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GRANBY.

A NOVEL.

Thomas Henry Lister

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.

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GRANBY.

CHAP. I.

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes
How diversly love doth his pageants play,
And shews his power in variable kindes :
The baser wit whose idle thoughts alway
Are wont to cleave unto the lowly clay,
It stirreth up to sensual desire,
And in lewd slothe to waste the careless day ;
But in brave sprite it kindles goodly fire,
That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

SPENSER.

AT the close of a dull cold day, in the month of November, 182—, General Granby and his nephew were (to use a word strictly national), “comfortably” established in a small plainly furnished dining-room, well warmed and cheerfully lighted, at a table furnished with plates and glasses, two half-filled decanters, and the remnants of a small dessert.

At the moment which we have chosen for intruding upon their privacy, the *tête-à-tête* wore no very promising aspect. The General, a mild and pleasing, but withered and infirm old man, whose face and figure showed signs of his having suffered from the fatigues of service and the vicissitudes of climate, was propped in an easy chair, regaling himself, with much deliberation, from a veteran snuff-box, and regarding, with an air of grave inquiry, his nephew, a handsome and intelligent-looking young man, of about two-and-twenty, who was cracking his last walnut with more seriousness than the operation seemed to warrant. This done, the latter was sinking into a state of deep abstraction, when the General, who had replaced his snuff-box, and, consequently, began to feel more acutely the want of a cheerful companion, broke abruptly upon his reverie.

“Come, Harry, pass the wine,—you can do that at least, if you can’t talk. Here’s to our absent friends,” said he, nodding to his ne-

phew, as he filled his glass; "I reckon you amongst the number."

"Sir?" said the nephew starting, "I beg your pardon—what were you saying?"

"Why, nothing worth repeating, luckily, for it seems if I had you would not have heard it. Come, man, don't go to sleep, or if you *are* thinking, tell us what it's all about."

His nephew smiled, raised his eyebrows, and shook his head, as if he would fain have intimated that his thoughts were neither communicable, nor worth communicating.

"Oh, come, don't shake your head," said the General, "you know I never understand that; unless," he added, with a happy after thought, "you mean to indicate that there's nothing in it;" and the good man chuckled at his joke with as much glee as if it had been a new one, while his nephew chimed in with a short laugh of civility.

A pause ensued. The General's attack had been ill-concerted. Jokes are unfavourable to

the flow of conversation, when both parties are not equally disposed to be facetious. In such cases, the lesser wit, instead of replying to the pleasantness of the greater, employs the succédaneum of a laugh. And so it was in this instance: Henry Granby having contributed his laugh, was inclined to think that this was enough, and, accordingly relapsed into his former silence. The General hemmed—looked at his nephew—at the candles, and at the fire, and saw, to his sorrow, that they stood in need neither of snuffing nor poking, drank off his wine, took out his snuff-box, drummed awhile upon the lid, and then commenced again in a lower key, with “Harry, are you tired after your journey?”

“No, Sir, I thank you, not at all.”

“Then my good fellow, if you are not, what makes you so silent? Here have you been away these three weeks, among old friends of mine, and have nothing to say about them now you are come back. You never used to be so

chary of your information. You were always very communicative, and told me how they were, and what they did, and what they said, and all about them. How did you leave them all at Brackingsley?"

"All well—quite well, Sir."

"Did they send any message to me?"

"Their kind regards, Sir, nothing more."

"And what is my old friend Sir Thomas doing? He is just the same I'll be bound—busy as ever, eh? bustle, bustle, all day long, and thinks he's of all the use in the world to everybody. He is never so happy as when he can tell you he is hurried to death, and could not get a quiet moment if he would give his life for it."

"Just the same, Sir; you describe him exactly."

"Aye, I understand him pretty well; and so I ought, for I have known him almost from a boy. And who had you there all the time?"

"A good many people coming and going,

Sir—the Charltons, the Beaumonts, the Cleavers, and there were two or three odd, vulgar-looking persons, who came one day—constituents of Sir Thomas's, I believe.”

“ Well, and how were Lady Jermyn and my god-daughter Caroline? Is she a handsome girl?”

“ I should think she would generally be considered so.”

“ Generally considered? humph! and pray do you consider her so?”

“ Yes, Sir, I meant to include myself,” said the nephew, with a slight accession of colour as he spoke.

“ She has a right to be handsome,” said the General. “ Lady Jermyn was a fine looking girl some thirty years ago, and Sir Thomas was a well-favoured fellow in his time. He's an old friend of mine, and a good friend of your's too. I think you were always a favourite.”

“ Perhaps I was,” observed Henry, in rather a grave and sorrowful tone.

“ Was? yes, and are now.”

“ Am I?” said the nephew doubtfully.

“ Are you? yes, to be sure you are. Have not they always shown it? I’m sure they have been remarkably civil to you, and I don’t see why you should think the contrary. How have they offended you?”

“ I have nothing *particularly* to complain of,” said the nephew; “ but to tell you the truth, I *did* think, this last time, that I perceived a considerable alteration in their behaviour towards me. It was not uncivil—nay, it was quite as civil as ever—perhaps more so—but it was unpleasantly altered—it was formal—it was cold.”

“ Cold! fiddlestick! all fancy, I’ll be bound—Why should they be cold?”

“ That I do not know, Sir; but it certainly was so.”

“ Pshaw! nonsense! I cannot believe it—besides, if their manner was altered, you ought to remember that you are not a boy now, and

cannot expect to be treated in the same unceremonious style as when you used to go to them in town from Westminster on a Saturday."

"No, Sir, that I don't expect—I make all those allowances."

"But you don't make allowances enough, my good fellow. Besides, you say that they are as civil as ever, and perhaps more so. Why, then, what would you have? I'll be bound they are only making what they think a proper distinction between the boy and the man."

"It is possible, Sir," said the nephew, in a tone which showed that he barely admitted the possibility, but was glad at any rate to dismiss the subject.

A silence ensued, which was first broken by the General.

"I am very glad, Harry, that you stopped a day or two at Lord Malton's in your way back, and that I wrote to tell him you would do so. Considering our near relationship—considering

that his father and mine were brothers, I think it right that you should see a little more of him and your cousin Tyrrel than you have hitherto. You cannot now plead either school or college, and you have no profession to take up your time. Besides, I think people would begin to notice your very slight acquaintance with your nearest relations; and they might suspect that there was some coolness between us; which you know, Harry, is not the case."

"Certainly, Sir; and to tell you the truth, I have often thought it strange that so little communication should ever have taken place between ourselves and Lord Malton, though no unkindness appeared to exist, and he was always very ready to do what you asked him. I have frequently turned it in my mind; but as it was a delicate subject, I never liked to mention all I thought. Since my late visit, too, I can less account for his conduct than before, from his pointed inquiries after you, and very kind attention to myself. It is certainly singular that

I should never have been at Tedworth till the other day ; and Lord Malton does not seem a retired man, but I should think, on the contrary, rather given to hospitality.”

“ You are very right, so he is ; I am glad to see that he has made a favourable impression.”

“ Yes, Sir, in some respects he has. He showed no want of disposition to treat me with the kindness of a relation, and if he failed in making me quite like him, it is perhaps more my fault than his. I should think he was a man of variable spirits, and rather peculiar temper. He often began to talk to me cheerfully, when a sudden cloud would seem to pass over him, and all would be gloom and formality in an instant ; but these fits were only momentary—he always rallied again directly.”

“ He is a peculiar man,” said the General, after a short pause ; “ but he has good points about him. He is rather reserved—it is a family failing. His father, the first Lord, had a great deal of reserve, and pride too.”

“If his was pride of family,” said the nephew, “it must, I imagine, have cost him a pang to change his name from Granby to Tyrrel.”

“I have no doubt it did; although your great unclè would never have got his title, if it had not been for the fortune which old Tyrrel left him. But he plainly showed his love of his old family name, by the way in which he contrived that the peerage should descend. He certainly had an eye to the possibility of its being held some time or other by a Granby. There is a remainder, you know, as I have told you before, to the male representative of the younger branch, and that is yourself.”

“It is never likely to do me any good, Sir,” said the nephew; “there is Mr. Tyrrel—I dare say he will marry—I wonder he has not already. Besides, I should not like to profit by the loss of a relation.”

The General returned no answer and re-

mained for a few minutes lost in thought. "How do like your cousin Tyrrel?" said he at length; "you never saw him before, I think."

"Never;—and it was by accident that I saw him then. He came home unexpectedly, a few hours after I reached Tedworth, and as it appears, did not know that I was to be there. He seemed surprised, I thought, and hardly pleased, when first I was introduced to him. His manner struck me very much—it was very odd—I can scarcely describe it. He hardly spoke three words to me all the first evening, and resisted every attempt on my part to become acquainted with him. However, the next day he was quite another person. Nothing could be more kind, frank, and cordial. I like him extremely. You cannot think, Sir, how friendly he was."

