Really,” returned the young man; “and

I do assure you," he added, "that till you were so obliging as to give me the information, I cannot be said to have positively known that she had any eyes at all."

"Such eyes!" repeated Juliana, earnestly; "such eyes, and such eye-lashes! No, I certainly never did see anything so beautiful before!"

"But may I ask you," said Mr. Curtis, "how you contrived to make a discovery which, I really believe, has escaped everybody else as well as myself?"

"It was purely accidental," replied Miss de Morley. "In order to prevent the loss of a couple to the dancers, and particularly the loss of a partner to you, Mr. Curtis, I ventured to ask her to let me take her place at the pianoforte while she danced."

"Danced! poor creature!" exclaimed Curtis. "You do not know, then, Miss de Morley, that she is subject to some constitutional complaint about the head, which obliges her to be always shaved, I think they say; but, at any rate, it prevents her ever appearing without that extraordinary cap and muffler under her chin,

through all which you contrived to penetrate, in order to find out that she had some eyes. Did you never hear of it?"

"No, indeed; but there is nothing very extraordinary in that, because we know nothing about anybody," replied Juliana.

"How very mortifying!" cried the young man. "And you really never heard anything about any of us?"

"Oh, yes," cried Juliana, colouring, "I have heard a great deal about you, Mr. Curtis. Mamma used to be very intimate with Mrs. Curtis, and I have often heard her talk of you all."

"Indeed," said the young man, with a look of graver interest than he had before manifested; "but I cannot be really surprised to hear it," he added, "for I do not believe that any one who has ever known my mother could forget her."

"Nor did mamma forget you either, Mr. Curtis," rejoined Juliana, laughing; "and that I suppose is the reason why I take the liberty of asking you questions. Will you have the great kindness to tell me, seriously, whether

none of the people that are all dancing and talking here, really know any more of that beautiful girl than that she plays waltzes to perfection, and that she wears a very large thing upon her head, that looks exceedingly like a night-cap?"

"Seriously, Miss de Morley, I do not believe that anybody knows anything more about her, except that, as I told you before," added the young man, very gravely, "some people say that she is the niece of Mrs. Stanberry. But whether this be true, or not, I really cannot say. Nay, I will honestly confess—notwithstanding her particularly nice manner of playing, and the indefatigable good nature with which she goes on, hour after hour, at it, without ever appearing weary—I do not believe that there is a single individual who has ever had the civility or the gratitude to desire to be introduced to her; and yet she has been amongst us, playing waltzes, just as you have heard her to-night, for the last six or seven months. But the truth is, and it is no use to deny it, that the idea of a young lady afflicted with a constitutional malady about the head,

has something in it that altogether extinguishes curiosity."

"I do not see that at all," returned Juliana. "On the contrary, I think it is calculated to awaken interest, instead of setting it to sleep. Besides which, I want excessively to know what she meant by saying that she *dared not* dance."

"Did she say so?" demanded young Curtis, eagerly. "Nay, then, you are right, Miss de Morley. There really is something interesting about her—dare not? She dare not dance? Oh, I guess! I will tell you what it means. She dare not dance, poor thing! for fear that it should make her malady worse. It is something very bad, I know; for my mother said one day, I remember, that Mrs. Stanberry spoke of it as something very horrible—a constant eruption, I believe, or something of that shocking kind."

"I do not believe a word of it," returned Juliana, warmly. "Her head and face are most strangely covered up, certainly; but when she looked up at me as I stood close to her, I am certain I must have seen it, had there

really been anything of the kind to see. She is rather pale, but most exquisitely fair; and when she smiled, which she did at me, I assure you, it was not only the most beautiful smile I ever saw, but I particularly remarked the redness of her lips, and the whiteness of her teeth, which I have always been told is a great proof of perfect health. Depend upon it, Mr. Curtis, there is some mystery about it."

"Then, depend upon it, Miss de Morley, I will never rest till I find it out," he replied.

He was silent for a moment, and then added, "It is impossible that there can be any feeling of jealousy. Adelaide Stanberry is so extremely beautiful, that the idea of their fearing a rival in that poor heavy-looking girl is perfectly ridiculous."

As Mr. Curtis thus again alluded to the beauty of Miss Stanberry, Juliana turned her head to look at her, and then perceived that she herself, or her companion, or perhaps both, formed at that moment the object of the beauty's earnest contemplation; for though she was still standing with her partner, Mr. Stephen Rowley, in the circle of dancers, and

though his arm was round her waist as if in the very act of leading her on, her entire attention was evidently directed to the sofa on which they were sitting.

No young lady in the slightest degree conscious of being engaged in a flirtation, could have encountered such a steady gaze as Miss de Morley now encountered, without wincing. But there was no such consciousness in Juliana; and the unsuspecting heiress both met the gaze, and returned it, with a smile, believing that the young lady was only looking thus earnestly at her, in order to ascertain whether there was any chance of her returning to join the dancers.

The moment Miss Stanberry perceived she was observed, her eyes were withdrawn; but for a moment or two she still remained stationary, and Juliana employed the interval without scruple, in examining the features she had heard so highly commended.

Unquestionably, Miss Stanberry was very handsome; but till the fact had been thus pointed out to her, it had made no great impression upon Juliana; and even now,

though feeling that there was nothing at all surprising in the admiration expressed by Mr. Curtis, she did not show it.

The beauty of Adelaide Stanberry was, perhaps, of a style more likely to be appreciated by gentlemen than ladies. She was tall, and though far from being coarsely formed, was equally far from being slightly built. Her maternal grandmother was a Roman, by no means of the very highest rank, and Adelaide Stanberry might have formed an invaluable model for a painter desirous of giving a fine specimen of a type of that race. Her features were not delicate, but they were regular, and finely formed; the upper lip short, and rather full, though less so than its fellow, and both were of the deep bright red which sets off the whiteness of the teeth to such great advantage. The mouth altogether was beautiful, though it was large, and its expression more voluptuous than refined. Her hair and eyes were of ebon blackness, and exceeding beauty; and her complexion of that dark rich tint so valued by painters of the Roman school. Her smooth and almost dimpled shoulders were broad, though her

waist was slender, and her whole bust, which was, beyond contradiction, of uncommon loveliness, both as to form and colour, was as much exposed as it was well possible for the dress-maker to leave it.

“Yes, she is very beautiful,” said Juliana, to her companion, who was looking greatly amazed at the earnest look of examination with which one beauty was thus contemplating another—“extremely beautiful, and very like an exquisitely radiant picture. Nevertheless, Mr. William Curtis, I still hold to my former opinion, that Fanny Clarence, as you call her, is incomparably lovelier.”

“Considering that you must be speaking in jest, Miss de Morley, you look wonderfully in earnest. But, perhaps, when I have the happiness of knowing you more, I shall understand you better. Perhaps you are only endeavouring to mystify me.”

“If you did know me more, Mr. Curtis, you would certainly know better than to suspect me of that species of witticism, or, indeed, of any other. You will always get wrong if you suspect me of intending to be witty. On this

point, at least, I am aware of my own deficiency. No, I am not endeavouring to mystify you; and you will get nearer the truth if you take refuge in the old adage, that there is no accounting for taste."

"Oh, thank you, Miss de Morley," replied the young man, laughing; "the mystery is dissolved at once. You prefer a pale, sickly-looking, inconceivably dull young lady, to the most brilliant incarnation of youth, health, beauty, and vivacity. Thus much being granted, I have not a word to say in reply."

Some ladies rather more used to the world and its inuendoes than Juliana, might have resented the saucy tone of this reply; but it never occurred to her that Mr. Curtis meant, even in jest, to accuse her of the defective sort of vision produced by envy, and she replied, gaily, "No; but I prefer the soft sweet moonlight of the gentle waltz-player's eyes, and I prefer the half-smile of her lovely little mouth, to—to all the glare of the most blazing beauty that ever the sun shone upon."

Mr. William Curtis looked at her earnestly as she spoke, and he certainly thought, though

he did not say so, that there might be more styles of beauty than one. All he did say was, "Well, Miss de Morley, you have at least excited a strong feeling of curiosity about your protégée. And if I should ever be fortunate enough to find myself in circumstances that may enable me to look Miss Fanny in the face, depend upon it I will endeavour to profit by them."

For a short, a very short time after Juliana had thus decidedly withdrawn herself from the dance, the waltzing of the four couple who were left went on; but the watchful eye of Mrs. Rowley perceived evident symptoms of discontent on the beauteous face of Miss Stanberry: her honourable mother, too, was evidently ill at ease, and there seemed to be an air of languor creeping over the festivities of Eagle's Crag on this occasion, such as she had never observed before since her splendid mansion had first opened its pompous and hospitable gates to the neighbourhood.

Now, among the many full-blown glories of Mrs. Rowley's heart, one of the most flourishing was the belief that, although her wealth

was what, of course, made her the most *important* personage in the neighbourhood, it was her peculiarly skilful manner of arranging her parties which rendered her the most *popular*, as well as the most honoured individual in the county.

And hitherto she really had been exceedingly successful; for though her "horrible vulgarity" formed the most unceasing and the most copious theme of discussion in every house that she entered, there was scarcely an inhabitant in either of them who did not rejoice over an invitation to Eagle's Crag, as pretty nearly the most agreeable event that could occur to them. It is generally, indeed, a very easy thing in a country neighbourhood for rich people to make themselves popular, if they happen, like Mrs. Rowley, to have the wish to do so. The simple operation of inviting all the people to dinner a good deal oftener than they can reasonably expect to be invited, goes far towards it; and if, in addition to this, the younger part of the population be propitiated by an ever-ready permission to dance, the *rich people* must be very dis-

agreeable indeed, if they do not become “*most delightful people*,” notwithstanding any imaginable degree of vulgarity which may have to be placed per contra.

That such a result from such causes may, does, and must arise wherever they are found in action, it would be folly, as well as falsehood, to deny; but in the particular neighbourhood under discussion, there were additional reasons for rendering the Rowley family popular, notwithstanding all the quizzing bestowed upon the mother of the race.

The circumstance of her having four sons, each one a well-endowed, independent, and marriageable individual, would have, “naturally so,” a conciliatory effect anywhere; but in the western part of the county of ——— most particularly so, because it happened that just in that part of the country there was quite a constellation of beautiful young ladies, and many of them well born into the bargain, who, with the exception of the heiress of Cuthbert and Miss Stanberry, were rather peculiarly devoid of cash.

Thus, then, the festivities of Eagle’s Crag

were always sure to go off with éclat; and it was an unfortunate fact, that this first appearance of Lady Sarah de Morley and her beautiful daughter in the circle, was also the first appearance of anything like the shadow of a possibility that it should ever be otherwise.

Little did either mother or daughter imagine how important was the expression of their feelings on this occasion. Little did Juliana suppose that because she felt very tired, and avowed it, she should establish herself in the opinion of very nearly every person present as being proud, conceited, affected, and, in one comprehensive word, most completely odious.

As little did Lady Sarah guess that when, upon observing that her darling looked pale, and that by retiring from the dance she betrayed fatigue, she had asked Mrs. Rowley's permission to ring for her carriage, a feeling of indignant resentment against them both became nearly general.

The dancing was thus broken up, even before the folding doors leading to an exquisitely decorated little apartment, sacred to flirting and the evening *buffet*, had been thrown

open; and instead of the increasing hilarity which had hitherto always rendered this hour the most delightful of all, a general air of stiffness and of gloom seemed to pervade the whole party. But ere long the carriage of Lady Sarah was announced, and the two offending ladies rose, and took their leave, innocent as angels, poor souls! of all the mischief they had been doing, and so unconscious of the angry feelings they had unwittingly inspired, that Lady Sarah's first words to Mr. Wardour, who returned to the rectory in their carriage, were—"How very kind they all seem to be." To which Juliana, with equal simplicity, replied, "Yes, indeed."

Mr. Wardour had some little misgivings on the subject; and Sir Peter Teazle's words, "we leave our characters behind us," recurred to him; but all he said was, "How beautifully bright the moon is to-night!"

He was quite right, however. They had left their characters behind them, and wild work did the offended company make with them. The gentle voice of Mrs. Curtis, who ventured to say that she did not think they

intended to be rude, was utterly overpowered and lost; and when her son, after listening in succession to all the various charges brought against them by all the ladies of the party (except, indeed, the mysterious waltz-player, who had been requested by her cousin, Miss Stanberry, to go into the lobby and see that their shawls were ready), when William Curtis, after listening to them all, burst at last into what appeared to be an uncontrollable fit of laughter, there was not one among them who doubted that he agreed entirely with every word they had spoken.

CHAPTER X.

A VERY slight sketch of one or two scenes which passed afterwards will suffice to show that the neighbourhood with which the long-secluded Lady Sarah, and her young daughter, were about to mix, in the hope of finding a great deal of social enjoyment, was not very likely to answer their expectations.

In order to give fitting precedence to rank, our first visit shall be made to the boudoir of the Dowager Countess of Setterton, in which small, untidy, not to say dirty little apartment, it was the custom of this noble lady and her daughters to take their morning meal.

“So, girls,” was her salutation to the young ladies as she entered it, “I have made you wait, I suppose; but I could not come to breakfast till I had looked after the crape that

I am dying pink for your ball dresses. They will be beautiful, I promise you. And I promise you, into the bargain, that you will have nothing else for the races."

"I wish to Heaven, ma'am," said Lady Margaret, "that if you will do such dirty jobs, you would not talk of them."

"Fiddle de dee!" returned her noble mother; "I have told you a thousand times over, and now I tell you again, that our rank is a great deal too high to make it signify the least in the world what dirty jobs we do. If Madame Rowhead—Rowley—what is her horrid name? were she to set up a dying concern like mine, I might confess, perhaps, that it would be *raison de plus* for calling her a monster. But a duke's daughter and an earl's widow may do a vast number of things with impunity,—your ladyship may take my word for it—that the blowsy relict of a cotton-spinner had better let alone. You must go to this ball; you must be well dressed. No, I don't mean that, either; well dressed you can never be, till after you get married; but you may, and you must look beautiful and gay; but the

ways and means, my dears, must be left to me."

The two nobly-born young beauties exchanged looks of immense disgust, unseen by their bustling mamma, who was occupied in making tea for their breakfast. This done, and the three ladies being seated round the little table on which the particularly uncomfortable repast was spread, Lady Setterton said—

"Now, then, as I must sit still for a few minutes, let me hear your opinion of these Cuthbert Castle people. What do you think of Miss de Morley, girls, by way of a beauty?"

"I think, ma'am, that no living being but yourself would ever think of calling her a beauty," replied Lady Margaret, applying, from habit, her glass to her eye, in order to assist her in finding the knife which lay on the plate before her.

"That is, because you are jealous of her, my dear," replied her mother, "which is great nonsense. For though she is quite perfect in her own particular style of beauty, you know, as well as I do, that she cannot be compared

to either of you. Of course, she wants the *air noble*. She has blood on one side, I know. But that won't do; one always sees the difference. So you need not trouble yourselves with any fears of rivalship. She never can rival my daughters. But tell me, how do you like her, and how do you like her mother?"

"As to her mother," cried Lady Louisa, "I consider her as almost quite an old woman, and I never do pay any attention to old women."

"And as to the girl," added Lady Margaret, "she is not only, as you truly say, most completely *mauvais ton*, but one of the most odiously conceited and disagreeable creatures I ever met with, into the bargain."

The Dowager Countess clapped her hands, and cried, "Bravo! that is honest and sincere, to say the least of it. And, that I may follow so good an example, I will not pretend to say that I feel inclined to like either of them at all more than you seem to do." And then, setting down the tea-kettle, she added, with a pleasant smile at her own wit, "At any rate, we obey the Scriptures on this subject, for

nobody can deny that we are of one mind in a house."

* * * * *

Mr. Raymond told his daughter that he did not greatly like the tone of the woman-kind at the castle; they did not look as if they were at their ease; but whether this arose from pride or shyness, he could not tell.

His daughter replied, that she thought them decidedly stupid, too much so, she was afraid, to permit their ever being much of an acquaintance as neighbours; concluding her observations by remarking, that she did not believe they either of them knew more of a house, than if they had been born and bred in the hulks.

* * * * *

In short, the only civil words spoken concerning them by their new acquaintance, were uttered by the fat lady and her four tall sons, at Eagle's Crag Hall, and by the muffled minstrel of the pianoforte. The old lady of the Crag pronounced, in a very *ex cathedrâ* style, that both mother and daughter were downright ladies, every inch of them; and then added,

that although, of course, in their particular splendid *situation*, money could be no sort of object, yet, nevertheless, that she confessed she should feel disappointed if one of her boys did not make up to that "uncommon nice girl, Juliana de Morley."

As to the favourable word uttered by the waltz-player, it only amounted to something like a whisper into the ear of her mother, signifying that, among all the people she had seen since their arrival at "the Grange," there was only one whom she fancied she should like to know, and that was a tall, slight, rather pale, but very lovely young lady, who she thought was called Miss de Morley.

And *apropos* of this, her singular opinion, we must take occasion to say a few words concerning her equally singular self. She was, indeed, as Mr. William Curtis had hinted, no less a personage than the niece of the Honourable Mrs. Stanberry, being the daughter (and the only child) of that distinguished lady's twin sister. It were long to tell all the accidents which had led to this twin sister's having been left, on the death of her husband, in a

state of the most hopeless destitution; this kind-hearted, but very improvident husband, having sold his commission for the purpose of bringing her to England for advice, for a rheumatic complaint in her limbs. It boots not to describe all the suffering of the one twin sister in narrating this deplorable history, nor all the warm affection with which the other (despite the very decidedly-expressed disapprobation of her darling Adelaide) persevered in arranging a home in her own house, and a small annual income from her own purse, for the still dearly-loved sister and her unknown niece.

They came, and were received by the silly, but warm-hearted Mrs. Stanberry, with such sincerity of pleasure and so much tenderness of attention, that the wounded hearts of the poor wanderers were soothed into something much more resembling a feeling of happiness than they had ever expected to know again.

But a dreadful misfortune awaited them.

On the night of their arrival, Fanny Clarence, closely wrapped in her deep mourning garments, which were by no means of the most

delicate or becoming fabric, and suffering, moreover, from great fatigue, and a most oppressive cold to boot, was so completely disguised and so thoroughly unlike herself in appearance, that her aunt's first thought, as she looked at her, was expressed inwardly by a deep and sincere lamentation for her total want of the family beauty; while Adelaide, as *she* looked, thought of William Curtis, and, pressing her hands upon her heart, fervently thanked the gods that the arrival of this unknown girl, which she had so deeply dreaded, brought no danger on the score of rivalry.

This beautiful Adelaide Stanberry had, unhappily for herself and for many others, conceived a violent passion for the unconscious William Curtis. It is certain that he thought her by much the handsomest girl in the neighbourhood, but the idea of falling in love with her had literally never entered his head; and as to his heart, it was as sound and untouched as if there had been no such things as black eyes in the world.

This fortunate youth, this admired William Curtis, who was considered by Lady Setterton

and her pretty daughters as so much the most important person of their acquaintance, held a place no less distinguished in the estimation of Mrs. Stanberry and *her* daughter. Yet nothing could be less similar than the nature of the sentiments entertained towards him in the two families.

The value which the noble Letchmeers and their dowager mother put upon him, has already been sufficiently explained; but that felt by Adelaide and her mother was wholly different.

Mrs. Stanberry was in perfectly easy circumstances, and her daughter already in possession of a very handsome fortune, entirely independent of her. The worldly circumstances of the young man were, therefore, comparatively speaking, of no importance to them. But Adelaide, the worshipped idol of her doting mother's heart, was in love with him, passionately in love with him; and, unfortunately, hers was a character and disposition to render such a passion a very dangerous sort of frenzy.

Mrs. Stanberry was herself a particularly

peaceable, quiet-tempered woman, a little self-indulgent, but never having manifested anything approaching to passion, unless her blind and devoted attachment to her daughter could be so termed.

But notwithstanding this tranquil temperament, she had given birth to a child, in whom the Italian warmth and violence of character, which might be said to have slept in her, appeared again with a force and vehemence that seemed strengthened by having remained at rest during one generation.

It would require the powerful pen of a Byron to do justice to the violence of the feeling by which Adelaide Stanberry was now enslaved. There was scarcely a circumstance that could by possibility occur, scarcely an event that fate could bring about, which, if unconnected with William Curtis, could at that time have appeared to her of sufficient importance to demand a second thought.

Fortunately for her, the object of this ill-regulated attachment was not only perfectly unconscious of it, but really might fairly be said to be incapable of comprehending its vehemence.

Never was there a nobler-spirited or higher-principled young man than William Curtis; and he had a heart, too, both tender and warm enough to love with devotion and constancy. But his hour was not yet come.

He decidedly admired Miss Stanberry more than he admired either of her fair neighbours; but he felt that she was a sort of imperious personage, before whom it was not wise to bow too low; and he sometimes made his mother laugh by boasting that he kept her in order, by not letting her perceive that he thought her as attractive as she certainly was.

He was mistaken, however, if he supposed that Adelaide was not aware of this preference. She was more than aware of it; for, unhappily, she flattered herself that it was growing, and must grow, into a sentiment as powerful as her own. Her self-delusion, however, stopped short of believing that Curtis had as yet made up his mind to marry her; and it was her doubts and fears upon this point which led to the "*dreadful misfortune*" which has been mentioned as having betided poor Fanny Clarence.

It has been already stated that Miss Stanberry's introduction to her cousin on the night of her arrival was exceedingly satisfactory; but far different was the result of their interview on the following morning. Fanny Clarence, refreshed with sleep, neatly, though most simply dressed, without either cap or bonnet to conceal her beautiful head, was, melancholy to relate, one of the very prettiest creatures that ever was seen.

It would be dangerous to attempt entering upon any description of the effect which this unexpected opposition produced on Miss Stanberry. It would require a much more detailed account of the peculiarities of this young lady than I have either time or inclination to give, in order to convey an idea of it. And even if this were done, the labour might only be rewarded by an exclamation of "How unnatural!"

The light readers of "light reading," as it is called, if they happen to know more of native than of universal nature, are rather apt to utter this exclamation when portraits are brought before their eyes, the originals of

which they have never known; for which reason I prefer trusting this part of my narrative solely to facts, instead of entering into a full description of the feelings which led to them.

In a word, then, the sight of her young cousin's face and form at once suggested to the terrified Adelaide such a train of dreadful consequences, as likely to arise from her being seen by William Curtis, that she immediately sought a private interview with her mother, and imperiously demanded that a person so peculiarly likely to do her the most fatal injury should immediately be dismissed from the house; adding, however, that she was perfectly ready to contribute liberally to the support of her aunt and her cousin, provided they would select their residence at a sufficiently distant part of the globe.

But Mrs. Stanberry, who had experienced a greater sensation of pleasure from this re-union with her long-lost twin sister than she had felt for many years, stoutly refused to comply with this mandate. The refusal, indeed, was clothed in abundance of tender and cajoling words, but

Adelaide had acuteness enough to perceive, before the conversation had lasted many minutes, that her mother would not consent to turn her sister out of doors because her daughter was pretty.

Once convinced of this distressing fact, the fair innamorata "changed her hand," and informed her mamma with great solemnity that, though she had no power to remove her aunt and cousin, she had power to remove herself, and that she certainly should do so without loss of time.

To her equal surprise and vexation, this tremendous threat was received with a smile by her mother, instead of being deprecated amidst tears and groans.

"My dear love!" said Mrs. Stanberry, with an aspect of the most perfect good humour, "such a scheme as you now propose would never answer! You know that I perfectly and entirely approve your attachment to Mr. Curtis; and I have not the slightest doubt, whatever you may think of it, my lovely Adelaide, that his attachment is equal to your own. But you know, sweet love! that if you were

really and in sober earnest to run away from us all, it would be almost too much to expect that he should run after you. Would it not, dearest?"

"You will drive me mad, madam!" cried Adelaide, suddenly starting up, and walking up and down the room with a hurried step, and her clasped hands pressed against her forehead—"you will drive me mad, and then you will repent of it."

"It is you, my lovely Adelaide, that will repent if you suffer yourself to lose your wits, or spend your wits in talking nonsense, instead of consulting rationally with me, as to the best way of preventing the mischief you dread. I confess I do not see any very great danger. Neither Fanny Clarence nor any one else, my dear, can look handsome when you are near. However, if you have got such a notion into your head, it is nothing that I can say that will put it out, and the best thing we can do is to keep the dear girl out of the way till matters are settled between you and Curtis."

"And will you assist in doing this, my

dearest mother?" cried Adelaide, suddenly dropping upon her knees, and clasping her mother in her arms.

"To be sure I will, darling!" returned the doting lady, fondly kissing her. "And there will be nothing very difficult in it after all. Partly, you know, on account of Fanny's deep mourning, and partly because of her mother's illness, it will be quite right that she should not go into company."

"Manage this for me, mamma!" cried Adelaide, springing to her feet, and clapping her hands in ecstasy—"manage only for a few months, perhaps only for a few weeks, to keep this unlucky cousin of mine out of sight, and you shall be rewarded, in the first place, by seeing me married to William Curtis, and in the second, by having *champ libre* afterwards, to bring your pretty niece forward with her mourning and her mufflers thrown aside, and looking beautiful enough to enslave all the four Mr. Rowleys at once!"

* * * * *

Absurd as it was, this project of concealment was actually carried into effect; and

although the irresistible temptation of finding in poor Fanny an unwearied waltz-player, had led to the dangerous experiment of trusting wholly to the cap and shawl, and permitting her, thus enveloped, occasionally to emerge from her retreat, no danger had arisen from it, till the prying eyes of the heiress of Cuthbert had made the discovery mentioned in the last chapter. What the consequences of this discovery were, will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER XI.

THERE have been generals, as we all know, who have sought, before the commencement of a doubtful campaign, to extract in a council of war all that the experience and wisdom of those composing it could furnish in aid of his own; and there have been other generals, as we all know equally well, whose sole reliance, as far as the order of the campaign was concerned, rested upon their own individual genius.

Antonio Scaviatoli, the General of the Jesuits, at the period when the events recorded in this narrative occurred, managed his affairs upon the latter principle. He never asked the advice of any man. Nevertheless, few individuals of any age, country, or condition, listened more patiently to the voices of his fellow men

than did Antonio Scaviatoli; but what he sought to obtain by this were facts and not opinions.

His first interview with Father Ambrose, the ex-confessor of Cuthbert Castle, after the return of that very faithful servant from his long residence in England, has been already given. Another followed, which it is unnecessary to detail, for it consisted wholly of a series of minute questionings, on the part of the General, concerning Cuthbert Castle,—its inmates, its dependents, nay, even its architectural form and peculiarities. He questioned him also very minutely, and with great perseverance, respecting the most distinguished of the neighbouring families,—their characters, possessions, and even their local positions, as relative to the castle.

But on these points Father Ambrose had wonderfully little information to give; the isolated manner in which his late penitent had lived during nearly the whole time he had resided with him, having effectually prevented any personal intercourse between the priest and those around him.

Nevertheless, scanty as the information was, it still amounted to something; and such as it was, not an atom of it was lost upon Scaviatoli. This second interview, however, left him, as it seemed, no more questions to ask; for it was the last with which Father Ambrose was honoured previous to his departure for his convent; but at the end of it the old man was more than sufficiently rewarded for all his long and faithful services, by one single phrase of approbation from his superior.

“Go! Father Ambrose!” he said, “return to the convent to which you have done honour, and carry with you my assurance that I am satisfied both as to the ability and the zeal with which you have performed the duties entrusted to you since you left it.”

The following scene took place in the apartment which has been already described as that which witnessed the first interview between Father Ambrose and the General of the company of Jesus.

One week had elapsed since the old man had received the above friendly dismissal. Scaviatoli was sitting alone, when a young

man entered his presence, not by the door through which Father Ambrose had been admitted, but by that through which he had made his exit; and had any one about two minutes before been passing the door of the little tobacconist's establishment which was situated at the foot of the stairs by which he mounted, they might have seen a very nice-looking young gentleman enter it, with a pretty little gold snuff-box open in his hand, the emptiness of which fully explained the reason why so well-dressed a personage (being a snuff-taker) should be tempted to enter so obscure a shop.

But those who saw him enter must have waited till deep midnight before they would have seen him come out again; and even then, had they seen him, they would scarcely have known him for the same, a priestly slouched hat then covering his young head, and his slight and graceful figure being completely enveloped, and completely concealed by a large black cloak, which might have served to enwrap either a soldier or a priest with equal propriety.

There can be no doubt that he entered the presence of the General in strict accordance with the manner prescribed, and the consequence was, that he appeared before him without having permitted the very slightest sound to herald his approach.

But the General of the Jesuits can never be startled. Were any such symptom of weakness to be perceptible in him, it might questionless offer one of those cases in which not even the head and chief of this holy company is placed beyond the reach of remonstrance.

Few amongst us are now ignorant—thanks to the light thrown upon the subject in the exquisite pages of *Oliver Twist*—few amongst us are ignorant of the careful and skilful system of training, by which a particular class of our metropolitan population are brought to such perfection in the management of their fingers, that their movements are made as imperceptible to feeling as to sight; and in like manner, if the whisperings from behind the veil speak sooth, the COMPANY upon whom more eyes are now fixed than were ever fixed before, not only instruct the young idea, but

the young limbs also, how to move onward, with as little disturbance as possible.

So Antonio Scaviatoli, though he beheld this young gentleman standing before him without having heard the slightest sound announcing his approach, neither started nor gave any other indication of surprise, when he raised his eyes, and saw him standing in the space before him.