"It does him credit," said the General, in a low serious tone. His nephew assented, but

with a look of slight surprise at this marked commendation of conduct, which appeared to him so natural and proper.

“He is no longer in the army, I believe,” said the General, rousing himself from a short lethargy.

“No, he has just quitted the Guards, and does not, I believe, intend to enter any other regiment.” Then, after a short pause, with some hesitation and timidity of manner, he proceeded: “Excuse what I am going to say, sir, for I am sure you have always acted from the kindest intentions in bringing me up without any profession; but considering the smallness of my means, the desirableness of employment, and the impossibility otherwise of getting on in the world, if you do not dislike it, sir, I should wish to do something for myself.”

The General stared at the request, looked uneasy, and remained for some time silent. “Ay, ay, Harry,” said he, at length, with a sigh, “I ought to be sensible that a poor old

broken-down fellow, like me, is but indifferent company for a young one like yourself. You lead a moping life here, I know; and though you do go out among friends at a distance, you are only more sensible, on your return, of the dulness of home. If an old uncle is too stupid to live with, God forbid that I should, for my own sake, try to detain you !”

“ My dear sir,” said the nephew, with great earnestness, “ you must not so misunderstand me. It hurts me to be thought capable of such a meaning. I cannot forget my great and deep obligations to you, and your many kindnesses, and constant indulgence. I must always remember that you have been a second father to an orphan, and a protector to one who had none else to look to. I should be acting most unworthily, if I had made this proposal under the motives which you attribute to me. I hope you cannot bear in mind your own great claims upon me, and still think me capable of such ingratitude.”

“ Well, well, Harry, I don’t—I don’t. I spoke foolishly. You never failed in gratitude an instant in your life—excuse my hastiness, and forget it.”

“ How can I do otherwise?” said the nephew, with emotion. “ I will say no more about a profession.”

“ Nay, nay,” interposed the General, “ don’t let me stop your mouth. What profession is it you fancy?”

“ No one particularly, sir; I only wished not to be quite idle.”

“ Oh! then your plans are quite unformed. So much the better. But let us see what there is you can do. I do not like the army, though it is my own profession: it is a riotous, squabbling, drinking life.”

“ Formerly, perhaps,” said the nephew; “ but that description can hardly be applied to it at the present day. The rare occurrence of a duel proves that it is not a quarrelsome profession, and drinking is universally exploded.

I believe, Sir, you would find that a mess-table, now, is quite as temperate as any other."

"So I have heard say; but be that as it may, we are at peace now, and likely to remain so—therefore think no more of army or navy."

"Well, Sir; then there is nothing left me but church and law."

"No—and how are you to get on in either of those? You have no chance on earth of a living; and as for law—I don't mean to say that you are not a sharp fellow, or that you cannot stick to anything you have once taken in hand—but it is idle talking about professions: let us hear no more of them. You have done well enough hitherto without a profession, and I don't see why you should want one now. Besides, I can't do without you, Harry—I can't, indeed. You must not think of it. If I had thought you would want a profession, I should have brought you up to one; but I never did, and for good reasons best known to myself—so there is an end of the matter."

Though Henry Granby internally smiled at the weakness and vagueness of the arguments (if we must so call them) which the worthy and warm-hearted old man had brought forward in support of his wishes, he felt too much respect for those wishes, so strongly expressed, and therefore, evidently, so deeply felt, to offer any farther remonstrance; and magnanimously smothering a sigh, he relinquished with quiet acquiescence the project he had formed. After this, conversation was not resumed. The General, gratified by his successful remonstrance, soon yielded to the soothing influence of silence, an easy chair, and the sober twilight of two unsnuffed candles, and fell asleep; while the nephew, after a long but unsatisfactory reverie, endeavoured to console himself with the last number of the Quarterly Review.

CHAP. II.

C'est le sole d'un sot d'être importun ; un habile homme sont s'il convient, ou s'il ennuie.

LA BRUYÈRE.

THE grandfather of Henry Granby was the younger brother of the first Lord Malton, who obtained that title subsequent to his succession to the property and name of Tyrrel. He possessed a fortune which, for a younger brother, was considerable, and which he transmitted undiminished to his son, but unhappily without communicating a sufficient portion of that prudence by which he himself had preserved it. Mr. Granby, the son, soon formed an alliance which apparently did anything but discredit to

his taste and judgment, and on which his nearest friends were loud in their congratulations, but which was nevertheless the source of eventual unhappiness. He married a woman of great beauty, good temper, and considerable fortune, but who combined with good temper a compliancy amounting to weakness, and brought with her fortune a disposition for expense, which the extent of that fortune could by no means gratify. She died soon after giving birth to Henry ; but not until she had greatly contributed to the derangement of her husband's affairs.

Needy and dispirited, Mr. Granby lent too willing an ear to the suggestions of an insidious speculator, and was induced by him to become his partner, together with others, in a bank. Always a man of pleasure, rather than of business, he naturally became the dupe of his designing associates. The bank failed, and he found himself reduced to the verge of ruin. His health and spirits sank under the blow, and he soon afterwards died, leaving his son, with a very

small fortune, to the guardianship of his only brother, General Granby.

This important trust was executed by that worthy man, in a manner which did honour to his heart. The profits of his profession, added to a comfortable patrimony, had placed him in easy circumstances; and established in a small and quiet country residence, near the village of Ashton, he liberally shared with his nephew that little fortune of which he destined him to be the heir. He spared no expense in his education, and imposed few restrictions upon his pleasures. His liberality was even carried to an extent which gave occasional surprise to his more prudent neighbours; and his resolute refusal to bring up his nephew to any profession, was confidently pronounced by more than one to be the best and surest way to ruin him. Those who will not go all lengths with these zealous prognosticators of evil, will still be agreed upon the impolicy of his system. The General himself had but a scanty store of cogent reasons; and the

expression of his sentiments might generally be comprised in that royal sentence, "*tel est notre plaisir*;" the only argument which never fails to silence a debate.

Still, strange as it may appear, in spite of the ill-judged indulgence of the uncle, and the charms of idleness, and in defiance of the presages of croaking friends, the young man was so little corrupted, even at the age of two and twenty, as to offer a sincere, though feeble remonstrance, to any further continuance in a life of inactivity. The feebleness of that remonstrance arose in some degree from his scrupulous fear of avowing the motives by which he was led to it; and as he was silent on that point, we must tell them for him.

He had from early boyhood been accustomed to spend a small portion of every year in the house of Sir Thomas Jermyn, and had always been the object of his peculiar favour. There were many reasons for this; Sir Thomas's old friendship with his father; his having no son of

his own; the lively spirits and engaging manners of the boy; and perhaps, (for he was of a good family), his being in some degree, though distantly, related. He was also his godson; a feeble tie, but an useful motive, which persons sometimes like to assign, for a partiality for which they cannot in any other way so briefly account. Be this as it may, thus much is certain,—that he was a great favourite, and a frequent visitor.

Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn had an only daughter, about four years Henry's junior, and for whom he had always professed to feel a most brotherly regard. But "brotherly regards" are feelings which are rarely fated to maintain their existence out of that narrow pale of close relationship to which they properly belong. Even between first cousins they will sometimes melt into a tenderer species of affection; and as the relationship becomes more distant, nothing short of mutual repulsiveness will preserve their respective feelings in that sober state of chastened communion. It was not, therefore, probable that

two young persons, amply endued with many loveable qualities, should afford an exception to the above-mentioned rule ; and accordingly, they had by this time begun to entertain precisely those sentiments which were most natural to their relative situations.

But whatever they thought on this point, they kept very prudently to themselves. This was most commendable in the gentleman ; for he was far the more enlightened of the two, as to the real nature of his feelings. He could not, however, refrain from betraying them a little before his last departure, by asking and obtaining a lock of the lady's hair, which he volunteered a promise never to shew to any human being ; intimating also that he would write to inform her of his safe arrival at home. He felt, however, and keenly felt, that the inequality of their fortunes would render presumptuous his addresses, and that the heiress of Brackingsley might aspire to an alliance much higher than he could offer. As he viewed the insignifi-

cance of his means, his mind also dwelt on the apparent hopelessness of their improvement, and he bitterly regretted the inglorious inactivity to which he had been doomed. He trusted, however, that this evil was not without a remedy. Distinction was the sure reward of merit and exertion, in any profession; and they were all open to his choice. He was young; quite young enough to succeed in any of them. In short, he was determined somehow or other to make a figure; and visions of glory, and of Caroline Jermyn, were brightly pictured in his warm imagination; Caroline's form being clearly traceable—the rest being grand, but rather indistinct.