The young man certainly saluted the General; but it was such a salute as ghost might have exchanged with ghost. The head was bent forward by a slow and solemn movement, and then permitted to recover its usual position. And that was all.

Upon this occasion, it was the eye of the visitor which sought the ground; that of Scaviatoli being undisguisedly fixed upon the stranger's face, with a steady intensity of examination which few men could have undergone without shrinking; yet the young man stood it without apparent emotion, and might, indeed, from the downward direction of his eye, have been supposed unconscious of it, had not something in his physiognomy indicated a

species of sensibility, that suggested the idea of his feeling rather than seeing the searching glance of his superior.

This pantomime lasted for a minute or two, and then ended by Scaviatoli's saying, in a gentle tone, "Sit down."

The voice of the Jesuit General, though ever clear and distinct, was never loud; but now it had an inflection that almost seemed to betoken kindness, and if the reverend father was a man in whom kindness might be generated by beauty and sweetness of countenance, it could hardly be but he must have felt it then.

The young man who had thus presented himself before him was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, a little above the middle height, and rather slightly formed; easy and graceful in his carriage, and bearing very decidedly the aspect and air of a gentleman. His countenance was one of very remarkable beauty; the features exquisitely formed, and the large, long, dark blue eye, with its rich black eye-lashes and delicately formed eye-brow, might have vied with any in the world either in shape, colour, or ex-

pression. The form of his head, also, was of rare beauty, and the dark brown curls which nature seemed to have arranged expressly to preserve its small classic outline, set close, but without looking *crépu*. Nor was it possible, when his glove was withdrawn, to avoid remarking the singularly symmetrical form of his hand, and the almost feminine delicacy of its colour. Vandyke must have had some such model, when he first learned to draw the perfect type which he has left to teach the world what the hand of a gentleman ought to be.

And yet, despite all this, it must have been an eye that hardly deserved the privilege of looking at him, which could have felt this uncommon perfection of face and form to be the greatest attraction his aspect possessed. No; it was, it must have been, the mingled expression of goodness and intelligence, which seemed to dwell in every feature, and look out from those indescribable eyes, which caused the iron man in whose presence the young stranger stood, to throw upon him a glance that had neither severity nor suspicion in it.

The young man obeyed the command he had received, and placed himself in the chair that seemed to stand ready for him. The light which entered from the window behind the superior's chair fell full upon his face, and no painter could have desired an arrangement more favourable for the study of a head than that which Scaviatoli now enjoyed. And during the minute or two of profound silence which followed, there was every reason to suppose that he took advantage of it; for his eye, no longer commencing with the ground, was fixed upon the man before him, as earnestly as if his own safety in this world and the next depended upon the accuracy of the observations he was then making. This silence was at length broken by the Jesuit General, who said, "Your name, I think, is Edward Storment?"

"It is, father," was the reply.

"Your conventual appellation, Father Eustace?"

"Yes, father."

"Are you at all acquainted with the object for which you have been summoned from your convent to Rome?"

“I only know that it is your will that I should be here.”

“It is well, brother Eustace,—it is well that I should myself explain to you the business upon which you are to be employed. It is one of great moment; and when I tell you that the interests of the company are deeply implicated in its success, I cannot doubt that you will enter upon it with all the ardour of a good and faithful servant; for as such, brother Eustace, you have been represented to me.”

As Scaviatoli spoke these words, his pale and earnest eye contracted itself, as if still more favourably to take advantage of the light, in order to read the countenance of his companion. The tone in which the reply was made was one of deep solemnity, and the expression of the beautiful features corresponded with it. The words of the reply were these—

“By the blessing of God, I trust that those who have so reported me will die in the conviction that their words were true.”

And then again followed a short interval of silence, during which the eyes of Father Eus-

tace were again fixed upon the ground, while those of the General were riveted upon his face.

At length Scaviatoli again spoke, and said, "As you hope for the salvation of your soul, answer truly and without subterfuge to the questions I am about to ask you."

The young man then raised his eyes to the face of his superior, and replied, with a look and accent which spoke the most pure and loyal truth, "Father, I will!"

"As God shall help you in your hour of need, you will?" reiterated Scaviatoli, looking as it seemed into the very depth of the young man's soul, as he again awaited his answer.

"So help me God, I will!" replied Father Eustace, and the deeply speculative eye of his superior read in every lineament of that expressive face, that these awful words were uttered with all the simplicity, and all the solemnity of truth.

"Is it your conviction, brother, that, as a priest and a Jesuit, you are bound, as you value the safety of your immortal soul, to advance and maintain the interest of the holy

Company of Jesus under all circumstances, and in defiance of every obstacle?"

"It is."

"Is it your conviction that thus, and thus only, you the most certainly and righteously act for the glory of God?"

"It is."

"Is it your conviction that it is your duty, in all that concerns the interests of the Company of Jesus, and the glory of God identified with it, to abdicate all individual will, all individual judgment, and to live, think, speak, and act, wholly, solely, and without reservation, according to the judgment and the commands of your superiors?"

"It is," replied Father Eustace, firmly; and the words were spoken with more of warmth and energy than any he had before uttered, as if he found comfort and consolation in thus proclaiming the result of long thought and deep and conscientious conviction.

"Do you feel, in the inmost recesses of your soul, any fear, that were you to find yourself in circumstances wherein the ordinary bias of your temper might lead you to act one way,

while the commands of your superior dictated a line of conduct that your feelings and previously formed opinions might disapprove, and thereby render it more agreeable for you to act in another—do you, in your secret soul, feel any fear, that under such circumstances your spirit would rebel, and lead you to do that which you fancied to be right, (as many sinning mortals have done for their own glory,) instead of that which might be commanded by your superiors, for the glory of God?”

“Father! I have no such fear!” replied the young monk, with the same earnest air of undoubting conviction and unshrinking zeal as before; and having spoken these words, he pressed the palms of his hands together, dropped his head upon his breast, closed his eyes, and moved his lips, as if speaking; but no sound was uttered by him, yet none could doubt who looked upon him that he was occupied in prayer.

Scaviatoli sat gazing at him with intense interest, and remained as motionless as himself; but when, after the interval of about a minute, Father Eustace made the sign of the cross upon

his breast, and then looked up; he met a less iron look from Scaviatoli than was often encountered by those who held communion with him.

“Brother! I believe you,” said the General, with emphasis, “and ere we part, you shall receive such proof that I do, as none may hope for, whose zeal for the glory of God speaks not by words and look as plainly as it does in you. But before I proceed to explain to you the undertaking about to be intrusted to your care, I shall freely display to you, as to a tried and true brother of our holy Company, the condition in which we now stand. You could not, Brother Eustace, have reached the blessed state of mind in which you now are, had you not already attained to a high and a just estimate of the great and glorious object of our institution. Many godly associations have been formed before the Company of Jesus existed; many truly pious men have banded themselves together in very holy union, in the hope of exalting the names of God, of our Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin upon earth, and of thereby finding for themselves the lasting joys

of heaven. That many among them have deserved and obtained the glorious rank of saints and martyrs, is most true, and each in their degree were good and useful servants to the Lord of Hosts. But as the Messiah was long waited for, and sent at last, so also was it long, much longer still, ere it seemed good in the counsels of the Most High to send the Founder of the Company of Jesus to teach to men the great secret by which (despite the hourly increasing sins of the hourly increasing world, and despite the ceaseless machinations of the evil spirit to boot) the word, the law, and the will of God, shall grow, strengthen, spread, and prosper upon earth, even till the sounding of the trumpet, that shall at last call His own from among the dead, and give them their allotted places in everlasting glory!"

These words were spoken as none but a Scaviatoli could have spoken them.

There were none of the ordinary symptoms of self-seeking authority, or of presumptuous cant. It was as if a voice from Heaven made itself heard through his lips, for the express

purpose of preparing the young Jesuit brother for some enterprise upon which the fate of millions hung.

Father Eustace felt a thrilling tremor shoot through his frame. For a moment after Scaviatoli had ceased to speak, he continued to gaze upon him in silence, and then pronounced, almost in a whisper, "What secret, father?"

Again there was a pause; the eyes of the Jesuit General were fixed upon the floor. He seemed as if he were meditating upon his answer, or, at any rate, upon the form of it. At length, however, he again looked up, and replied, "It is not, and it must not be given to all men, Brother Eustace, to know this secret. But it is at this moment given to me to believe that you are one of those to whom it may be confided. The holy men who have, before the institution of our order, associated themselves together under different religious rules and denominations, as well as those who have continued to do so since, without being in community with us, have had, and still have, I doubt not, much merit. But though I am far from intending to say that they live with-

out God in the world, I have no scruple in declaring that they have been, and are, permitted to live without the use of one of those attributes of the Godhead which is the most essential to the well-being of every association having the glory of God for its object. Our secret, Brother Eustace, lies in one single word, and that word is, WISDOM."

Father Eustace listened, as if the words thus spoken to him were indeed words of wisdom; nay, as if all wisdom, short of divine, hung upon the lips which uttered them. Yet though the General had ceased, he answered not, but seemed to listen still. And he was right, for Scaviatoli had more to say.

"There is one phrase of Holy Writ, Brother Eustace," he resumed, "which all have listened to, but few have understood. Our glorious founder was, I conceive, the first to whom it was given fully to comprehend the mysterious words, 'BE YE WISE AS SERPENTS.' He understood them, and left his interpretation of them as a legacy to the Company of Jesus for ever!"

"Blessed be his name!" ejaculated Father Eustace.

“ Amen !” rejoined Scaviatoli. “ Yea, and it shall be blessed ! It is this legacy, Brother Eustace,” he continued, which has kept us together, even as one man, amidst persecutions, hatreds, backbitings, and slanders numerous as the stars of heaven. It has supported us through long ages of warfare, desperate and unrelenting enough to have scattered to the four winds of heaven every other association that ever was formed by man. But lo ! it hath not availed to scatter us ! Are we not each and all of us bound in an adamantine chain, bright as the Faith which forged it, and enduring as the God for whose glory it is worn ? And whence arises this almost miraculous endurance, this decidedly more than human strength ? Why have all other earth-born constitutions rusted, withered, dwindled, and worn themselves away, even as the organized clay of which our mortal bodies are composed, and this alone—this thrice holy COMPANY OF JESUS endured ? Say, why is it so ? Speak, Brother Eustace ; I wish to hear you speak of this.”

The young man started at this appeal. His

whole soul seemed to have settled in his eyes and ears; and as he gazed and listened, he became so fixed and motionless, that one might fancy he was turned to stone; but stone for ever doomed to bear the impress of the words and thoughts which it was the will of the powerful being in whose presence he found himself, to stamp upon him.

“Speak, Brother Eustace!” repeated Scaviatoli.

“Father!” replied Eustace, “I have no power to speak! No power—*none*, to do justice to the deep conviction which I feel that the strength so mysteriously vested in us is from Heaven! Teach me, oh! teach me so to act, to think, to feel, as may to your wisdom appear best! Teach me, as a most humble portion of this wondrous machine, so to perform the work allotted to me, as to assist and not impede its movements! I have WILL, steadfast and earnest to OBEY, but not for my soul’s safety dare I trust myself to decide what I ought, or what I ought not to do!”

It was not now merely a look of kindness which softened the usually stern expression of

the Jesuit General's countenance; admiration, and a sort of bland, confiding love, seemed beaming from every feature; and he exclaimed, in a tone of voice as unlike, in its almost impassioned eagerness, to the slow and measured accents which usually fell from him, as was the affectionate expression of his eye to the cold and quiet sternness that was its ordinary character, "There spake a Jesuit brother, worthy of the name, and worthy of the work! Brother Eustace! it is only because the God for whose glory alone we live—it is only because He has ordained, expressly ordained, from age to age, that such men as you are should be born; it is only because of and by means of this, that the Holy Company of Jesus still exists! Brother Eustace! it is this merging of all men's minds in one—it is this unseen, unknown, unguessed-at unity of purpose, which has made, and which shall make, the Company of Jesus as lasting as the solid earth itself. Read the varied pages of this world's history. You are permitted, you are enjoined, to do it. What will you find there? Records of principalities and powers; records

of dynasties, lasting and powerful as the wit of man could make them. Where are they now! Look at the favoured East—read of its power and its learning. Look at the mighty North—read of its vigorous strength. Look at the new-born West—read of its ricketty activity, and its abortive emulation. Nay, look at the more holy South. Dare to look steadily even at the holy seat itself! Whisper it not beyond these sheltering walls, but——” and here Scaviatoli lowered his voice to a deep whisper, “but Eustace! brother! can we look steadily at that holy seat and not perceive that it is tottering?”

Eustace again pressed his palms together, and permitted his lips to move in prayer, while his beautiful head was lowly bent upon his breast.

“Look up, my brother!” cried Scaviatoli, cheerily. “Look up! nor fear that the church of Christ shall perish from the earth so long as the Company of Jesus shall endure! Never, no, never shall it perish, while there are spirits such as thine to watch for, and to work for, its Heaven-protected interests!

Read, I say to you, read this world's history; read it with that all-blessed and all-piercing wisdom of the serpent, which the messenger of God himself enjoined us to employ, but of which our deathless Loyola alone understood the value. Read with this wisdom, Eustace, and you will perceive *why* it is that all the noblest institutions of man have perished and are perishing. Power and splendour, wealth and fame, have all been sought for, all been found, and have fallen away from the races and the dynasties which sought and found them, like the fleeting colours of the unsubstantial bow, that for a moment looks like a glory joining heaven to earth, and then fades into a misty cloud, its brightness remembered but as a dream! Why is this, Eustace? Why has no power yet been found capable of continuity and endurance? Brother, there is no such power on earth **SAVE ONE**. Each man that you shall read of, struggling for greatness, struggling for renown, thought of and cared for *himself*; all save the **JESUIT**. He, he alone has found the secret of uniting *all* will, *all* strength, *all* power, into **ONE**. Strange, that

a truth which may be illustrated by so many cases, familiar to all the different races of men, should never have been systematically acted upon, save by Ignatius Loyola! Strange, that he, and his faithful followers only should have received sufficient intellectual light, to know that unless all men can learn to merge their wills into that of one, the whole mass makes but a rope of sand! Eustace, what would an army be, if every separate soldier thought it his duty to reason on the manœuvre he was commanded to perform? All the nations of the earth can see this, but they cannot see that power, real, sterling, effective and enduring power, can only exist in a banded multitude, throughout which individual judgment has ceased to struggle against authority. Tell me, dear brother, do you not feel that it is so?"

"To doubt it, father," replied Eustace, "would be to slide from off the solid rock on which it is our blessed privilege to stand. To disobey this fundamental rule, would be an impious act of Jesuite suicide."

"Your words, dear Eustace, fully justify the high esteem in which your superiors hold

you," replied Scaviatoli, affectionately. "But let me go one step farther. Having, by the especial blessing of God, and for his especial glory, thus reasonably, piously, and devoutly brought yourself to the excellent state of mind you have so well described, let me ask you, father, whether you believe yourself sufficiently strong in faith, to obey to the very letter all the instructions that may be given you, whether the acts enjoined appear to you good or evil?"

"Father!" replied the young monk, again, and quite involuntarily as it seemed, assuming an attitude of prayer, "I trust that my faith is, and will ever be, sufficiently strong to prevent my being conscious that I have any judgment at all in matters wherein I have the blessed privilege of looking to my superiors for instruction;" and bending himself with an action in which youthful grace and youthful modesty were beautifully blended, he again traced upon his breast the figure of the cross.

Scaviatoli rose from his chair, and stretching out his arms towards the young man, as in the act of bestowing a benediction, pronounced

the words, "of such are the kingdom of Heaven!"

Greatly affected, both by the action and the words, Father Eustace bent his knee, and then received from the General's lips a formal *bénédictité*, which was both spoken and listened to with impressive solemnity.

Scaviatoli having reseated himself, and caused Eustace, by an action of the hand, to do the same, he resumed the conversation in a more familiar tone, by saying, "I wish you to tell me, brother Eustace, a little more about your parentage than I have yet learnt. I am aware, although you speak Italian so nearly like a native, that you are tramontane, and of an Irish family, if I mistake not.

"Yes, reverend father," replied the young man, "my mother was of noble Irish blood, and my father, though only a soldier of fortune, was well connected also. But the early death of both has effectually severed me from the land in which I was born."

"But you still speak its language fluently, do you not?" demanded Scaviatoli, in a manner that showed he felt some interest in the reply.

“ Assuredly. I still feel, both in speaking, and writing, that it is my mother tongue,” returned Eustace.

“ That is as I would have it. It is of considerable importance to the object I have in view that it should be so,” said Scaviatoli. “ Young as you are, Brother Eustace; I need hardly tell you that the interests of the Company of Jesus are deeply, I might say vitally, concerned in the great enterprise to which its attention is now more than ever directed, namely, the quietly spreading its own peculiar and most able system of education over the whole earth. Neither need I point out to you, that in this bold and blasphemous age it is absolutely necessary to keep this object secret. These two facts together explain, easily enough, the reason why, notwithstanding our vow of poverty, the Society is so earnestly bent upon acquiring money. Not even our worst enemies accuse us of sloth, or luxury; our members are not left sufficiently to their own human weaknesses to render such a charge tenable. With us, discipline supplies the want of mental firmness, wherever such want occurs.

And this we may safely boast, without fear of contradiction, that individual love of wealth, that lowest and vilest snare, employed by the devil to entrap the soul of man, is removed from our path. We hunger and thirst after wealth, only as a means of righteousness and usefulness; as, for instance, in this matter of education. Other bodies of men, when they profess to devote themselves to this important task, look to the pecuniary reward which they are to receive for it; but in nine cases out of ten, Brother Eustace, the teachers belonging to the holy Company of Jesus find themselves obliged to execute their important mission in secret. They say not, I am a Jesuit, and I keep a school! The corrupt condition of the still struggling world forbids this, save in a few blessed instances; and therefore is it, that instead of receiving money as a reward for the holy task of leading sinful souls to righteousness, we are forced to disburse it largely, in order to obtain the opportunities we require for performing it. You comprehend me, Brother Eustace?"

"Assuredly, holy father!" replied the young man, reverently.

“Well then, dear brother, I may now proceed to tell you that the mission upon which you are about to be despatched is twofold in its object; for it embraces the hope of recovering a race who formerly lived for the glory of God, and which is now turned away to the very worst and most damnable heresy; and also, of obtaining the command of a property to which we have the most unquestionable right, but which is now withheld from us by impious laws and impious force. Is there enough of holy usefulness, dear brother, in such a task as this, to enable you to conquer, overthrow, and trample upon, all the shortsighted notions of worldly right and worldly wrong, which are so apt to cling to the heart in youth?—so apt to cling, dear Eustace, if not driven thence by the elevating consciousness that every act in which individual will is crushed, and individual judgment put to sleep, is a higher and nobler offering to the glory of God than all the paltry little efforts ever made by man, to do what in his shallow wisdom he thought right. Tell me, my brother, has

this solemn, this all-important truth entered into your soul?"

"Father!" replied Eustace, with an earnestness which caused his lip to tremble, "if I have the power of reading my own inmost thoughts and feelings, I would answer, YES! I feel my own perilous weakness in a thousand ways! I feel *that*, which I have been taught to know as the snare which Satan best loves to spread for us; I feel for ever a longing desire to do what I myself fancy to be right, and feeling this, I tremble, with just terror, at the abyss before me! Where can I find refuge from this damning sin?—where seek protection from its eternal punishment, save in bending to the dust before the Heaven-ordained power that can turn our weakness into strength? Had I not this shield to shelter me," added the young monk, with deep emotion, "I should not only be the most weak, but the most wretched, of created beings."

"But with it, my dear brother, you may safely breast and brave all that the evil one can do to tempt you," said Scaviatoli. "Yield to his paltry temptations in lesser matters,

yield, and humbly own the weakness that unresisted leaves you powerless. There is more righteousness in such avowal, my good Eustace, than in all the efforts ever made by men to prove the contrary. OBEY, AND YOU ARE SAFE."

The young man raised his eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands in fervent thankfulness, as he listened to this assurance. His superior again smiled kindly on him, and stretching out both his hands towards him, took one of his between them, and pressing it affectionately, said—

"Eustace, you are worthy to be a Jesuit! Could I find any words that could more strongly express approval of the spirit you display, I would use them. But I know none such. Farewell, my brother; you must leave me now. You have been much excited, and it is not at this moment that I could enter with advantage upon the task of explaining to you at large the duties you will have to perform. Go forth, dear brother. The sun will soon shed its setting beams over the Campagna. Go to Saint John Lateran—kneel before its high altar, and pray for steadfast faith and unshrink-

ing obedience. Then take your stand upon the steps of the western portico, and as you look out upon the mass of heavenly splendour that shall meet your gaze, ask your own heart if there is aught among its fond and fluttering impulses holy enough to win for you a place of endless blessedness, amidst glory of which the blaze you look upon is but a feeble type! Ask yourself this, and you will feel the Heaven-sent doctrine of obedience to be the only staff on which to rest your hope."

The young monk received these words as if they had been sent from Heaven; he uttered no sound in reply, but bowing low, retreated backwards with more genuine reverence than ever courtier felt, and left the presence of the Jesuit General.

CHAPTER XII.

It certainly cannot be doubted that, to some natures, the doctrine of passive obedience is repugnant; but there are many others to which it is greatly the reverse. Nor should these latter be rashly classed as imbecile and worthless.

There may be many ardent and very noble natures, which, conscious of being more easily wrought upon by sensation than ruled by wisdom, may thankfully submit themselves, particularly in matters of religious faith and ceremonial observance, to the authority of others, instead of making themselves responsible by reasoning upon them. It surely is by no means difficult to believe that many very honest consciences may find great consolation in creeping under the shelter of authority,

instead of torturing heart and head to decide upon questions greatly beyond the reach of ordinary understandings. There is, moreover, a species of idiosyncrasy, by no means very rare, in which imagination and veneration being both strongly developed, the former is apt to entangle itself with the latter; and when this is the case, whether the subject be a disciple of the Church of Rome or of John Wesley, a sort of grand and holy fanaticism is the result. Such a condition as this may be regarded with pity, as indicating a brain in which the beautiful action of judgment is impeded, but it never can be looked upon with contempt.

Father Eustace left the presence of his superior in a state of mind which rendered a literal and precise obedience to his parting commands a positive relief.

He walked with a rapid step to the beautiful church in which he had been enjoined to pray; and no human heart ever prayed a prayer with more fervent devotion on the steps of its noble altar, than did that of the Jesuit monk upon this occasion.

Never was there breathed into a human form a spirit of more genuine piety than that which warmed the breast of Father Eustace. His highly susceptible imagination had received its first impressions from his religious instructors; and the vague sort of mysticism which was mixed with the ideas he thus imbibed, was perhaps only the more impressive from being unintelligible.

He was, moreover, gifted with all the faculties which may be generally seen to result from great and delicate perfection of organization. He was a painter and a musician by the irresistible force of temperament, and the combined activity of both made him a poet. But in all this, religious feeling was so strongly blended, that every picture was an *ex voto*, every musical composition, whether written, or breathed in an inspired voluntary from the organ, a canticle, and every poem a hymn.

Yet, nevertheless, there would sometimes arise within him visions of a sort of intellectual heaven, in which the visible wonders of nature would have greater share than in those temples made with hands, wherein he

had been taught to centre all thoughts having the worship of God for their object. And there had been moments when he had felt terrified at the sort of licence which his soaring thoughts would take. And then it was that he felt and enjoyed, as it were, the luxury of believing that as long as he submitted himself implicitly to the commands of his superiors in all he did, light penance might assoilzie his worst thoughts.

And truly, however much his timorous conscience might be startled by some of the flights these thoughts took, they were really as innocent as those of a fanciful child, although sometimes there was a mixture of wild and impassioned sublimity in them that startled him.

Having performed this whispered act of enjoined devotion on the steps of St. John's altar, Eustace stood up, and looked around him for a moment with a feeling of intense enjoyment. He had so far obeyed the Jesuit General's command to the letter; and he gazed upon the impressive scene around him with all the delicious enthusiasm of a man of taste, and

with an easy conscience into the bargain. He walked among the stately columns, pampered his sensitive eye by the rich colouring of the marbles and the majestic simplicity of form, and then he paused and again bowed, almost unconsciously, before the altar.

Though the convent to which he belonged was many miles distant from Rome, this was not his first visit to St. John Lateran. But his enjoyment was greater than if it had been. The fresh young wonder was past, but there was the larger portion of the spirit left for genuine poetic sensibility to expand itself, and as the majesty of that noble edifice impressed itself upon his soul, he blessed the beneficent behest of the holy priest who had sanctioned his again beholding it.

A slanting beam from the now setting sun shot through a window as he still stood gazing on this mighty work, and he remembered that there was yet another command of his revered General to be obeyed; and once more bowing his head, by a sort of habitual act of humiliation before what he considered holy, he turned away, and sought, as he had been com-

manded, the south-eastern portico, from between the stately columns of which the magic majesty of the Campagna is best seen.

How well did Antonio Scaviatoli understand the Jesuit art of playing upon the mind of man by means of his senses! As Eustace stepped out from the deep shadow of the solemn church into the blaze of rosy light that spread over that widespread and most singular landscape, his spirit kindled at the idea suggested by the General's parting words; and his very inmost soul renewed its vow of obedience—obedience without stint or limit—as the one only means by which mortal man might hope to inherit the bright heaven of which he seemed to see a brilliant glimpse before him!

The following day he was left at leisure to take a dim, but delightful look backwards upon the glories of old Rome, as well as to send many a glance forward—still more dim, perhaps, but not less delightful—upon the unknown days that were before him.

Eustace was in truth a monk, and a most faithful and devoted one; but he was a young

man, nevertheless, and the imaginative turn of his character, its acute sensitiveness, and the intense pleasure which he derived from contemplating all that was new and all that was beautiful, either in nature or in art, caused his heart to beat with very delicious emotion, as he thought of all that he *must of necessity* behold in the course of the mission upon which he was about to be despatched.

Had it not been for that clause, indeed—had it not been *of necessity*—the conscience of poor Eustace would have been sore troubled at the irresistibly happy thoughts which mixed themselves with his orisons. He feared, indeed, that a cloistered monk had still no business to feel as he felt; and he determined, at his next interview with the General, so far to take advantage of the flattering kindness he had expressed for him, as to state his fears as to his own weakness, and the dangers into which his want of firmness might plunge him, amidst scenes so new and so exciting as long travel and a residence in the world were sure to lead to.

At the appointed day and hour, the young

Jesuit again made his appearance before the General in the same manner as before. Nothing could be more amiable, more condescending, more encouraging, than the demeanour of his superior upon this occasion; and the warm feelings of the unpractised young man led him, despite the dignity and unbounded authority of the personage before him, to believe that he stood in the presence of a friend.

Instead, therefore, of waiting in solemn silence, as before, for the words which his superior might vouchsafe to bestow upon him, he ventured, as soon as the first gracious words of salutation had been pronounced, to say,—

“Father, I am come to receive your final orders; and my most earnest prayers are, and have been, that I may be gifted with power commensurate with my will to do your bidding. But I would gladly, if such favour be permitted to me, open my whole heart before your eyes, that you may know all its fears and all its weakness.”

Scaviatoli's brow was for a moment overcast. It was not, however, that his dignity was offended at the idea of such familiarity on

the part of the youth before him, as must be necessary in order to enable him to display his inmost thoughts. No Jesuit who knows his duty—and none knew it better than Scaviatoli—ever permits his dignity to interfere with any opportunity that may offer of reading the *inmost thoughts of anybody*. But it appeared to him possible that Eustace intended to confess such an utter repugnance to the enterprise, as might prove a serious obstacle to employing him upon it; and this would have been a severe disappointment, for the reverend General felt quite aware that it would not only be difficult, but probably impossible, to replace him by any one equally fit in all ways for the service for which he was intended.

Father Eustace saw this cloud upon the awful brow on which he looked with a degree of reverence, which certainly, though unconsciously, did a little approach idolatry; and a deep blush was upon his cheek as he said, casting his eyes with deep humility on the ground, “Forgive me, father; I have been too bold!”

“Not so, not so, my brother,” replied Sca-

viatoli; “speak freely. If you remarked a look of care upon my brow, it arose but from the fear that something had run counter to your wish of strictly obeying the commands which the Church is about to lay upon you. But speak freely, Brother Eustace. Whatever it be that lays upon your mind, disclose it freely.”

Thus encouraged, the young man did with most loyal truth, and without one shade of egotistical reserve, confide to his superior the fear he felt that travel and the aspect of the outer world might mix such a sense of pleasure with his sense of duty, as might plunge him deep in sin at the very moment that his most earnest wish was to avoid it.

The smile was indeed benignant with which Scaviatoli received this innocent confession, nor did it leave his lip, as he replied,—

“Be tranquil, my dear brother! Forget not the law by which we rule ourselves. Forget not that obedience—*obedience*, which is a duty, simple, intelligible, and the same to-day and for ever—takes with us the place of conscience—*conscience*, wavering, uncertain, and

unsound, even as the heart of man itself. The man who forgets this, Brother Eustace, however well-intentioned he may be, can never make a faithful Jesuit. Never let this truth be absent from your mind."

"Never shall it again be forgotten by me, my father!" replied Eustace, trembling with repentant shame. "I feel it now, I feel the sin that I have committed; and the first object of my thoughts shall henceforth be, to do all things and to dare all things, save only the daring to think that I may dare to think at all!"