With a mind full of these interesting topics, he rode out in the morning, at the request of the General, to call on a friend, and having succeeded much to his satisfaction in finding him not at home, was agreeably resuming the thread of his meditations, when he heard with horror, at a short distance behind him, the loud greeting of Mr. Edwards. This unwelcome companion

was a gentleman of moderate independent property, who was called "the Squire," *par excellence*, by his own parishioners, but who, had he lived in Ireland, which is richer in distinctions, might have come under the denomination of a "squireen." He was a good humoured, troublesome, neighbourly man; a perfect burr to a chance companion, and for loudness and lengthiness, the most powerful talker in his district. He came trotting after Granby, gaining upon him rapidly, and repeating in stout hearty tones as he rose in his stirrups, "Well met, Mr. Granby—well met—well overtaken, I ought to say. I am glad to see you once more. I did not know you were come back. So when I saw you just this minute, thinks I, that looks like—no it can't be—yes, it is though—but I was not sure till I came quite close; so I hope you will excuse my not having called, for I give you my honour I did not know you were in the country, or I should have made a point of it."

"Pray do not apologise," said Henry. "I

returned only yesterday, and as I knew that you were in the country, I suppose I ought to have called first."

"Oh, I beg you would not mention it. Well, and how is the General? Better, I suppose—I am glad to hear it. Tell him not to stir out. The wind is in the east, and will be so until the moon changes. Mind if it is not. Bitter cold, is not it? Ah, you are looking at me riding without a great coat. It is not very prudent, to be sure, but I'll just tell you how that happens. You see, I have two great coats at home, and neither of them the right thing; one is a thick box coat, and the other a mere frock, thin and short; terribly short. Tom Davis is always at me about that coat—but I tell him, that short as it is, it will be long enough before I have another. That is the way I answer him." (Granby good humouredly tried to laugh.) "But, it *is* cold," said Mr. Edwards, buttoning his coat still higher. "I might have put

it on to-day—but we should not complain, for it is very seasonable; and Christmas will be coming soon; and we are not far from the shortest day, and it is excellent weather for farmers, as I have just been telling a tenant of mine. Things are looking up wonderfully,—turnips especially; and by the bye, talking of turnips, how many birds do you think I killed the other day in my Swedes? Four brace and a half. No bad sport so late in the season. I never knew a better year for birds in my life—coveys uncommonly large and strong; I saw two of fourteen, and one of sixteen, or thereabouts, as near as I can guess; but I wont pretend to be exact to a pair or two, but I think the largest had sixteen, for I said to Tom Davis, (he was with me), says I, ‘Davis, I’ll lay any money,’ says I, ‘there’s sixteen birds in that covey.’ ‘Why yes,’ says he, ‘I should think there might, as near as I can guess,’ he said. But I have been out of luck of late, for I have lost my best dog, a liver and white

one—you must know him—you have seen him out with me—well, I've lost him, and I'll tell you how it was." And he told it, and then passed on to the state of the roads—new gravel—parish rates—appointment of a sexton—robbery of his poultry yard—commitment of a vagrant—suspected poachers—loss of a shoe in yesterday's ride—and the history of two blank days with the fox hounds."

Henry Granby had one property, which was eminently serviceable at this crisis; he was a good listener; and however unskilled in the arts of "seeming wise" where he was not, at least possessed the inferior faculty of seeming attentive. The General's "prose," (for that worthy man, like Moliere's "Bourgeois Gentlehomme," uttered a good deal without knowing it), had greatly contributed to what physiologists would call the "development of this faculty;" and this was heightened by the occasional aid of rencontres like the present.

Thus gifted, our hero, without quitting his own

bright day-dreams, or suffering them to clash with the anti-romantic topics of his companion, mechanically but dextrously threw in his "indeed!—yes—ah!—no doubt—you don't say so!—really!—certainly—of course,"—in a tone so well suited to that of the narrator, that this communicative person was perfectly satisfied, and parted from our hero with the full conviction that he was a very agreeable, well informed, sensible young fellow.

On reaching home, Henry proceeded to embody the fruit of his long, though broken cogitations, in a letter to Caroline Jermyn.

He first opened a pocket-book, and took out of it, carefully folded up in silver paper, a small glossy lock of dark hair, upon which, with his head resting upon his hand, he seemed to ruminate as intensely, as if he were trying to conjure up the actual presence of the donor.

After adjusting pen, ink, and paper; after frequent startings up, and two or three turns round the table; after splitting the pen he had

just mended, and attempting to re-mend it with the back of his pen-knife; after such, and sundry other delays, he wrote, sealed, and directed a tolerably long letter to Miss Jermyn.

We shall not abuse our privileges (which are great) so far as to disclose verbatim the contents of this epistle. We shall only premise that it was not a proposal of marriage, or even a declaration of love; that it contained no expression warmer than "regard;" that it began with "Dear Cousin," (for they were cousins, though distant ones) and ended with "Very truly yours, H. Granby;" that it was not *crossed*, (lady correspondents will understand this term), nor even closely filled three sides; that it had no postscript; and that it described common-place topics in a common-place manner. It was, in short, (so at least the writer flattered himself,) as demure, cautious, and correct a letter, as full of innocent nothings, and well guarded dulness, as any foe to correspondents ever dreaded to receive. It was, he thought,

admirably calculated for a safe introduction to a long series of epistolary intercourse, for it could give no offence to the lady, and excite no alarm in the parents. Thus prudent was he in the execution of a measure, of which imprudence was the primary feature.

The letter was sent, but by no secret messenger, no light-heeled, ready-witted page; he had bribed no Abigail, or trusty steward, to cram it through a key-hole, or deliver it at mid-night. He had read of such things in many romances; but he admired neither the principle nor the practice. He therefore enclosed it to the Father, put "Free, M. P." at the bottom of his direction, and dispatched it boldly by the post.

CHAP. III.

Such is the weaknesse of all mortall hope ;
 So fickle is the state of earthly things,
 That ere they come into their aimed seope
 They fall so short of our frail reckonings,
 And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings
 Instead of comfort which we should embrace.
 This is the state of Cæsars and of kings,
 Let none therefore that is in meaner place
 Too greatly grieve at his unlucky case.

SPENSER.

HENRY had now nothing to do but dwell on the past, and live in daily hopes of a reply. He was accordingly visited every day with a great accession of restless anxiety about the arrival of the post, which was even perceptible to the eyes of the General. At length his happiness and anxiety were at their height, at the sight of a letter to himself, franked by Sir. T. Jermyn.

“From Brackingsley, eh?” said the General, who saw it. “Come, don’t march off with it—

open it here, can't you, and let us know how they are, and all about them."

His nephew reluctantly obeyed.—“ Well, and which of them is it from? And what does it say?”

Henry, who had by this time opened his letter, stood aghast.

“ Hey! why! what now?” said the General. “ God bless my soul—I hope—No, it is a red seal—nothing of that sort, thank Heaven. But speak, can't you? What are you alarmed about?”

“ It is inconceivable,” said Henry, “ I cannot understand it.”

“ I am sure *I* cannot,” said the General.

“ There, there, Sir,” said he, handing the letter to his uncle. “ Look—read—that she should—oh! I can hardly believe it—but it is too true.”

“ Why! what is all this? I am more puzzled than ever. Here is a letter *from* you, and not *to* you.”

“ Yes, my own letter returned—without a

line—without one word of explanation—yes,” said he, snatching up and examining the envelope, “actually without one word.”

“Oh, oh! stay—I begin to understand. ‘Dear cousin,’ humph! to Caroline, I see: ‘regret,’—um (muttering the contents half aloud)—‘agreeable circle,’—um, um—‘many happy days,’—um—‘near relations,’—um, um—‘seeing you again,’—um, um—‘absence,’—um—‘our last conversation,’—um—‘best wishes always attend,’—um, um, um—eh! why, Harry, I’m still in the dark—I don’t understand why she should send this letter back again.”

“Nor I,” said the other, faintly.

“It seems to me,” said the General, “to be a very correct, fair-spoken letter, with no offence in it, that I can make out.”

“Whatever it may contain, Sir, I am sure I cannot conceive why it should be visited so heavily.”

“Nor I, Harry—nor I, for the life of me. But, my good fellow, you have been very close

and secret in your proceedings. Why did you not tell me you were going to write? How did you know that I had not some message to send to Brackingsley?"

"I wish I had told you, with all my heart; indeed I bitterly regret that I wrote at all."

"Why, as it turns out, it seems that you had better have let it alone. But what puzzles me is, why they should send your letter back. Hey! no, by George! but I think I understand them—ay, and so it is, as sure as fate. I see what they have got in their heads; and a strange idea it is too. They think you want to make up to Caroline. What whims good people have sometimes! I can tell you this, Harry, for your comfort, that I think they have used you very ill."

"I certainly feel myself rather ill-used," said Henry; "but if they acted from the persuasion which you mention, I cannot conscientiously say that they were altogether mistaken."