The General of the Jesuits listened, and looked at the beautiful countenance of the young man, beaming with ingenuous ardour as he spoke, with very evident satisfaction.

"Brother Eustace," said he, "the spirit of Loyola, the spirit of our sanctified founder himself, may look down from the heaven of heavens, well pleased to hear the words you have now uttered. They do in truth contain the very essence of his most holy and most all-efficient law. Go on, my brother! Act but as you speak, and you shall prove a pillar to

the holy cause, whose object neither is nor can be aught save the *glory of God!*"

The heart of Eustace swelled and throbbed in his bosom as he listened to this praise, like that of a young child while hanging upon the never-to-be-doubted lips of his mother, as she tells him that a sure reward awaits his obedience.

And then followed a long communication from Scaviatoli to this truly faithful servant of his Company, in which was explained the details of the business which he was commanded to undertake. Had not the doctrine of obedience, despite every possible danger, whether moral or physical, which might arise from it, been thus freshly and powerfully impressed upon the young man's mind as he listened to these instructions, it is probable that he would have shrunk, in his conscientious weakness, from the undertaking, for assuredly it was one of peril; but now he was armed cap-a-pie in a panoply which he felt could never fail him, save by his own fault, or rather, save by a defect of faith in the fundamental law by which he had solemnly sworn to be for ever guided.

Thus protected, he was strengthened in the persuasion that he ought to, and that he could, undertake anything and everything that could be appointed for him to do; and it was only for one moment, as he looked into the pale, firm, mysterious eyes of the General, that he involuntarily breathed a prayer to Heaven, (with which, however, he remembered, the moment after, he had no business to meddle,) that he might never be commanded to practise against the *life* of a fellow-creature.

No command of this nature, however, appeared in the least degree probable. The chief danger that awaited him was, as he strongly felt, that his ways, to use the inspired Psalmist's words, might be too much ways of pleasantness, which in his present temper of mind would, he was very sure, be to him anything rather than paths of peace.

It is unnecessary to detain the reader here, by giving any more lengthened account as to what these details were. The following pages will at once develop the purpose of the General, and the manner in which that purpose was brought into action. It is enough to say, that

the agitated, but devoted Eustace, left the presence of the General, and received his parting blessing, with a determination, firm as his will could make it, that what he was commanded to do, that he would do, let his rebellious reason plead as it might against it.

Had it been possible, he would have wished to start upon his journey immediately. But it was not so. There were several persons, all belonging, of course, to the same holy band, to whom the General wished to despatch letters, which he preferred trusting to such a servant as Eustace rather than to the post; and for these letters it was necessary that he should wait.

The young missionary, meantime, passed most of the intervening hours in the different churches of the eternal city. This species of locality was chosen by him, in the hope of subduing, and keeping in good monkish order, the throbbing pulses of his youthful heart. But it was all in vain. Whether he wandered among the incalculable treasures of the Vatican, or sought the gorgeous holiness of St. Peter's, it was still the same. His spirit was already

en route; and the idea of rolling wheels and trotting horses pertinaciously drove all others from his brain.

Not even the especial altar sacred to Loyola himself,—though it is that before which the Pope yearly returns thanks to Heaven for his own holiness—not even this thrice-sacred spot had power to chase the earth-born visions which haunted him. In vain he raised his eyes to the round globe of azure lapis-lazzuli that surmounts that altar, and remembered that it stood there for a type of that globe called earth, over which the rule of the saint at whose shrine he knelt was doomed to spread; in vain he told himself that a soldier of Loyola should hold all things in contempt, save those wherein the interests of his order were concerned; the idea of driving over the land and sailing over the sea would rush, with power irresistible, between him and his saint, till at last, drawing strength of spirit and ease of conscience from luckily remembering that there was no breach of obedience in remembering such things, inasmuch as he had never been commanded to forget them, he sallied

forth from the walls of Rome, and wandered, with a joyous, but unequal step, over the Campagna, till the fever of his spirit was tamed; and then he walked back to his lodging, better prepared for a night of quiet sleep than he had been since this important and most exciting mission had been assigned to him.

At length the feverishly longed-for day of his departure arrived; and the first nervous agitation of his mind, occasioned by the unexpected nature of his new employment, having in a great measure subsided, he set off with perfect external, and a good portion of real composure; no longer felt terrified at the idea of being pleased—saw little or nothing like diabolical temptation in what he looked upon; and when

“The cheerful birds chirping him sweet good morrow,” seemed to call upon him to join their universal hymn, he ventured a thought, which may be expressed by the words, “Thank God for all his mercies!” although no Jesuit teacher had ever commanded him to do anything of the kind.

CHAPTER XIII.

MEANWHILE the young heiress of Cuthbert Castle was beginning to feel that it was possible to go to a great many dinner-parties, and receive a great many parties at home in return, without experiencing any very great degree of enjoyment from the process.

The youth of Juliana had, almost from necessity, been passed in occupations calculated to develop the faculties and enlarge the mind. She played well, for her mother was an excellent musician, and had passed some of the happiest hours she had tasted since her marriage in cultivating this talent in her daughter. They had played duets and sung duets, till they had often forgotten together the loneliness of their dignified abode. Her reading, though very miscellaneous, had never been of

a kind either to injure her mind or vitiate her taste; and so completely had she acquired the *habit* of reading, (without which habit all the education in the world is of no avail,) that it would have seemed impossible to her to get through the day without enjoying several hours of it in communion with the treasures of the rich old library.

During the last year or two, moreover, she had stolen time, both from reading and from music, in order to cultivate a faculty newly developed—namely, that of landscape-sketching. But in this she had never had any instructor to assist her. Her mother had never touched a pencil in her life, and no master in the art was to be found in the neighbourhood. But notwithstanding these impediments, a native taste for it was strong enough within her to lead to her spending many happy hours, both within doors and without, in the cultivation of it.

A mind which, from the time it was first conscious of its own existence, has been thus occupied, is very apt to shrink from association, especially *new* association with persons

whose pursuits have been so widely different as those of Juliana's young lady neighbours had been to hers.

That such cultivation as her faculties had received is an advantage beyond all price cannot be doubted, but it now led her to be too much alone.

However severely the majority of the neighbourhood might be tempted to criticize the young heiress in the sacred retirements of their respective boudoirs, it was by no means the fashion among them to decry in public either the castle or its fair inhabitants. On the contrary, every invitation from Cuthbert was looked for with impatience, and welcomed with avidity; and no party elsewhere would have been considered as *a good one*, had they not made part of it.

Had Lady Sarah de Morley never suffered from the enforced seclusion within her castle walls which the inclination, or rather the authority, of her husband had led to, it is probable that there would have been more perfect sympathy between her feelings and those of her daughter respecting their intercourse with

their neighbours than was actually the case. Not that Lady Sarah was either frivolous, or ignorant; had she been either, it would have been scarcely possible that Juliana should have been what I have described her. But, young as she was at the time of her marriage, she had already been presented to the world, and taken her place as one of the fairest of the fair within its brightest circle. The remembrance of the lively, bright, and happy days so spent, instead of being effaced, only became more precious from its contrast with the gloomy years which followed; and the consequence now was, that the well-lighted saloon, the gay smiles, and the air de fête which welcomed her wherever she went, had an attraction for her which she had no inclination to resist, but in which, assuredly, her daughter did not share.

Yet Juliana was conscious that it would be both difficult and wrong to withdraw herself from those frequently recurring festivities, irksome as they were to her; she felt that she was not liked, but felt also that she wanted energy to conciliate greater favour, by appearing amused, when in fact she was not only

wearily, but longing, with even painful impatience, to creep back to the shelter of her own dear room.

And thus, without the slightest hope of either pleasing or being pleased, she continued to go wherever her mother went, and to suffer herself to be examined and criticized with a degree of indifference which did credit to her philosophy, though perhaps it did not say much for the yielding pliability of her character.

The almost inevitable result of all this was, that the hours which she passed alone were the only portion of her life that she really enjoyed. She still loved her mother as fondly as ever; but she, too, had now her separate occupations; she had renewed many old correspondences which had judiciously been permitted to sleep, when they must, on her side, either have become the vehicle of domestic complainings, or a most false record of feelings, which, in their sad reality, she was unable to conquer, and unwilling to disclose.

Even the perusal of the daily London paper, in which Juliana took not the slightest interest, had once more become a favourite occupation;

and when the long-secluded girl found that the daily visit of their truly amiable and excellent rector enabled her mother to discuss a multitude of subjects on which they both conversed with equal animation and enjoyment, but in which she really felt incapable of taking any interest, she at length began "to deem it not a sin" when she felt tempted to steal away and leave them tête à tête, while she enjoyed a solitary ramble in her own beautiful park and the well-wooded preserves which surrounded it, or a solitary hour at her reading-desk with some quaint old volume that she had disinterred from the library.

She was not doomed, however, to go on for ever without finding a companion of her own age and sex, and one, too, perfectly capable of supplying, in sober earnest, the want she had playfully (and vainly) expressed to Mr. Wardour, when he was engaged in describing to her and her mother the various families of the neighbourhood with whom they were about to make acquaintance.

The commencement of this friendship has been already related; but the first steps to-

wards it were so very slight, that it is possible they may already have escaped the memory of the reader.

The circumstances which led to its development were as follow :

The most constant and the best beloved hour for one of Miss de Morley's daily walks was that which has been beautifully called "the sweet hour of prime," which, in common parlance, I believe correctly means the early morning. At an hour considerably earlier than that at which elegant ladies and gentlemen usually rise, Juliana had, as usual, wandered forth, and not contented with the pretty sinuosities of the paths which led across the park, or the saucy glances of the wild, yet gentle eyes of the dappled herd which peopled it, she had rambled on over the lofty deer-defying stile, in order to enjoy the woodland scenery of the oak-copse beyond.

She had walked nearly a mile through the little wood, and was climbing the steep ascent that formed its boundary, in order to meet and greet the sun upon the upland lawn beyond it, when she perceived a female figure clad in

deep mourning, but displaying, instead of the ordinary walking head-gear, a profusion of wavy ringlets that were wildly floating in the breeze. The figure, bonnet in hand, was moving on before her with a very loitering step, and at length seated itself upon a fallen tree at the distance of about a dozen yards from the spot where Juliana had paused to look at her.

Under different circumstances, this curious examination of one young lady by another, when casually meeting upon a walk, might be considered, to say the least of it, as being very extraordinary. But Miss de Morley had much to excuse her. The early hour, so much earlier, as she had been told, than any other young lady in the whole world beside herself ever ventured beyond the shelter of her bed-room; the remote spot, remote, that is to say, from every high road, and only, in truth, fairly and honestly to be got at by a high and carefully-padlocked gate on one side, or by the high park-steps above mentioned on the other; the park itself being no thoroughfare, but very much the reverse, being as

carefully enclosed, locked-up, and guarded, as if it had been a royal park—not of deer, but of artillery;—whence it followed, that the tall slender figure clothed in black, having long chesnut ringlets waving in the wind, must either have got thither by the help of fairies, or after the manner of a poacher. In either case, there was enough both to pique and to excuse curiosity.

So, in short, we think Miss de Morley must be excused, though she did stand gazing very earnestly at the dark-robed apparition before her.

But still the face, whether fair or foul, was turned so completely away from her, that her gazing did not advance her much in the way of enabling her to guess who the intruder upon the premises might be. Presently, however, another indication was given as to what sort of personage the intruder might be; for she began to sing, and to sing aloud—clearly, powerfully, beautifully aloud—with notes so fresh and pure, that the larks and the blackbirds might have listened to her with envy.

And the words she sung were beautiful, too,

for they were Fanny Kemble's words; and though the scene they described was beheld by the poetess in the land of the stars and the stripes, they were not unapt on the spot, and at the moment, where and when they were now sung; for the season was autumn, and the little wood was full of bright autumn flowers, which were canopied by leaves of tints almost as rich and varied as those beheld by the histrionic wanderer on the banks of the Schuylkill. The words ran thus:

Thou comest not in sober guise,
In mellow cloak of russet clad,
Thine are no melancholy skies,
Nor hueless flowers, pale and sad;

But like an emperor, triumphing
With gorgeous robe of Tyrian dyes,
Full flush of fragrant blossoming,
And glowing purple canopies.

How call you this the season's fall?
It seems the pageant of the year,
Richer and brighter far than all
The poms that spring and summer wear.

It is perfectly impossible to do justice to the thrilling delight with which Juliana listened to these words, pronounced as distinctly as if not

sung but said, and to the delicious voice which uttered them. Any human being having ears might well have been delighted by such sounds; but to her they really seemed something more than mortal. All that was most strongly individual and characteristic in Juliana was precisely of a nature to make her appreciate what she now heard even above its worth.

The little all which she had seen of the world, and of the men and women in it, had led her to believe that the sounds of her own solitary voice, and the thoughts of her own solitary heart, were all she had to look to as the food that was to supply her hungry longing for melody, and for the images that fancy loves to marry to it.

Till the voice ceased, she stood spell-bound, but when the singer, repeating the last line in a sort of melodious whisper, rose from her lowly seat, and seemed preparing to walk away, Juliana sprang after her with a step as vehemently sudden as if she had been her own game-keeper, and determined to lay violent

hands upon her, in order to make her account for her intrusion.

And in good truth she did lay a hand, though not a very violent one, upon her, and exclaimed, "Oh, do not go!" with as much earnest eagerness as if the words had been exchanged for "you shall not!"

The sable songstress, very considerably alarmed, turned round to ascertain who it was that thus wished to detain her; but in less than a second after meeting the eyes that were fixed upon her, she exclaimed, "Miss de Morley!"

"You know me?" returned Juliana, inexpressibly surprised—"How can you possibly know me?"

"I looked at you, when we last met, more steadfastly, it seems, than you did at me," said the young stranger, smiling.

The smile was a bright one, and threw a light upon the subject.

"Fanny Clarence, as I live!" cried Juliana, taking her hands with the cordial grasp of old acquaintance.

“ Oh! how could I be so earthly dull? But please to remember,” she added, “that you were in masquerade, and I was not. How could I guess that the mobbled musician of Eagle’s Crag Hall and the warbling nymph of the floating locks whom I now see, could be one and the same person? I do assure you, Miss Clarence, there is wonderfully little resemblance between the two.”

“ True, dear Miss de Morley,” replied Fanny, colouring; “ I will reproach you no more with dulness of vision. On the contrary, it would be greatly more to the purpose were I to lament that you should have now seen so clearly. Do not think ill of me, if you can help it, but I must implore you not to mention to any one that you have seen me here; and still more do I entreat you, never—oh, never!—to say, to man, woman, or child, that you have seen me looking in any way unlike what I was in Mrs. Rowley’s drawing-room.”

“ What a very mysterious request!” returned Juliana, laughing. “ But it comes too late, Fanny. I am sorry to distress you, my dear; but on the very night you mention, I was

guilty of the indiscretion of telling Mr William Curtis, that, by means of making you a speech which caused you to raise your eyes from the pianoforte, I had discovered that you were very handsome. And he appeared to listen to me with equal attention and surprise."

"Alas!" cried the unfortunate girl, suddenly becoming very red; "that perhaps explains—that may be the cause. Oh, Miss de Morley, how little did you think the injury you were doing me!"

"Injury!" cried Juliana; "not for the world would I do you injury. You are the only person I have seen, since I have been taken beyond the shelter of the castle walls, whom I have felt the slightest wish to see again; and the never having been so fortunate, has been one reason for my hating all the visiting so very heartily as I do. How can I have injured you, my dear young lady?"

The eyes of Juliana were full of kindness as she said this; and she looked at the melancholy face of Fanny as she spoke, with so much anxious and affectionate interest, that the poor

orphan's courage quite deserted her, and she wept, and wept heartily, at an appearance sympathy as unexpected as it was precious.

Juliana now looked at her with as much surprise as concern, but also with a degree of interest that seemed to increase every moment. After a short silence, during which she seemed to have been debating some point within her own mind, and at length to have settled it, she threw her arm round her still weeping companion, and leading her back to the fallen tree, from which they had advanced a few paces, she made her sit down; and sitting down herself beside her, said,

“ My dear Miss Clarence, let this strange meeting prove a happy chance to us both. The manner in which I first saw you, convinces me that there are circumstances in your situation both strange and painful; but I might have met you in a dozen drawing-rooms without ever finding courage to tell you that I had made any such discovery. Here the case is different. Do you not feel it to be so? Look at all these dear sheltering branches! Look at the innocent eyes of those flowers, whose

praises you have been hymning so sweetly, and tell me if it does not seem as if we were thrown together here on purpose that we might be able to talk to each other in safety? And do not fancy that, if we are to be friends, all the confidence is to be on your side. Friendship cannot exist, you know, without mutual confidence. And on my side, I assure you that I have abundance of odd caprices and strange whims to confess."

"I do not know that I have any particularly strange caprices of my own to confess," replied Fanny, smiling through her tears, "unless it be that of fancying, even for a moment, that the heiress of Cuthbert Castle can really take much interest in the concerns of poor Fanny Clarence."

"If you have indeed any doubt on that point, Fanny," replied Juliana, taking her hand with both her own, and fixing her beautiful dark eyes with a look of affectionate interest on her face, "let me remove it at once, and for ever. The heiress of Cuthbert Castle is not, perhaps, the happier for being so; and yet, the principal drawback to her happiness-

is the want of such a friend as she thinks you might be to her. Have you any feeling of repugnance, Fanny, to our construing this strange meeting into an omen that Providence intends we should be friends?"

"Repugnance! Oh no! my dear Miss de Morley, I have no repugnance; and I will not scruple to confess, that if there be any comfort that I dare ask of Heaven in addition to that of seeing my mother safe, it is that of having one friend to whom I might open my heart, for there are times when it feels full to bursting. Neither do I feel that I should do any one wrong by asking the advice of such an one as you seem to be, under circumstances that are most cruelly embarrassing—*most* cruelly, because I dare not name them to my mother."

"Dare!" repeated Miss de Morley, with emphasis. "Short as our acquaintance has been, this is the second time, Fanny, that I have heard you use that unpleasant word. There is, then, somebody of whom you stand very painfully in awe?"

Fanny Clarence gave an assenting nod.

“Is it your mother, my dear girl?” demanded Juliana.

“Oh no!” replied Fanny, with eager haste. “From her I fear nothing but too great affection, too great indulgence, too great anxiety lest I may not be happy enough.”

“Is it your aunt, Mrs. Stanberry?”

Fanny paused for half a moment before she replied, and then said, “No; it is not my aunt. I cannot honestly say that I have any real fear of my aunt, in her own individual person.”

“Then it is your cousin!” cried Juliana, eagerly; “and if it be anybody, I would rather it should be her than another, because I have already taken so very decided a dislike to her. That is one of *my* confessions, Fanny. You see I am quite ready to begin.”

“My situation is certainly most extraordinary,” said Fanny, thoughtfully; “but it is also so absurd, that I feel as if I had hardly courage to encounter the ridicule which I know must follow the disclosure of it. But indeed I want advice, Miss de Morley, and I know not any one in the wide world to whom I could turn to ask it.”

“I am but a young counsellor, my dear girl, but I will lend you the use of the best judgment I have,” replied Juliana, gravely; “and as for ridicule, Fanny,” she added, more gravely still, “is it not better that one who feels disposed to love you should laugh, than that one who feels disposed to hate you should make you weep instead? Besides, to speak truly and soberly, there is something here (touching her bosom) which tells me that I shall not feel disposed to laugh. You look at this moment, my dear child, very lovely and very wretched too; and as I confess myself to be one of the weak ones who are apt to receive impressions through their eyes, I am quite ready both to love and pity you. Explain to me, therefore, what it is that you feel to be so peculiar in your situation.”

“And I suppose I too am one of the weak ones apt to receive impressions by the eyes,” replied Fanny, with a melancholy smile; “for I know not how otherwise to explain why it is that I feel prompted to tell all my comical sorrows to a great lady like you, without very

seriously fearing your laugh, and without at all fearing your indifference."

"I tell you we are fated to be friends," said Juliana; "and as to my greatness, trust me that you will not find that in your way. I am afraid that I am capable of making a great fool of myself in many ways, but the oppressing people with my grandeur will not be one of them. So now then, dear Fanny, begin! Let us waste no more time; for people who '*dare not*,' my poor Fanny, must never, I should think, forget what o'clock it is."

"But what o'clock *is* it?" cried the startled Fanny. "It is not the *dare not* which is the most important here. My mother will not have her breakfast till I am there to give it to her; and though, if I kept her waiting till mid-day, she would only notice my lengthened absence by a lengthened kiss, I would not remain out of the house beyond nine o'clock for more than I should like to tell you."

"Nine!" repeated Juliana, looking at her watch. "It wants twenty minutes to eight as yet, so you may tell me an immense deal of

what I am most anxious to hear, long before you can be wanted at home. And first, dear Fanny, begin by telling me why it is that you *dare not* do what you wish and what you like."

"Alas, alas! it is a very long story," replied Fanny, sighing; "and I shall be obliged to confess to you, in the course of it, such melancholy destitution on the part of my poor mother, as must make your kind heart ache, and may lead you, perhaps, to repent having sought so painful a confidence."

The reply to this was a gentle caress, and an earnest assurance that the possibility of being of any use, or of affording any comfort either to her or her mother, would prevent all selfish shrinking from the pain of hearing a sad narrative. Thus encouraged, Fanny Clarence briefly stated what the reader knows already respecting the dreadful situation in which they were left at the death of Captain Clarence, and then went on to relate all the particulars of Mrs. Stanberry's most cordial and affectionate invitation, and their immediate acceptance of it.

And there she stopped, evidently at a loss in what manner to proceed with her narrative.

“ Nothing could be more amiable, more kind, or more natural,” said Miss de Morley; “ and indeed, I should never consider it possible that one sister could know distress, while another was so well able to remove it as your aunt Stanberry. But then, the fearful calamity of bad temper comes in, I suppose, and spoils all. Those tremendously fine eyes of your cousin look very much as if they could flash lightnings. I fear that her temper is both violent and tyrannical.”

“ Oh yes! both, both,” replied Fanny; “ but that would be nothing. I could bear, I ought to bear, anything of that kind. But now comes the ridiculous part of it, Miss de Morley. Would you not have thought that my cousin Adelaide was handsome enough to prevent her being jealous of anybody?”

“ Why no, Fanny, I am not quite sure that I should,” replied Juliana, looking at her with a smile, and at the same time parting the glossy ringlets that hung over her face.

“ You must not laugh at me if you can help

it," resumed Fanny, blushing violently; "but it seems that my strange cousin is violently enamoured of Mr. William Curtis, and that, having doubts as to his returning her love, she fears his seeing any new face, lest he might like it better than her own."

"Well, Fanny," returned Miss de Morley, again looking in the sweet face of her companion with a smile, "I profess that, as a matter of discretion, I do not think she is wrong. As to the wisdom, in the first instance, of 'yielding up her virgin heart,' before her troth was asked for, I have nothing to say in its defence, but when your magnificent cousin *was* in love, I don't know that she could do anything better than keep you out of sight."

"You look so sedately grave while you are saying so," replied Fanny, "that I suppose you will not let me accuse you of quizzing; but what will you say when I tell you that the mode in which my cousin Adelaide has sought to obtain her object, has not been by locking me up, or turning us at once out of the house,—as I suppose she might have done—but by

insisting upon it that I should never appear without hiding my hair under such a cap as that which you saw me wear at Mrs. Rowley's?"

Fanny paused again, and looked at her new friend as if she expected that this must prove too much for her gravity; but Miss de Morley very demurely repeated her "well, Fanny," adding, that she thought Miss Stanberry showed in this, also, a very sane and excellent judgment.

"I do not wish to say anything personally rude to you, my dear Fanny," she continued, "but I confess I do not think it would be easy to invent a head-dress more effectually disfiguring; and as this was her avowed object, we ought to give her credit for having well attained it."

"You are, I believe, very right, my dear Miss de Morley, in treating all this absurdity lightly. It scarcely deserves serious discussion; and if you teach me to think this, I shall owe you much; for is it not great weakness to permit ourselves to be unhappy about trifles?"

"Trifles!" exclaimed Juliana, in an altered

tone. "Do you really suppose that I think this odious, envious tyranny easy to bear? In all my life I never read, or heard, of any thing more thoroughly detestable. And now, my dear Miss Clarence, let us speak very seriously. Have you told your mother all this? Is she aware of the manner in which you are treated?"

"No, Miss de Morley, she is not," replied Fanny; "she has no idea of it."

"Then I think you are very much to blame," said Juliana. "Pardon my freedom, but I should not be entering upon the friendly intercourse I wish for, well, did I conceal from you my opinion. Your mother ought to know all you have now told me, and I cannot doubt that she would soon find means of putting an end to your thralldom. Promise me, dear Fanny, that you will tell her everything immediately."

"Alas!" said Fanny, while tears started to her eyes, "my doing so would, I really believe, destroy her. Half confidences are foolish things always, and it can be nothing but a very contemptible feeling of pride which makes

it painful for me to tell you that my mother has no resource but in the generous kindness of her sister. How, then, could she interfere to prevent this petty tyranny, without risking her present comfortable and really happy home?"

"Do you suppose that your aunt is a party to this detestable scheme of keeping you out of sight?" said Juliana.

"It is impossible she should be ignorant of it," replied Fanny. "I am quite sure that she is exceedingly attached to mamma, and nothing can be more thoughtfully kind and attentive than all the arrangements for our comfort which depend upon her. But I am greatly mistaken if she might not use the phrase, 'I dare not,' with as much propriety as myself. She is devotedly attached to Adelaide, but she is dreadfully afraid of her."

"Then if, without troubling your poor suffering mamma upon the subject, you were to address yourself to your aunt, you think she really would not have it in her power to put a stop to all this nonsense, and to insist upon your being introduced to the neighbourhood, as you ought to be?"

“I am quite sure,” replied Fanny, “that it would not be in her power.”

“If it be so, my poor Fanny, you are right, quite right, to endure it all, rather than disturb the tranquillity of your mother,” replied Juliana, “and we must comfort ourselves by remembering that it is not likely to last long. I happen to know that William Curtis does admire this fierce cousin of yours exceedingly, and I dare say their loves will terminate in marriage at no very distant day, and *then* you will be permitted to recover from your ‘constitutional cold.’”

As Miss de Morley said this, she looked playfully into the face of her companion, and was surprised, not a little, at perceiving there strong symptoms of agitation and embarrassment. A burning blush dyed her delicate cheek, her eyes were cast upon the ground, and her hands were clasped together in a way that showed she was suffering from some very painful emotion.

As Juliana continued to gaze upon her, she suddenly remembered the words with which their conversation had begun; she remembered

that Fanny had said she had done her great injury by telling William Curtis that she had discovered her being handsome, and she remembered too, though the circumstance was not quite so recent, that William Curtis, on hearing of this discovery, had very strenuously declared his purpose of ascertaining for himself what the truth on this point might be.

Had the thoughtless words she had then addressed to him led to some imprudence on his part, which had tended to increase the suspicions of the jealous Adelaide?

She began to fear that it was so; and as the silence of poor Fanny seemed likely to last, unless something in the form of a direct question led her to break it, Miss de Morley unclasped the little hands which were so dolorously pressed together, and holding one of them in her own, said, "I quite agree in your censure, Fanny, against half confidences, and for that reason, I shall ask you, without scruple, to tell me what it was you meant just now, when you said that I had done you great injury by telling William Curtis that you were handsome? I hope he was not indiscreet enough to repeat it to his beloved?"

“His beloved!” repeated Fanny, almost with a groan, “you are mistaken, Miss de Morley, and she is mistaken too! My cousin Adelaide is not beloved by Mr. William Curtis.”

“Indeed? Well, for his sake I am exceedingly well pleased to hear it. But for yours, my dear, I am very sorry, because such a mistake may last a great while, and you may be obliged to remain incog. till it is over. But what injury have I done you by what I said?” again inquired Juliana.

Fanny’s silence and embarrassment appeared likely to return; but upon Miss de Morley’s saying, rather earnestly, “Do tell me!” she made what was evidently a strong effort, and replied, “You did me an injury, most unintentionally, I know, when you excited his curiosity by those words. Most unfortunately, I met him one morning, as unexpectedly as I have now met you, and—and he introduced himself to me.”

“And perhaps he told you, Fanny, that he did not think me altogether wrong?” said Juliana.

“ Oh no! But I do not mean that he said he thought you wrong. I cannot tell you all he said to me. It was very, *very* foolish, and I know it is impossible for you not to blame me, when I tell you that we have twice met since. But it shall happen no more. Did my cousin know it, my mother would be without a home. I need not tell you to keep this secret faithfully. But though I have talked to him, and listened to him most imprudently, do not believe that I ever met him intentionally. I never did. After the first meeting, I gave up my early, and, indeed, my only walk beyond the garden; but my doing so produced a remonstrance from my mother, on account of my health, to which I was obliged to yield. Of course she knows nothing of these meetings—such knowledge could only make her miserable in every way. To-day, in order to walk in safety, I have broken bounds, and got into your grounds without your leave, and perhaps you will let me do so again?”

“ Dear love! I will give you the key of a more private walk than this, and we will

enjoy it together, Fanny," replied the heiress, kindly; adding, after a moment—"And now, then, you have told me all?"