“What, then you had some thoughts of putting the question?” said the General.

“I am obliged to confess, Sir, that I had my hopes, my wishes, on that subject.”

“Well said, my boy,” replied his uncle, “a very proper notion of yours; and hang me if I see the harm of it.”

“But surely, Sir, with my limited means, it would be the height of presumption to——”

“Presumption! stuff! don’t talk to me of it. I tell you again, you have been very ill used. I know well enough what presumption is, and I say you are a very good match for the girl.”

“My dear Sir!”

“Why, you are not such a blockhead as to wish to contradict me! I say you are; and I ought to know. As for money, I have not much, God knows, to leave you; but if Sir Thomas knew all—pshaw—(as if suddenly checking himself)—I can tell Sir Thomas, I say, that the nephew of a very old friend, like me, is not to be treated in this sort of manner.

Push the ink-stand nearer this way—I'll tell him my mind, I promise him."

"I hope you are not going to write," said his nephew, whose sense of his wrongs began to cool in proportion to the rising warmth of the General; "I had rather you would let the subject rest. Pray do not write to Sir Thomas Jermyn."

"Not write to him!—Why not, I should be glad to know? I knew him before you were born, and the devil's in it if I am not to write a letter to him."

So saying, he seized pen and paper which lay before him, and wrote as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR THOMAS.—A circumstance has just occurred, which appears to me to want a little explanation; and as we are very old acquaintance, and have never stood much upon ceremony, there can be as little objection to my asking it, as to your giving it. You know the whole of the case beyond a doubt, but

it will be more satisfactory to state it again. The long and the short of it seems to be this. My nephew writes to your daughter a very sensible inoffensive letter, with no harm in it that I can see ; and in a few days it is sent back without a single word to tell him why. Now you know very well, that among gentlemen, to send back a man's letter, is almost equivalent to knocking him down ; and as nobody would think of sitting down tamely under such an affront, so, I think it proper on my nephew's account, more particularly as you are an old acquaintance, to desire an explanation of this affair. These are all the observations I shall make for the present. I have no doubt but that we perfectly understand each other ; and least said is soonest mended. Trusting that everything will be easily and speedily accounted for, and with best regards to Lady Jermyn and Caroline,

I remain,

Ever yours, faithfully,

JOHN JAMES GRANBY."

The reader, in perusing this document, enjoys a privilege which Henry did not. As the General was folding it up, his nephew entreated, on the plea of his interest in the subject, to be allowed to see what it contained, but was repulsed with a look of good-humoured positiveness. “No, no, my boy, for once I’ll be even with you; you never told me of your letter, and by George you shall not see mine:” so saying, the General precluded all further expostulation, by immediately sealing the letter.

It was sent, and the subject dropped for several hours; but the General was too much pleased with his letter, to abstain from resuming it: “I wish you had seen my letter, Harry, after all—I think you would have approved of what I said—it was strongly put—I should like to be by when my old friend receives it—by George it will make him look blue. But so much the better—it will do him good. What could he be thinking of, to use you

so? If he did not approve of your writing to Caroline, he ought to have told you so before."

"I thought I had told you, Sir—though I am not certain—that neither he nor Lady Jermyyn knew that I meant to write."

"The devil they did'nt!—That alters the question;—why, my good fellow, I never knew that."

"Did'nt you, indeed, Sir? I am sorry to hear it. Then since you wrote to Sir Thomas under a false impression, may not your letter have been expressed a little too warmly, and would it not be advisable to repair it by a second? You know, you told me yourself, just this minute, that some parts of it were strongly put."

"Not a bit too strongly; you need not alarm yourself; there was no warmth in it; all steady cool reasoning. I wish I had shown it you nevertheless. Lord bless you, we are too old friends to fall out; we understand one another perfectly."

Three days did the General repose on this comfortable persuasion, and on the fourth received the following communication from his very old friend.

“ Sir T. Jermyn acknowledges the receipt of General Granby’s note of the 14th inst. and takes the liberty of saying in reply, that in the first place he does not consider himself called upon by the features of the case, and the situation of the parties, to offer any explanation of his own conduct in the affair in question. He perfectly agrees with General Granby in thinking, that to give such an explanation, is just as little objectionable, as it is to ask it; but that objection, *little* as it may appear in certain quarters, is sufficient to induce him to offer a decided negative to such a step. Convinced that their present mutual understanding will not be improved by an extended communication, and concurring with General Granby in his opinion, that what is most briefly expressed

is most speedily rectified, he begs leave to decline any further discussion of the existing circumstances of the case at issue. He cannot, however, conclude without an unqualified expression of his astonishment, that the matured judgment of General Granby should have lent itself to the sanction of so dangerous, so unadvised, and so unprecedented a measure."

"I hope the answer is not unfavourable," said Henry, who gathered very scanty materials for hope from his uncle's countenance. "Can you tell me the substance of what he says?"

"No, hang me if I can, and I don't believe he could himself. An old puppy! he ought to know better. My "note"—"features of the case"—Then the whole style of the thing! General Granby-ing me all the way through. There! look at it.—There's a pretty, formal, flourishing, prig of a letter for you! taken word for word, I verily believe, out of the "Complete Letter Writer," or some confounded book or other. By George, I think the fellow's crazy—to

write in that manner to a man he has known these thirty years! I give him up; I've done with him; but I've a very good mind to give him a brush at parting, too."

"I hope, Sir, you are not going to write again," said the nephew, returning the letter to his uncle; "there does not seem to be anything in this letter that you can easily take notice of."

"Do you think so?" said the General. "Well, I won't write to him. I believe, after all, nothing is so good as silent contempt.—No! I know what I'll do," (and his eye twinkled as if he had seized a bright idea,) "light me the taper—I am not going to write to him—you need not be alarmed—come! light me the taper—I'll pay him off in his own coin—by George I will. I'll send him his own choice letter back again;" and chuckling at the thought, he took the lighted taper from his nephew's hand, and Sir T. Jermyn's note was enclosed, sealed, and directed, in an instant.

It is not to be expected, after this, that any

farther communication, at least, by letter, should take place between the parties. The General, by the hasty measure which seemed to him so able a dispensation of retributive justice, had entirely precluded any renewal on his own part, that did not partake of the nature of an apology; and it was far from probable that Sir T. Jermyn, whose brief and frosty address seemed expressly calculated to check all future correspondence, should a second time incur the risk of a similar indignity.

With the General, when the fever of resentment, and the elation of successful warfare had a little subsided, the estrangement of an old friend began to press heavily. But by Henry it was still more severely felt. He could not but reproach himself with being the original author of all the misunderstanding which had taken place. He was separated, and he thought, in his despair, irrevocably separated, not only from a family with whom he had long lived in habits of friendly communion, but from a being

whose perfections seemed to expand before his eyes, through the mists of absence and distance, and to whom he scarcely knew the intensity of his attachment, till it was put thus cruelly to the test. And to add to his affliction, while thus sadly certain of his own feelings, he was left in melancholy doubt as to the nature of Caroline's. He knew not with what sentiments she had received his letter, nor how she had concurred in its dismissal. There was ample material for the most gloomy conjecture, and no favourable points in the recent occurrence whereon to ground a cheerful presage. Immediate circumstances wore an untoward and menacing aspect, and when he looked far back for consolation, he could only find his hopes upon slender equivocal symptoms of a growing partiality.

CHAP. IV.

This let me hope, that when in public view
 I bring my pictures, men may feel them true;
 ' This is a likeness,' may they all declare,
 ' And I have seen him, but I know not where ;'
 For I should mourn the mischief I had done
 If as the likeness all should fix on one.

CRABBE.

CAROLINE JERMYN was worthy of all the love and admiration which she had inspired in our hero. Without possessing that faultless regularity of feature, the very blamelessness of which is sometimes insipid, she united the charm of interesting expression, to a face and figure which were sufficiently good to obtain an approval from the most fastidious eye. There was a sunny brightness in her smile, the charm of which could not be overlooked; and her cheerful and even spirits, and playful vivacity, were rendered still more attractive by her unvarying sweetness of

temper. She also possessed considerable quickness of perception, mixed with a candour and good-nature, which made her ever ready to excuse those follies which she was so prompt in discovering. She was young, and had hitherto seen little of the world; and society on an extended scale was still almost new to her; but she brought with her an innate tact, the united result of good sense and good taste and powers of pleasing, of which she was always less aware than those who were in her company. She had a good deal of diffidence, and a sensitive delicacy of feeling, which gave to her manner an occasional shade of reserve; but it was reserve without coldness, and which did not even injure the artless sincerity of her address; it was a reserve which scarcely any who witnessed it could wish to see removed,—so well did it accord with the graceful softness of her character. She was totally free from affectation, and had a shrinking dread of display, which gave an in-

trinsic value to those captivating qualities which she unconsciously exhibited.