"Oh! no, I have not! I hardly know how to tell you all. You could hardly be made to understand *how* he has talked to me," replied Fanny, again bursting into tears. "So noble, so gentle a heart! Had I been a throned queen he could not have treated me with more deference; and he says, she added, with beautiful *naïveté*, "that if I would only let him ask for his father's consent, we might be married as soon as the settlements could be drawn; for that his father and mother are constantly imploring him to marry, and as constantly assuring him that they will never refuse to receive a daughter from his hands, provided he would assure them that his happiness depended upon their accepting her."

"And what is there so terrible in all this, my dear child?" demanded Juliana. "Instead of misery, I see nothing but happiness before you—that is, provided you do not dislike Mr. William Curtis."

"Dislike him!" exclaimed Fanny. And

although she said no more by way of reply to the question, her new friend appeared to be completely satisfied.

“But you do not know my cousin,” added Fanny, after the silence of a moment. “She would kill herself, she would kill me—nay, I believe in my heart she would kill Curtis—poison, stab him, with her own hand, rather than endure such a termination to her impassioned love.”

There was so much of genuine terror in the expression of the poor girl's countenance as she said this, that Miss de Morley felt it would be vain to reason with her; nor did she in truth know enough of Miss Stanberry to be quite sure that her terror was vain.

The remainder of the interview, therefore, passed in settling the best and safest mode for their meeting in future. On the morrow it was agreed that they should both come again to the same spot, by a repetition of the trespass, when Miss de Morley was to furnish Fanny with a key which would admit her very conveniently to another part of the extensive preserves, where they would be still more secure

from interruption. And then they parted; Fanny Clarence inexpressibly comforted by having acquired such a friend, and Miss de Morley almost equally delighted by the same acquisition, and having her head full of plans for bringing about a happy termination to the singular romance she had listened to.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE is, or there ought to be, in all old castles, some portion of the premises with which not quite all, but very nearly all, the inhabitants are unacquainted, and of which the owners themselves would have lived and died in ignorance, had it not been for some remarkable accident.

This was precisely the case at Cuthbert Castle.

Had Lady Sarah found herself the wife of a gay young husband, it is highly probable that, when first installed as mistress of that venerable and very noble abode, she might have shown herself as frolicsome as the beautiful bride of iron-chest celebrity, who spent her wedding-day in galloping from cellar to garret, till at length she penetrated to the dark re-

treat which proved her tomb. But Lady Sarah de Morley was neither indulged in any such amusement, nor exposed to any such danger. From the time she entered Cuthbert Castle as its mistress, she had never felt sufficiently playful to exclaim, "We'll hide! we'll hide!" and the consequence was, that she was not, by many degrees, so thoroughly well acquainted with some of its medieval contrivances as she might have been.

Nor was her young daughter very much better acquainted with the out-of-the-way architectural vagaries of the venerable edifice than her mother, till the time that her father's death changed the aspect of everything, save precisely that of the unknown regions of which I am speaking.

Till Father Ambrose departed, it is certain that neither Lady Sarah nor her daughter fully enjoyed the liberty they had gained by the death of his unfortunate patron. Her ladyship, notwithstanding that love of practical truth which led her almost to prefer offending usage by the premature dismissal of the "trappings and the suits of woe," than harass her

own conscience by seeming to affect a sorrow which she did not feel, could not, nevertheless, throw off the fetters (though now unlocked) with which the presence of the old priest seemed to bind her. Till he departed, for instance, she was never once heard to hum the fondly remembered tune of some old song, which she had never, perhaps, been sufficiently at ease in heart to recall, till conscious of no longer being the hated wife of a gloomy fanatic.

How she employed her real freedom from all such thralldom when the departure of the confessor put her in full possession of it, we have already seen; but Juliana, little as her mother suspected the fact, was very far from enjoying the change in their manner of life with as unmixed a gladness as she did herself. The novelty of going out of course amused her, and the novelty of seeing so many people amused her too, but it also wearied her. Nevertheless, there were many new feelings and new ideas awakened by this sudden change in her position, which gave increased interest to every hour of her existence. The manner in which both Lady Sarah and her daughter

had, to say the truth, appeared to count for little or nothing in the domestic arrangements of Mr. de Morley, had not only left a sore and resentful feeling on the mind of his widow, but had led her to conceive the idea that Juliana's character would never recover from the effects of the blighting feeling of insignificance which this style of treatment had engendered.

In order as much as possible to correct this, she had systematically endeavoured, ever since the death of her husband, to make Juliana understand that she really was a personage of some consequence, and that, as a matter of duty, she ought to keep in mind the fact, that within the short space of two or three years, she would become the uncontrolled mistress of herself and her splendid property.

That the wide-spreading noble old castle, in one corner of which she had been permitted to run about, like a little lap-dog with a string, for ever drawn back if suspected of being inclined to wander too far, was now her own, and that not only the castle itself, but the wide domain round it, could be subject to no other authority (save that of the laws) until

such time as she should herself see fit to dispose of both it and herself in marriage, was now repeated to her as a lesson that it was absolutely necessary she should learn.

All this certainly did produce a considerable effect on the mind of the young heiress. It was not in her nature to become vulgarly inflated by any of the various modifications of the little passion called pride; but she did become quite aware of the fact that she possessed as much power as independence could bestow upon a woman; and she was exceedingly glad of it, because it would prevent the necessity of her doing a multitude of disagreeable things, which she saw other people do, and to which young ladies, less particularly independent than herself, might be obliged perhaps to submit.

But the point at which this carefully cultivated feeling of property certainly touched her the most was, the consciousness that the dark, huge, wide-spreading mass of ancient masonry called Cuthbert Castle, was as much her own as ever her doll or her doll's house had been.

There was something in this that at first

seemed almost too strange to be possible; but by degrees the idea grew familiar, and extremely agreeable to her; and the notion of becoming personally intimate with every corner of the overgrown edifice took such possession of her fancy, that she repeatedly dreamed of adventures encountered in her wanderings through the unknown chambers of her long-descended home.

Had she consulted her inclination only, she would certainly have set off upon these domestic expeditions, at a very early period after becoming fully conscious of her right to do so; but she was shy of displaying her newly-obtained authority; and the more she longed to profit by it, the more averse did she feel to confess the longing to those whose assistance, notwithstanding all her power, was absolutely necessary to the gratification of it.

It is true that Mrs. Hardwood, the old housekeeper, was her sworn friend, as well as her faithful servant, and that although rather a stiff and solemn-looking dame, she had ever shown quite as much fondness as respect for Juliana.

But the heiress was too young in years and too new in power not to feel somewhat of a childish dread of making herself ridiculous, and day after day, and week after week, had passed on, without her having ever announced that it was her will and pleasure to be led into every nook and corner of the old edifice.

It is true that she had, more than once, employed the hour when she knew the servants were at dinner, in mounting various flights of stairs leading she knew not where, which, of course, was very gratifying, and, as Dickens says, "naturally so." But, unfortunately, nearly all the rooms to which they led were locked, and therefore, doubtless, containing objects of interest; whereas the few which she was fortunate enough to find open, were so unmistakeably the sleeping apartments of the grooms and footmen, that her satisfaction at having penetrated to them was not altogether of an unmixed character.

At length she began to tax herself with some sort of weakness or other, to which she could only give the name of cowardice, for

thus letting "I dare not, wait upon I would;" and rather suddenly resolving to yield to it no longer, she left her mother engaged in an earnest discussion with Mr. Wardour upon the nature and value of apostolical succession, and crept down to the private sitting-room of Mrs. Hardwood.

Though this was the first time she had ever been there with the fixed intention of declaring that it was her wish and will to go over every part of the castle, "excepting the rooms in actual occupation by the family," she had often paid the old lady a visit there before. Even as a little child, though she was never taken to any part of the castle where it was thought likely she should meet her unhappy father (for no sight roused within him so terrible a feeling of conscience-stricken self-reproach as the sight of his innocent, but, in his judgment, perdition-doomed little girl); though never permitted to go where it was thought likely that *he* might be, she had frequently been indulged by a visit to the housekeeper's room, to which sweetmeats, and the pictures at the head

of a long series of Oxford Almanacs, had attached very pleasant memories.

But since she had been grown up, these visits had become more rare, for her father's wish to see the "ladies of the family" only in the drawing-room and at table," having been communicated to her, she had carefully, and, for many reasons, most strictly obeyed it; but since his death she had repeatedly sat for half an hour at a time with the infinitely flattered old woman.

Having given a discreet little tap, and been desired to enter, she went in, and poor Mrs. Hardwood, though usually one of the least demonstrative people in the world, actually bent her knee before her for a moment, as if involuntarily, and from a movement of joy and gratitude that she was unable to control.

"My dear good Hardwood!" exclaimed Juliana, taking her kindly by the hand, "your joy at seeing me, looks as if it was a long time since I had paid you a visit, but to make up for it, I intend to make a very long one now. And why do you not come up into my room

sometimes? I am very often there, with nobody but my books and my birds; and now remember, if you please, that I hereby give you a general invitation to come and pay me a visit whenever you feel any inclination to do so."

"Ah, my dear young lady! that is a dangerous word to say, for if I was to take it in earnest, you would never have any more time to yourself, for your books, or your music, or your drawing, or anything. I do pay a visit to your room, sometimes, my dear Miss de Morley, but that is when I am quite sure you are not in it; and then I see that the hours you spend alone are too well spent to make it proper that they should be broken in upon by the visits of such a one as I."

"You do not do yourself justice, Hardwood. There are very few people, I assure you, that I like to talk to so well as I do to you," said Juliana.

"It is like your own father's child to say so," replied the old woman, in a voice that testified considerable emotion; "for, great gentle-

man as he was, he never was above saying that he had a great regard for me."

"He had known you a long while, Hardwood, had he not?" demanded Juliana; "if I mistake not, you lived with his mother?"

"I did, indeed, Miss de Morley; and I remember him when he was quite a boy. Stay, my dear!" cried the good woman, eagerly, and stepping hastily towards a chest of drawers which stood on one side of her room, "I will show you something that will prove how kind and good he was to me."

And then, unlocking one of the drawers, she took out a small box lined with cotton, and drew from the very centre of it a small but very thick bronze medal, on one side of which there was a long Latin inscription, and on the other the head of a venerable looking old man. "There, Miss de Morley," she said, placing it carefully in the hand of Juliana, "my honoured master gave me that when he was just twelve years old. It was his birth-day; and I shall never forget the dear precious look with which—with which he gave it to me."

Juliana received it in her hand with an air and with a feeling of reverence. She attempted to interpret the meaning of the Latin inscription, but this was beyond her. She then turned it over, and contemplated the deeply cut and finely expressive head on the other side; she endeavoured, also, to make out the meaning of the circle of capital letters which surrounded it. This also, however, was beyond her power; for the names and titles, or whatever it might be, were so abbreviated as to defy her power of comprehending them. In turning the medal, however, round and round, and from side to side, a finger of her right hand unconsciously touched a spring, and the case—for such in fact it was—suddenly opening, disclosed a small silver crucifix, very beautifully modelled, in the interior of it.

Juliana started. Such a pretty foreign toy might have been found in many an English house without creating the emotion which it certainly did in her. Nor was she alone affected by the disclosure of this Papist symbol. Mrs. Hardwood coloured, and looked con-

fused ; but almost immediately recovering herself, she stretched out her hand to receive the medal back again.

“ It has opened by accident, Miss de Morley ; but I did not mean to show you what it is possible you may not like to see.”

And so saying, she closed the little case and replaced it in its soft cotton repository.

“ But how do you happen to keep such a thing as that, Mrs. Hardwood ?” said Juliana, gravely. “ I thought that my mother took particular care to know that all her female servants were Protestants.”

“ But what has that to do, my dear young lady, with what your poor dear papa gave me, out of his childish affection, at least a dozen years before he ever saw her ladyship ? Everybody knew, I believe, and always knew that Richard Randolphe de Morley was a Catholic ; and so thoroughly Catholic, too, that I doubt if he could at any age have given a token of love and good-will to anybody, of any faith, without its bearing, in sight or out of sight, some sign of its being the gift of a Catholic. But for all that, Miss de Morley, your papa

was a truly good man. Indeed, I do most humbly hope and believe that there may be good people in every faith, provided they are sincere in their belief. For if people are taught wrong, my dear young lady, how can they be expected to know what is right?"

"And indeed, my good Hardwood," replied the young lady, "I am quite of the same opinion. It is, beyond all doubt, a great misfortune to have been taught wrong, but it cannot be a crime, inasmuch as we have no power to help it. But do not let us talk any more about it; it must always be rather a painful subject to me. I would to Heaven that, by wishing, I could learn to understand the real truth; but as I might pass my life in wishing this, without ever being at all likely to obtain it, it must be anything rather than wisdom to talk about it. But, Hardwood, I have not told you yet that I had a particular and special object in coming here to-day. I want you to give me your assistance in the gratification of a whim that I have taken into my head, and which haunts me so incessantly, that I shall never be at rest till it is satisfied."

“And what is that, Miss de Morley?” returned the old woman, looking delighted at the idea that she could in any way give pleasure to the young heiress.

“It is nothing very difficult, my dear good Hardwood,” returned Juliana. “It is only that I want you to arm yourself with all your keys, and take me into every room in the castle, however out of the way or even ruinous—that is, you know, excepting the rooms occupied by the servants.”

“Of course, my dear, I should never ask you to condescend to put your foot into any such,” replied Mrs. Hardwood, looking still more delighted than before. “And with that proper exception, Miss de Morley, I don’t see how any young lady can do better than make herself acquainted with all that her own castle contains. And as to ruinous, my dear, your saying that only shows the more how proper it is that you should go over it; for I do not believe that you would find a castle in all England of the same great antiquity that is kept, from the roof to the dungeons, in such particularly beautiful repair.”

“Dungeons!” repeated Juliana, with a little shudder, but looking, nevertheless, by no means displeased to hear the terrific word; “are there really dungeons, Hardwood?”

“That there are, indeed, Miss de Morley, and so deep, too—the great dungeon is twenty steps down from the principal beer-cellar—that I almost misdoubt your choosing to go down to it,” replied the housekeeper.

“You are quite wrong, then,” returned the heiress. “I think the dungeons are exactly what I shall like to see best; but remember we must have plenty of light, Hardwood, or else, you know, there will be no good in going. I must see everything.”

“And so you shall, Miss de Morley,” replied her old servant, earnestly. “And though I can’t answer for your finding anything in the dungeons that you may think much worth seeing, there is a good deal in the castle that is, and which will be quite as new to you as the dungeons themselves.”

Miss de Morley and the housekeeper then consulted together as to the best time for performing the business they meditated, and both

agreed that the most convenient hour would be after the dinner in the servants' hall. But too much time had already been spent in talking about it, to attempt making the survey that day.

“To-morrow, then! Let it be to-morrow, Hardwood. I will come down to you at the same hour that I did to-day,” said Juliana.