Caroline Jermyn felt a sincere and strong attachment to Henry Granby, whom she had now known for several years. She could remember to have liked him from the first period of their acquaintance; and that sentiment, which began in girlish admiration, ripened with her years into actual love. She, indeed, would not have given it that name; but how could one interpret otherwise her eagerness to insure his good opinion; her eye that watched his looks so timidly, yet anxiously; her abstracted air when he was absent; her brightening countenance when he approached? She felt that she had derived, not only pleasure, but advantage, from his society. His correct taste had enabled him to enter judiciously into her pursuits; it was his pencil that first called forth the powers of her's; his love of music that chiefly urged her to excel. Her literary taste had also been in a great degree

guided and encouraged by his ; and her talents, which amply repaid their cultivation, had not been suffered to lie waste. She was generally ; but not pedantically accomplished ; and without being profoundly or scientifically learned, was well informed on most topics of elegant and useful knowledge, and such as give a value and a grace to the intercourse of polished society.

Lady Jermyn, her mother, was one of those common, unmarked characters, which like many simple words in every day use, are by far the most difficult to define. Her parents moved in the sphere of humble gentility. When young she was a beauty, and in marrying Sir Thomas Jermyn, made what her friends called an excellent match ; while *his* friends reproached him behind his back, with having been caught by a pretty face. She was a person who had few tangible points in her character, and who had the good fortune never to be alluded to, by those who knew her, with any strong expression either of admiration or dislike.

She punctually fulfilled all the ostensible duties of her situation; was externally religious, and even charitable; and viewed with a pleasure which no one, I trust, would be so ungenerous as to envy, a long procession of charity-school children, neatly dressed in uniform attire, *nearly* the colour of the Jermyn livery,—the modest badge of her humble benevolence. She was not well read or highly accomplished, but she had plain, clear, mother wit, and a ready, though not finished address. Like most underbred persons who have risen in life, she had a considerable mania for fine people; a mania which was often too broadly displayed: but “take her for all in all,” she was well calculated to go through the world with great respectability; for, as was happily observed by an elderly gentleman, in the next town, far gone in long whist and snuff-taking, “she was a clever body at a pinch, and always played her cards well.”—Moreover, the Marchioness of D—, one of the *magnates* of her county, called her “a nice

obliging little woman ;” the apothecary’s wife said she was “vastly civil, but rather *igh* ;” the clergyman of the parish always allowed her to be “a very correct person ;” and the attorney has been known to observe with a wink, that “she always minded her P’s and her Q’s.”

It is now fit that our readers should be introduced to Sir Thomas Jermyn, member for the borough of Rottentown, and one of his majesty’s justices of the peace for the county of — . We mention these offices, both because they are essential features in his character, and because he himself would be the last person to pardon our omission of them ; and to the discharge of the duties of which, he brought as small a share of talent as was competent to fulfil them, added to as much zeal as could influence the most efficient. It was his chief ambition to be considered an able active man of business. Able he could not be, but activity was not only within his power, but seemed even necessary to his existence. He was a man of weak talents, but

great vanity; fond of petty dictation and trifling interference; loving business for the importance which it seemed to communicate, and the temporary good which it afforded to a restless twaddling dread of the tedium of a leisure hour. He liked to exert his influence even over a parish officer, and to deal out admonition, if it was but to a vagrant. He was a stirring man in a grand jury room, and always carried things with a high hand at a turnpike meeting. He was the hero of the overseer of the poor of his parish, and the constables of the district swore by him. But these humble honours had latterly been superseded by others of a higher nature, for he was now in Parliament; a situation which had for some time been the object of his ambition.

He had long cast a wishful eye towards the representation of his own county; but that was already too well represented to admit of an attack, and the health of the members was as flourishing as their popularity. Therefore, after pensively ruminating for some

time on this melancholy exception to the usual instability of human affairs, he began to consider that a snug little borough might answer his purpose; and accordingly, he was soon established at a moderate expence, in the representation of the ancient borough of Rottentown, where, instead of clamorous thousands, his constituents amounted to "sweet fifteen, *not* one *vote* more."

Rottentown was a government borough, and, *therefore*, his politics were ministerial. In fact, his politics had long wavered; and though he thought it vastly more spirited to dissent, and nothing easier than the art of railing, yet, as most of his connections were on the ministerial side, and a comfortable borough was opportunely offered him from that quarter, saddled only with the obligation of uniformly voting for measures of which, after all, he could not see the great atrocity—under these circumstances he thought it as advisable as it was *easy*, to range himself under the banners of the

administration. But though bound hand and foot by his political patrons, he still struggled for independence. The reality he disregarded, but he liked the name, and in order to obtain it, adopted a plan of proceeding, which many cleverer men might, in all probability, never have thought of. His vote was the minister's, but his voice was his own. It was his practice, therefore, after supporting Government over night, to balance the account by sporting what are commonly called *liberal* sentiments the next morning. Some short-sighted persons may think this inconsistent, or even dishonest; but in the Baronet's opinion it was a line of conduct which happily blended the policy of a Machiavel with the integrity of a Cato.

So much for the politics of Sir Thomas Jermy. His religion was of a kind well calculated for worldly wear. Like the best coat of a London shopman, it made its appearance only on a Sunday, and was carefully laid by on the intervening week days. He was loyally orthodox;

—could utter many undeniable truisms about “Church and King”—and drank that toast even in tavern port, with seeming satisfaction. He thought religion was a good thing, and ought to be kept up, and that, like cheap soup, it was “excellent for the poor.” He saw it made them orderly and respectful, punctual as tenants, and industrious as workmen. What it did for their betters he could not tell; but if it made his tenants pull off their hats and pay their rents, it was at any rate worth encouraging in *them*. But let it not be supposed that he was lax or careless. He had his scruples upon many points of church discipline. He objected to lay impropriations,—being a titheholder; thought that clergymen should never shoot,—for he had a choice pheasant-cover near his rector’s glebe; and was morally convinced that they ought not to be on the commission of the peace,—for, of two neighbouring clerical justices, the one had often presumed to differ in opinion

from him, and the other had three times refused to convict his poachers.

In his relations of neighbour, landlord, master, husband, and father, he might also be viewed with considerable advantage. As a neighbour he shone. Nobody gave more or better dinners; and he uniformly included every one to whom it was worth his while to be civil.—As a landlord he had his bright points. He gave kind words and as much as they could eat, to all who came full-handed on his rent-day, and never distrained where there was very little stock. As a father, he was fond and indulgent, but had never bestowed on his child the slightest portion of attention or instruction. This, however, arose not so much from indifference, as because he thought the tuition of a girl quite out of his line. Had she been a boy, he would have questioned her in the Latin Grammar, and looked over the school accounts, and corrected the holiday task, (if he could) with a great deal of pleasure; but he was

no modern linguist, nor had much taste for female accomplishments. In short, as long as she smiled and looked pretty, and was well dressed, he took it for granted that all went on well, and gave himself very little trouble about her. He was an easy master to the few old servants who "knew his way;" and a dexterous old Swiss boasted, with truth, that he could manage him completely. This was a power which Lady Jermyn also possessed in a very laudable degree, and which she exercised in a manner which did much credit to her skill. Like a good wife, she had made it her pride to understand her husband thoroughly. She knew all his weak points; and this, considering their number, was no small praise. But she made no silly display of her authority, and generally managed him without his knowing it. She seems to have had in view the advice of Pope, who commends a wife,

"Who never answers till her husband cools,
"And if she rules him, never shows she rules."

But this, as she had never read Pope, only proves that “great wits jump.”

Thanks to her good management, Sir Thomas and his lady went on as well together as any pair could naturally be expected to do, whose love did not long outlive the honey-moon.

Connected with his daughter, Sir Thomas had one subject of deep concern. She was his only child, and yet she could not inherit his fortune. In default of male issue, the Brackingsley estate, which formed almost the whole of his property, would go, on his death, to a distant relation. This circumstance was known only to Sir Thomas, Lady Jermyn, Caroline, the heir-at-law, and a trusty attorney, and was kept by the Baronet religiously secret,—a secrecy which was facilitated by the heir-at-law, who lived in a retired and distant part of the kingdom, being a humourist and a recluse, and by no means likely to communicate the fact. The attorney had solid reasons for silence; and as no one ever thought of questioning the truth of so

apparently self-evident a proposition, as that the daughter of Sir Thomas Jermyn should succeed to his estate, Caroline, as her parents desired, was universally looked upon as a very great heiress. She herself had not till lately been apprised of the truth. Her parents had long been of opinion that she had much better be kept in ignorance; but at length Lady Jermyn, in a lecture upon imprudent alliances, in order to impress upon her daughter's mind that she could not afford to marry as she pleased, let out the direful secret. This she did, as Sir Thomas said, "with the best intentions in the world, no doubt, but rather unnecessarily, nevertheless;" and sundry discussions took place in consequence. The information, however, came coupled with an injunction, which was repeated with double force by Sir Thomas, that on no account should she ever reveal it, until she came to be married, or had received permission to do so from them. She felt with pain that

there was a dishonesty in this silence, but she could not remonstrate, and ventured not to disobey.

With the ambitious and mercenary feelings which prompted Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn to such a line of conduct, we cannot be surprised at that change of manner which struck such a chill to the heart of Henry Granby. It is indeed rather a matter for surprise that this change should have come so late, and that they should have been so long insensible to the natural consequence of the association which they permitted. It is, however, attributable to that infatuation with which people sometimes rest satisfied, that events which they have long predetermined to be inadmissible, can never presume to take place. They, however, flattered themselves that they had not been too tardy in crushing the growing evil, and, well pleased with the steps which they had latterly taken, were reposing in placid satisfaction upon

the success of their manœuvres, when the dream of security was unpleasantly dissolved by Henry Granby's letter to Caroline.

The letter was received by Sir Thomas, in the presence of Lady Jermyn only; and, after opening the envelope, and observing that it was from Ashton, he gave the enclosure to the latter to deliver to her daughter. But Lady Jermyn, who knew the hand, immediately opened it; and although in some degree re-assured by the inoffensive nature of its contents, she found cause for considerable anxiety, on a patient re-perusal. It was, she thought, a very dangerous kind of letter, and exactly of that sort which would be most fatal to her plans. It was its very faultlessness she dreaded. Beyond the mere fact of writing, there was nothing reprehensible; not a word, not a sentiment, to which blame could be attached, and to which she could reply in terms of censure. Then, if delivered to Caroline, it could not fail to make an impression favourable to the writer; and this

could never be allowed. How to reply to it she knew not, whether she did it in her own name or Caroline's. A reply would certainly bring on a remonstrance; and thus she should be involved in an epistolatory conference, of which she clearly foresaw the difficulty and danger. No:—silence was at once both easiest and safest; and after a conversation on the subject with her husband, who entered fully into all her ideas, she re-enclosed to its author this luckless epistle, and told Caroline that Mr. Granby (she used to call him Henry) had sent her so very improper a letter, that she did not chuse to let her see it, but had immediately sent it back, that being the only treatment of which she considered it deserving.

Caroline was much hurt at this intelligence, —more indeed than she was willing to show. She found much difficulty in imagining Henry really guilty of any great impropriety, and yet she knew not how to believe him innocent. Lady Jermyn had stopped her enquiries, by

severely commenting on the indelicacy of seeking too minute an explanation ; and this rebuke, coupled with her mysterious nod, her grave and studied censure of Henry's conduct, and the tone of her intimation, in which more seemed meant than met the ear, all this conveyed to the unsophisticated mind of Caroline an almost awful impression of some dire and indefinable delinquency. Lady Jermyn also signified, but more by manner than by words, that the suppression of the letter, and her refusal to explain, were acts of tenderness towards the culprit.

But while Caroline was lamenting Granby's unworthiness, and deeply pondering upon the slight and unsatisfactory hints, which were all she was allowed to receive, Sir Thomas and his lady were beginning to subside into comfortable forgetfulness of this aggravated case, when they were roused afresh by the expostulation of General Granby. This both increased their irritation, and seemed to throw fresh light upon the subject. They now began to view the

whole as a concerted scheme between the uncle and the nephew ; and although the idea of the union of Henry and Caroline had never entered the mind of the former until the receipt of Sir Thomas's letter, they were soon able to enumerate many circumstances in his previous conduct, plainly indicative of such a design.

Such treacherous behaviour was, in their opinion, deserving of severe rebuke, and entirely cancelled all the obligations of former friendship. The Baronet, therefore, sat down, full of his wrongs, to the business of reply ; and being fresh from the perusal of a parliamentary protest of the Upper House, which he justly regarded as an able specimen of the *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, he endeavoured to embody, in his brief remonstrance, the circumlocutory graces of the great original.

We have already witnessed the feelings which this letter excited, and the fate which it received. The rage of the Baronet on receiving it again, could be equalled only by his

surprise ; and he solemnly vowed that he would renounce all connection with a family, whom his interest prompted him to neglect, and who had laboured to accelerate a formal rupture, by so gross a complication of studied insults: and thus ended all communication between the houses of Brackingsley and Ashton.

CHAP. V.

How convenient it proves to be a rational animal, who knows how to find or invent a plausible pretext for whatever it has an inclination to do!—FRANKLIN.

ABOUT a month after the disastrous close of the correspondence just alluded to, Lady Jermyn's eye, in glancing over the fashionable movements in the Morning Post, rested upon a paragraph copied from a provincial paper, announcing that on such a day, "the Duke and Duchess of Ilminster and suite passed through the town of —— on a visit to Viscount Daventry, at his superb seat, Hemingsworth Castle, in the county of ——." Lord Daventry had married the only sister of Sir T. Jermyn, and lived at a

distance which prevented any considerable frequency of intercourse. The Daventrys, it is true, might perhaps be suspected (from their superior rank, great fortune, and acknowledged station in the fashionable world,) of looking a little *de haut en bas* upon their relations at Brackingsley ; but they always maintained a very decent degree of cordiality and attention, said and wrote “ an elegant sufficiency” of civil things, and appeared glad to see them whenever they met. Their intercourse, however, had at this time suffered a long interruption, and it struck Lady Jermyn, that the approaching visit of the Ducal party would afford a desirable opportunity of renewing it. She therefore opened the subject next morning at breakfast.

“ I have been thinking for some time, Sir Thomas, that we have been using the Daventrys rather ill, and you cannot think how it lies upon my mind.”

“ Using them ill ! how so ?” said the Baro-

net, raising his head from a cup of green tea, and the Report of the Game Committee.

“ Why, you know how kind they have always been, and how fond they are of having us with them, and how long it is since they have been with us.”

“ Yes—I know it is a long time; but whose fault was that? I’m sure we have asked them often enough.”

“ True, true, Sir Thomas, so we have. Circumstances, you know, always prevented them. But what I was going to say was this—I really think we have not behaved quite well to them. Your sister Daventry, when we saw them at Leamington, said a great deal—a great deal indeed, about our meeting so seldom; and she seemed to allude to it again in her note, when she sent us those seeds and cuttings for the green-house; and you know, Sir Thomas, you have had two letters from Lord Daventry, written expressly to ask you there.”

“ No, no, my dear ; not written expressly ; no such thing. One was about an under game-keeper, and the other was full of the Compton-heath Inclosure Bill. He said something, to be sure, in each of them, about seeing us at Hemingsworth ; but he did not fix any day. They were mere general invitations.”

“ Certainly, certainly, there were other subjects in both letters. You know, you gentlemen seldom write except upon business. But you are aware, yourself, that he has invited us twice ; and after that, I really think it is now our turn to show some attention, and that we cannot do less than offer to go to them.”

“ Go to them ! oh ! that is the attention you mean ! Why I thought, Lady Jermyn, you were going to propose that we should ask them to come to us.”

“ I should be truly happy, I'm sure, to see them here, as I always am, and ever have been ; but you know, Sir Thomas, at this time of the year, they are constantly engaged with company

at home ; therefore, much as we may desire it, our seeing them here is out of the question. Besides, I think it would be quite unpardonable to take no notice of their invitation, after all that your sister has said, and Lord Daventry having written twice on the subject."

" I don't know what my sister may have said, but as for Daventry's two letters, they were nothing, as I told you, but general invitations ; and I always have said, and always shall say, that general invitations stand for nothing."

" Now, really, Sir Thomas, I cannot agree with you. I know it is the fashion to abuse general invitations, but for my part, I always stand up for them. To be sure, they are often used to indifferent people that one does'nt care about, because, perhaps, one must ask them, and cannot exactly at the moment fix any time ; but, surely, when friends and relations invite one in that way, they mean, that one shall at all times be equally welcome."

" Equally welcome !—aye, very likely—that

is to say, just as little at one time as another. No, no, my dear, I am no friend to general invitations. I have always said, and I always shall say, that a person who asks you to come 'at any time,' - had much rather you never came at all."

"Oh, Sir Thomas! you must not say that, because you are doing yourself a great injustice. You know, you often do that very thing to many excellent people, that I am sure we have a great regard for. There are the Joneses, and the Gibbises, and the Robinses, and the Barkers: you never meet them but you make a speech about seeing them, and yet we never have them but once in two years."

"Why, between ourselves, my dear," said the baronet, in a confidential tone, "towards a certain class of people that one must be civil to, a little management of this sort is very useful; and you may depend upon it, that Daventry pays off his scores in that coin as well as ourselves."