“And I will take good care to be ready for you, Miss de Morley,” replied the old woman; and then, after pausing a moment, she added, “but yet, my dear young lady, I think it is almost a pity that you should not begin a little to-day, because there is many a stair and many a step, I promise you, that must be gone over before the task you propose to yourself can be completed; and I think that all at once it will be too tiring for you. Besides, it seems to me, my dear, that if we could manage to get the dungeons over to-day, it would be a good thing done, for it is clear to me that they have got hold of you, as one may say; and till you have seen them, I think they will be running so much in your head that you won't be able to attend to anything else.”

“Well, Mrs. Hardwood, I have no objection to set off this very moment, if you like it,” returned her young mistress. “Get a good large wax candle for each of us, and, for fear of accidents, perhaps you had better take a little shut-up lantern into the bargain. I am by no means sure that I should like to find myself in the dungeon without a light.”

“There will be no fear of that, my dear, for the place is by no means particularly windy; rather the contrary, indeed, for the only times I ever was down there, I remember thinking that the poor prisoners in the old times, when dungeons really were used as dungeons, must have been wellnigh stifled for want of fresh air.”

The time which it took for the good woman to utter these speculations, sufficed her also to find her keys and prepare her lights, so that her next sentence was, “Now then, Miss de Morley, I am quite ready to set out; and I should think that I am the very first house-keeper of Cuthbert Castle who was ever so audacious as to lead her own lady and mistress into the dungeons of it.”

“ Well, Goody, if ever I live to get out again, you shall not be hanged for your audacity, I will promise you that,” replied Juliana, laughing; and then desiring the old woman to precede her, she took possession of her candle, and they set off.

The adventure ended much as all other such adventures in the nineteenth century are likely to end. The dungeon was declared to be a very horrid dungeon; and the cruelty of those who had condemned their fellow-creatures to such quarters, almost too shocking to think of. And all this having been properly felt and expressed, the young *châtelaine* for the time being, declared her intention of concluding her exploring for the day by going into the castle kitchen, not only as being an apartment of quite sufficient interest to deserve a visit, but also because she felt a strong inclination at that moment to stand for a short space before the castle kitchen-fire, the atmosphere of that most decidedly feudal appendage to her greatness from which she had just emerged, having considerably chilled her blood.

No bad consequences followed, however, and

at the hour appointed on the following day, the adventurous heiress again descended to the apartment of her humble friend for the purpose of continuing her researches. On this occasion the old housekeeper was considerably less talkative, and more respectful than on the preceding day. It might be that the aspect of all things, being of a more ordinary kind, suggested a more ordinary demeanour; but it was in vain that the kind-spirited Juliana endeavoured, by her familiar chit-chat, to make her old servant feel that she was to consider herself on this occasion as her companion; nothing seemed gay enough to make the old woman smile, and no tone sufficiently endearing to lead her to forget for a moment that it was the mistress of the castle upon whom she was attending.

Juliana remarked the change, and was puzzled to account for it; however, the real interest which she took in what she was about soon drew her attention from her guide to the objects which it was her office to show her.

The heiress of Cuthbert Castle was quite right in thinking that the wide and venerable

pile was likely to contain many things which it would be well worth while to examine. With all the handsomest apartments in the castle, whether in common use or not, Juliana was of course sufficiently well acquainted to render it needless that she should now visit them; but there was one spacious drawing-room up stairs which she had never seen used, though she had several times been in it when a child. As they passed the door of this apartment, Mrs. Hardwood threw it open, saying, "Though this fine room is not new to you, Miss de Morley, I wish you would enter it for a moment."

Juliana complied with the request, and perceived that the windows, both as to their shutters and sashes, were already open.

"I want you to look at something here, Miss de Morley. It is an object that I do not think should give you pain, but if, unfortunately, I am mistaken, forgive me."

Having said this, as soon as Juliana was sufficiently within the room to permit its door to be closed behind her, the housekeeper moved on, leading the way to the further end

of the spacious apartment, and then pausing before a large full-length portrait of a man not much past the middle age, in the dress of a cardinal, she said, "Look up at that picture, my dear young mistress."

Juliana obeyed her, and instantly exclaimed, "Good Heaven! my father!"

"No, Miss de Morley. Look again, and you will perceive that it cannot be the portrait of your father, for it wears the dress of a vowed priest; but the likeness is so remarkable, I might almost say so wonderful, that it has more than once seemed a pity to me, when I have entered this room in order to be sure that everything was in proper order—it has seemed to me a pity, and almost a sin, that my honoured master's only child should never raise her eyes to look at its noble features, which are so wonderfully like his own. And does it not look down upon you, Miss de Morley, as if it were breathing a blessing on your head?"

Juliana was greatly overcome, and did not, in fact could not, answer. There was a fluttering at her heart that was caused by emo-

tions made up of reverence, tenderness, and a strange thrilling of superstitious fear.

The portrait was of the very highest order of merit, and the strong light of a bright morning fell upon it at that moment at right angles, so precisely as the artist might have himself desired, when wishing to show his work to the greatest advantage, that under no circumstances could it ever have been seen with greater effect.

“Hardwood!” cried Juliana, mournfully, “it looks as if it were about to leave its frame and come down to me! It is a Roman cardinal, and he sees me here, and yet does not look angry!”

And then there was perfect silence for several minutes, during which the eyes of the heiress of Cuthbert were fixed upon the portrait of the cardinal with an expression of reverential affection that brought tears to those of her old servant.

At length Juliana turned away from the picture to her companion, and said, “Hardwood! you have brought me here to see this extraordinary picture, and you ask me to for-

give you for doing so. If I have any difficulty about forgiving you, it is because you have not brought me here before. But I am quite sure, my good old friend, that there is some mystery attached to this portrait and its dress. It is the portrait of my father, Mrs. Hardwood, of that it is impossible to doubt. I have examined it very carefully, the features are not like, they are the same. But of course there is some mystery concerning the dress, which it is possible that you may have promised never to disclose. If this be so, do not answer me, but lead me at once into another room; but if you are restrained by no promise of secrecy, I certainly should greatly like to learn all that you can tell me concerning it. It is scarcely likely that such a dress should be assumed without the right to wear it. And yet it is surely less likely still that my father possessed such right. I do not think you should have brought me to look at it unless you are at liberty to tell me all that you know concerning it."

"That there is a mystery concerning this picture, Miss de Morley, is very certain," re-

plied the old woman, rather solemnly, "and it is a mystery that I have not only a right to disclose to you, but I think I am now called upon by my duty to do it. It is not, however, in the least degree of the nature you suppose. Notwithstanding the resemblance, Miss de Morley, that is not the portrait of my late master. It was painted, as I have heard, several years before he was born, and is the likeness of the twin brother of his grandfather."

Juliana again fixed her eyes upon the portrait, and exclaimed, "Wonderful!" and then, having indulged herself by a long and steady gaze, she again addressed herself to the housekeeper, and said—

"What, then, is the mystery, Hardwood, which belongs to this picture?"

"It shall be disclosed to you immediately, Miss de Morley," was the reply; and having said so, she walked rapidly away, and reaching a small door, which, being covered by the same hangings as the walls of the room, was invisible, she opened it, and discovered a small light closet, from whence she brought a set of

neat mahogany steps, such as are used in libraries, and having placed it against the wall of the saloon immediately below the portrait of the cardinal, she mounted them with such care and caution as befitted her age; but, nevertheless, Juliana became alarmed for her, and exclaimed, "My dear good Hardwood! why should you risk the mounting those slight steps? Did you fancy you perceived that some injury had been done to the picture? I am sure I hope not, for it is a very precious one."

Mrs. Hardwood remained on the highest step for a moment, and seemed to justify the conjecture of her young mistress, for she passed her right hand over that of the cardinal, on the fore finger of which was depicted a ring, which, according to a somewhat barbarous fashion, not uncommon in days of yore, was embossed and gilt; she then descended the steps in the same careful manner in which she had mounted them, and replied to Juliana's words by saying, earnestly, "No; there is no injury, Miss de Morley. But it does my heart good to hear you call that picture

precious. And now," she added, "you shall learn what the mystery is which is attached to it."

And so saying, she again mounted one step, and applying her hand to the canvas, caused the picture to retire backwards from its frame, which, as she had before pressed a spring connected with the ring, it did readily, at a very slight touch, and disclosed to view a dark opening, the form and size of which it was impossible to ascertain from below.

Juliana now indeed felt that her researches were of the most interesting kind, and likely to lead to results greatly more accordant with the by-gone legends of old romance than she had ever dared to hope for.

"What does this mean?" she exclaimed, in a tone of such extreme astonishment, that if she had but changed "*does*" for "*may*," and looked in the very least degree pale, would have made the whole scene worthy of Udolpho.

As it was, however, it really was sufficiently exciting, and Mrs. Hardwood saw enough interest in the fair face of the heiress to make her hasten her explanation.

“ I need not tell a young lady so well read as you are,” she said, “ that it was formerly a very common thing in all mansions, large enough and strong enough to tempt an attack or resist one, to be furnished with hidden means of escape for the inhabitants, in case the fortune of a siege turned against them. I have heard say, that in almost all ruined castles in every country, it is easy to spy out dark and narrow staircases, which can only be accounted for in this manner. But there are few of such curious old contrivances kept in repair now, I believe; and it seems likely enough to me, Miss de Morley, that it is just in old Catholic families, like that of my master, that the remains of such may be found. And that because those who remained true to the old faith were not, in past days, in a condition to feel themselves quite safe from attacks from those of the new.”

“ That is quite true, Hardwood,” replied Juliana; “ but though the access to this mysterious opening is still in such perfect repair, and though you, the confidential housekeeper, are in possession of the secret of getting at it, I presume that, as a communication from one

part of the premises to another, it is no longer available? I dare say the staircase, if there be one, is all in ruin."

"I beg your pardon, Miss de Morley," replied the good woman, rather proudly. "There is not, in the whole castle, a staircase in more perfect repair than this. For it *is* a staircase, my dear young lady, and as I promised, when the secret was told me, that I never would confide it to any one but the heir, I have myself been sweeping it down for you, when everybody else was in bed, last night; so I hope you will have no objection to go down by it, for it is really very curious."

"No, indeed, Hardwood. On the contrary, I would not lose the pleasure of doing it for a great deal," replied Juliana. "Will you mount again, and let me follow you?"

"No, Miss de Morley, no; I must trouble you to go up the first, if you please, for I must take care to close the opening after me. You did not see me do it, I dare say, but I did not forget to lock the door of the saloon as soon as we had passed through it. I should be loath to break my promise, even by accident."

“Well, then,” returned Juliana, putting her foot upon the steps, “let me see if I can manage as cleverly as you did.”

“Oh, dear! There is no great difficulty in any part of it, or I would not propose it for the world!” replied the old woman, looking terrified at the bare idea of leading the heiress into danger; “but you must be pleased to stop a moment, Miss de Morley. Lights are quite as necessary now as they were yesterday; but it will not delay you a moment. I have got everything ready *there*.”

And so saying, she flitted back to the same little closet that had furnished the steps, and presently returned with two lighted wax candles carefully arranged for the expedition.

Juliana mounted the steps, and having received her candle, stepped through the picture-frame, and found herself upon a very small stone landing-place behind it.

“Do you see the stairs, my dear?” said the old woman, forgetting her respect in her anxiety.

“Oh, yes! here they are; shall I go down?” returned Juliana.

“No, no, no; let me go down the first, in case your foot should slip. Besides, you will then have one of the lights before you. There is room enough for us both to stand together upon the landing-place, if you will be so good, Miss de Morley, as to keep close to the wall, on the side furthest from where you see the picture, so that I may be able to push it back to its place.

Juliana prepared to follow these instructions, but in raising her candle in order to enable her to see, she threw the light so strongly on the visage of the portrait, as to produce a sudden and most startling appearance of life on the features, and exclaimed, in all the painful agony of terror, “Mrs. Hardwood! why do you try to frighten me thus? Why do you play these tricks with me? It is alive! and it is my father!”

And as she spoke, she stepped back upon the ladder, and very nearly fell, from her eager desire to return into the room.

Mrs. Hardwood, however, who was in the act of mounting, sustained her in her tottering position, and soon restored her to composure

by the quiet manner in which she replied, "Indeed, Miss de Morley, you are mistaken! there is nothing to frighten you. The picture is only a picture, though it is very well painted, and very much like my dear master."

It was quite impossible that any of the wild improbable notions which had seized upon the mind of Juliana, could retain possession of it when put to flight in this very matter-of-fact style, and, accordingly, the shaking mistress of the castle listened to reason, contrived to step back upon the landing-place, and relieved herself of the remnant of her agitation by saying, "It is certainly the most extraordinary likeness, Hardwood, that ever was seen."

"I do think it is, indeed, my dear," replied the old woman, who was by this time standing beside her on the landing-place, and preparing to return the canvas to its frame; "but surely it is a pleasure to look at it—and the more so, because it looks back again so kindly. I do think, at this very moment, Miss de Morley, it seems to be giving you a blessing."

Ashamed of her fit of alarm, Juliana now looked steadily at the masterpiece before which

she stood, while the housekeeper, well pleased at her doing so, raised the light she carried in such a manner as admirably to display the features, and Juliana indeed perceived an expression of gentleness in them which those of her very miserable father had often wanted.

In fact, the late Mr. de Morley had lived in all the terrors of a troubled conscience, and his features almost constantly expressed suffering, while the countenance of the cardinal, on the contrary, had a gentle look of tranquil meditation, which it was quite soothing to contemplate.

At this moment, the recollection of the casket, and the purpose to which Father Ambrose had told her the contents of it were to be applied, suddenly shot through the memory of Juliana, and conveyed to her heart a feeling of satisfaction, which proved that she was still considerably more under the influence of imagination than of common sense.

A few moments brought them to the bottom of the steep and narrow stair, and Mrs. Hardwood, who went the first, begged Juliana to take charge of the light she had carried,

while she raised her hands, and, apparently with a good deal of exertion, pushed forward what appeared to be a mass of solid wall. It yielded, however, and Miss de Morley, to her extreme astonishment, found herself in a small Catholic chapel, the altar of which was carefully and elegantly decorated. "Where are we, Hardwood?" she exclaimed, looking round her, "and how did we get here? I see no door, no opening."

"This room, Miss de Morley," replied the housekeeper, "was your father's private chapel. It is situated behind the library, through which we shall return to the great hall."

"But how did we get in?" reiterated Juliana. "That figure of the Holy Virgin," replied Mrs. Hardwood, pointing to a niche containing the figure she mentioned, "yields to a touch, and, turning on a strong pivot, leaves space to pass. See!" And the good woman pushed aside the statue, and the niche behind it, displaying the dark staircase behind.

The whole scene, and all she had felt in her way to it, had so excited Juliana that she now wished for nothing so much as to be quickly

in her own room again; but having expressed this wish, the extreme facility with which it was executed, and the sudden contrast between this and moving pictures, secret staircases, and revolving statues, appeared the most remarkable part of the adventure.

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