“ I have not the least doubt of it—to certain people—but I cannot suppose that he does to us. Really, Sir Thomas we ought to go, if it is only to show that we do not place ourselves in that class. Your dear sister would feel it very much ; and I am sure, Sir Thomas, that you, who are so generally civil to everybody, would never be guilty of an act of rudeness to your own near relations.”

“ Oh, I have no objection to go to them ; only, I have a great deal of business of one sort or other ; and I think I am rather wanted here at present.”

“ Ah, Sir Thomas !—as for that, you know you are always wanted in this neighbourhood. We could never leave home if that were an excuse. But they ought to be taught to do without you. A man in your situation is not to be made a drudge. He ought to take an opportunity of showing his independence.”

“ Yes, yes—no doubt—no doubt—well, do as you please—I say again, I have no objection to go to Hemingsworth.”

“ Very well. I could do nothing, you know, without your concurrence; but since you agree to go, I'll write directly to your sister Daventry, and tell her we'll come to them, if they can receive us, on Monday next. There will be ample time for an answer.”

A polite and carefully worded note was quickly dispatched to Lord Daventry, and received, as soon as the distance would permit, a very civil and favourable reply.

CHAP. VI.

This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air,
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.—MACBETH.

MONDAY came: it was a bright, clear, cheerful, frosty day—one of those which breathe peculiar exhilaration, and in which the smiling aspect of winter, like the ingratiating vivacity of green old age, charms the more because the less expected. The sun shone brightly through the thin silvery haze, and was gaily reflected by small twinkling drops upon every bough, and the dazzling rime upon the grass below. The stillness of the air allowed the ear to catch, with more than usual ease, an enlivening medley of familiar sounds, denoting life, gaiety, and

bustle; the rattle of the distant coach, the strong clear whistle of the light-hearted labourer, the busy hum of the neighbouring village, the distant clamour of foraging rooks, and, nearer at hand, the merry chattering of the redwing, and the brisk chirp of the plump-looking little birds which frisked about, apparently larger and gayer than ever.

On such a morning, when there was just a sufficient accession of cold to awaken "the fair" to a becoming sense of the soft comforts of swansdown and chinchilla, and the "lords of the creation" to the substantial merits of double-milled drab and lined beaver, did Sir Thomas Jermyn, his lady, and their daughter, step into their carriage, and depart for Hemingsworth. It is not to be expected, in this age of M'Adamized roads, patent axles, anti-attribution, and all the other luxurious aids of speedy conveyance, that a forty miles journey in one of Leader's best carriages, drawn by four good horses, should

afford many interesting casualties to embellish the narration. On the contrary, not a linchpin presumed to quit its post; and they rolled smoothly along, till, as the shades of night drew near, or, to speak in loftier and more befitting language, "when the declining orb of day had tinged with his expiring beams the waxing glories of the western hemisphere," our party entered the park at Hemingsworth.

This was a level and rather uninteresting tract of ground, fringed with a thin belt of spiry poplars, and many a kidney-formed clump of spruce looking trees, which had been browzed into more than their natural formality. Here and there, thinly scattered, was a solitary giant of the woods, which seemed to frown with disdain upon these congregated upstarts, and which showed by its growth the antiquity of the demesne, and by its solitary situation the subsequent ravages of the destroying axe. It seemed as if an unfortunate effort had

been lately made, to clothe afresh a half denuded place, which was now almost in the situation of a person who should put on a modern-made coat over the trunk hose and long-lapped waistcoat of his great grandfather.

A neat, well-kept road, which wriggled unmeaningly across a flat, conducted them to the mansion, which, from the humility of its situation, might with most propriety have exhibited the Palladian, Old English, or Abbey-Gothic styles of architecture, but which the taste of the noble owner had lately destined to assume the martial air of a baronial castle. It had frowning battlements, and well buttressed walls, with small arched windows, and round towers of a most imposing air of strength, pierced here and there with those narrow slits, from which the archer of other days could "shoot his bolt" securely. What with bringing the offices into play, and here and there a supplementary dead wall, the castle exhibited a very formidable extent. The owner had also laboured

to blend his outward bravery with inward convenience, and to cloak the most peaceful purposes under the most menacing exterior. The white cotton cap of his French cook, seen between the broad stanchions of a deep gothic window, betrayed that one massy wing contained a kitchen. The larder was a feudal guard-room; the dairy was a "donjon keep;" and a draw-bridge conducted to the coal-hole.

But while we are describing the appearance of the place, we are keeping the newly arrived guests waiting at the door, for what both themselves and the noble owners of the mansion would certainly have thought an unconscionable time. They were ushered through a spacious hall, and several rooms, of which the united effects of twilight and firelight only sufficed to inform them of the size; and they saw, in their short and rapid progress, few objects to arrest their attention. In one room were two young men in shooting jackets, playing or pretending to play at billiards; and in another, a person,

they believed of the male sex, sitting by the fire, dressed in something red, most probably a hunting coat, apparently asleep in a deep arm-chair. They passed on—another door was opened—their names were announced—and they found winding towards them, through a mighty maze of tables, chairs, and ottomans, Lady Daventry and her eldest daughter; and several minutes were quickly passed in the cordial interchange of customary civilities.

Lady Daventry was as glad to see them as she seemed to be; for she was a remarkably good-natured woman, and was really fond both of her brother and her niece, and had no dislike to Lady Jermyn, whose worldly sense she respected, and for whose little occasional want of refinement she was always ready to make more than requisite allowances, upon the consideration that, “poor thing, she had few advantages in early life.” Lady Daventry was not clever, but pleasing and amiable; and she was single-

hearted and guileless to a degree which Lady Jermyn thought quite incompatible with the worldly avocations of her station, and her long and high standing in fashionable circles.

Lord Daventry presently entered, and drew off Sir Thomas Jermyn to another room, to show him, as well as the light would permit, a projected alteration from an adjoining window, and left the ladies to themselves. They talked long; and Lady Daventry at length began to speak of their present and expected guests. "I am glad you happened to come to us now, for we have got the Duke and Duchess of Ilminster with us, and their daughter—the unmarried one—delightful people—you are sure to like them. They have made a long stay with us. Most of the party are gone that we asked here to meet them, but there are more arriving to-morrow. Lord Chesterton, and Mr. Duncan and Lady Harriet—Oh! and who do you think we have here now? Mr. Trebeck—the Tre-

beck—you know whom I mean—we take his visit as a great compliment,” said she, laughing. “But it is really very fortunate, for we were disappointed in Lord and Lady Tenby, who were to have come to meet the Duke and Duchess; and Mr. Trebeck is the person of all others, for he is particularly intimate—quite in their set. Perhaps you don’t know him, but of course you have heard him spoken of;—very fine, and every thing of that sort; but pleasant, remarkably pleasant where he is known. But I must not keep you here,” said she, warned of the time by seeing a servant enter to light the lamps; and they accordingly betook themselves to the pleasing labour of adornment.

When Caroline found herself alone with her mother, she could not forbear a question among others, concerning the Mr. Trebeck whom she had just heard spoken of.

“I do not know much about him, my dear,” said her mother, “any farther than this, that he is what they call very fine.”

“ Yes, mamma, so my aunt said ; but in what way ‘ fine ?’ ”

“ Oh, gives himself airs, and is very conceited, and a great dandy, and every thing of that sort.”

Caroline thought she comprehended ; and was satisfied and silent, and repaired to her apartment, where she occupied her mind as much as the important business of the toilette would permit, in forming abstract ideas of a duke and duchess, and in endeavouring to divine what manner of man *the* Trebeck could possibly be.

On descending to the drawing-room with Lady Jermyn, after having undergone the maternal scrutiny, and been complacently pronounced “ a presentable figure,” she found most of the party assembled, and among them the Duke and Duchess, and their daughter Lady Elizabeth Bellasys, to all of whom the Brackingsley party were severally and summarily introduced.

The Duke was a fat, jovial, good-humoured looking man, with a twinkling eye, and a chuck-

ling laugh at his friend's remarks, which it did one's heart good to hear.—The Duchess seemed a quiet, common-place woman, of gentle manners, with a countenance guiltless of much meaning, and in fact with no very distinguishing character about her. She fluently uttered some good-humoured every day civilities,—praising, among other things, the beauties of Brackingsley, for which it turned out that she had mistaken another place, and enquiring after a supposed near neighbour, whom Lady Jermyn had never seen.—Her daughter was an old young lady, whose celibacy might be considered as fixed. She was rather plain, but had a countenance that possessed all the intelligence which her mother's wanted ; a keen quick eye, and a sarcastic turn of the mouth, which gave rather an ill-natured and unprepossessing expression to her face. Caroline was introduced to her by Lady Daventry, and received with a rapid, careless, but acute scrutiny, and an air, which though devoid

of formality, was felt by the former to be chilling and repulsive.

There were no other ladies except the Misses Clifton. The rest of the gentlemen consisted of Mr. Clifton, and a sporting friend, Mr. William Charlecote; a tall, upright, smirking man in black, whose name was Bennett, and who was in orders, and had newly entered into the situation of domestic tutor to the younger Cliftons; Mr. Rigby, a factotum of the Duke's,—a bluff, coarse, square-built person, with a steady step, and an ease of manner, which, though not obtrusive, was still not gentlemanly; and though last not least, the Hon. Mr. Tarleton, an effeminate looking young man, more particularly distinguished by a very “recherché” attire, a profusion of chain work, several rings, a well curled head, and a highly scented handkerchief. His talk was as pretty as his appearance, and his acquirements corresponded. He had a correct taste in *bijouterie* and dress, took in the Journal

des Modes, could tell Lyons silk from English by the feel, and was not to be deceived (it was said) by paste diamonds at any distance. He was also well versed in foreign affairs—could always tell the private history of the new “prima donna,” and knew long before any body else, from unquestionable authority, (and he would whisper it mysteriously), that the French government would not suffer the expected “premier danseur” to come to England.

The short time which precedes an English dinner party is universally stigmatised as the dullest period which is passed in society; and far be it from us rashly to endeavour to rescue from disgrace what the sentence of the world so universally condemns. If it is libelled, it must look for other advocates, for we are bound to declare that the present party did not rescue it from the usual imputations. The ladies were talking of their morning’s walk and drive; the gentlemen recounting the successes of their “battue.” Sir Thomas Jermyn had already fastened upon the

Duke, and was endeavouring to impress upon his mind the overwhelming weight of business which was the unavoidable lot of every member of the lower house, and was enumerating upon his fingers the committees he had been upon during the two last sessions,—when, to the relief of his Grace, the dinner was announced.

CHAP. VII.

"Sir, your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impudence, and strange without heresy."—*LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.*

CAROLINE, on being seated, found at her side a vacant chair, between herself and the Duchess, which as her eye glanced round the table, she felt convinced was to be occupied by Mr. Trebeck. That gentleman, however, did not soon make his appearance; and she had taken her soup in tantalizing suspense, and had begun to form a resolute determination to attend to what was passing on the other side, when she was roused by Lord Daventry's "Trebeck, shall I help you?—I am afraid it is cold;" when she perceived the long expected person glide into his seat with an apologetic

shrug, and “ If you please, but I’ll first take some wine with the Duchess.—Cold, is it? oh! never mind;” and half turning to Caroline, “ even cold fish is a luxury to one who comes in resigned to see nothing but the cheese.”

She made no answer, and she believes stared at him, for he turned away again with a slight smile, and applied himself to his cold turbot and salad, between which, and a long story of the Duchess’s, he seemed very equally to divide his attention.

Caroline had now an opportunity of observing Mr. Trebeck, as much as was justifiable in her age and sex, and found that he was not exactly the sort of person she had pre-figured to herself. She had been rather misled by her mother’s word “ dandy,” and expected to view in him an excess of all the peculiarities of that numerous but decreasing tribe. She saw, therefore, with surprise, that he wore a dress in no respect distinguishable from that of ten thousand others; that he had neither rings nor

chains, that his head was not fixed at any particular angle, and that the quiet and almost careless tie of his cravat, plainly shewed that he had neither studied "Neckclothiana," nor believed in the axiom that "Starch makes the man." Then there was nothing supercilious or affected in his manner, which was totally free from all peculiarity. As for his person, it was neither plain nor handsome, but there was an air of intelligence and subdued satire, and an intuitive quickness in his eye, in the short glance which he bestowed upon her, which rather restored him to her estimation. But altogether she was a little disappointed at finding him so much like other people, and could not conceive why the honour of his visit should be so strongly felt by Lady Daventry.

These speculations beguiled a time which otherwise, from her constrained silence, she would have thought dull; but they were at length broken by her right hand neighbour, Mr. William Charlecote, a chubby, plain,

good humoured young man, tightly cravated, who having answered a question across the table from Mr. Clifton about the hounds, turning abruptly to Caroline, asked her if she ever hunted. She answered in the negative, with a look of slight surprise at the oddity of the question. "Oh! it does not signify," said he, thinking she was ashamed of the avowal, "everybody does not do it; but I thought, perhaps, you did. It seems to be quite the rage at present. Ever been in ——shire? Do you know the Ditchleys? Mrs. John Ditchley is a famous horsewoman; hunts four times a week, and goes fifteen miles to cover; but I don't speak of that as any great thing; however, she does it; a fact, upon my honour. She rides better than her husband—leads him—actually leads him."

"Leads her husband?—I hardly understand—what—with a rein?"

"Oh! no—I only meant she goes first, and makes him follow her."

He then turned away to talk to one of the Miss Cliftons, and Caroline had an ample opportunity of extending her attention to all the audible conversation that passed around her, particularly to that of his Grace of Ilminster, who was expatiating with enthusiasm upon a Strasbourg paté, and “ a glorious matelotte” that he had tasted somewhere. From thence he digressed to his friend Lord A.’s cook, “ a man of a thousand”—“ decidedly the first artist of his day”—his “ risolles,” his “ vol-au-vents” were superb—did any body ever eat anything better than his “ rognons au bechamel,” his “ filets de sole,” his “ fricandeaux aux pointes d’asperge?” And then his soufflets! his soufflets were unique. “ So light! so delicately flavoured! of such an exquisite consistency! the very eider-down of eatables,” said his Grace, growing eloquent in their praise. “ Oh, it was quite like eating air!—And then, his epigrammes!—there is nothing else in

the world like them — they are quite the cleverest things known.”

He then drew a rapid but masterly sketch of the state of cookery at the present period ; which, as the style of discourse was rather novel, was listened to by Caroline with amused attention,—an attention which, as it appeared, was not unobserved by her left-hand neighbour Mr. Trebeck, for she was presently roused from it by his asking her in a low tone if she had ever met the Duke before.

“I assure you,” said he, “that upon that subject he is well worth attending to. He is supposed to possess more true science than any amateur of his day. By the bye, what is the dish before you? It looks well, and I see you are eating some of it. Let me recommend it to him upon your authority ; I dare not upon my own.”

“Then pray do not use mine.”

“Yes, I will, with your permission ; I’ll tell

him you thought by what dropt from him in conversation that it would exactly suit the genius of his taste. Shall I? Yes, Duke," (raising his voice a little, and speaking across the table.)

"Oh, no! how can you?"

"Why not?—Duke," (with a glance at Caroline) "will you allow me to take wine with you?"

"I thought," said she, relieved from her trepidation, and laughing slightly, "you would never say any thing so very strange."

"You have too good an opinion of me; I blush for my unworthiness. But confess, that in fact you were rather alarmed at the idea of being held up to such a critic as the recommender of a bad dish."

"Oh no, I was not thinking of that; but I hardly know the Duke; and it would have seemed so odd; and perhaps he might have thought that I had really told you to say something of that kind."

"Of course he would; but you must not

suppose that he would have been at all surprised at it. I'm afraid you are not aware of the full extent of your privileges, and are not conscious how many things young ladies can, and may, and will do."

"Indeed I am not—perhaps you will instruct me."

"Ah, I never do that for any body. I like to see young ladies instruct themselves. It is better for them, and much more amusing to me. But, however, for once I will venture to tell you, that a very competent knowledge of the duties of women may, with proper attention, be picked up in a ball room."

"Then I hope," said she laughing, "you will attribute my deficiency to my little experience of balls. I have only been at two."

"Only two! and one of them I suppose a race ball. Then you have not yet experienced any of the pleasures of a London season? Never had the dear delight of seeing and being seen, in a well of tall people at a rout, or passed

a pleasant hour at a ball upon a staircase? I envy you. You have much to enjoy."

"You do not mean that I really have?"

"Yes—really. But let me give you a caution or two. Never dance with any man without first knowing his character and condition, on the word of two credible chaperons. At balls, too, consider what you come for—to dance of course, and not to converse; therefore, never talk yourself, nor encourage it in others."

"I'm afraid I can only answer for myself."

"Why, if foolish, well-meaning people will choose to be entertaining, I question if you have the power of frowning them down in a very forbidding manner: but I would give them no countenance nevertheless."

"Your advice seems a little ironical."

"Oh, you may either follow it or reverse it—that is its chief beauty. It is equally good taken either way."

After a slight pause, he continued—"I hope

you do not sing or play, or draw, or do anything that every body else does."

"I am obliged to confess that I do a little—very little—in each."

"I understand your 'very little;' I'm afraid you are accomplished."

"You need have no fear of that. But why are you an enemy to all accomplishments?"

"All accomplishments? Nay, surely, you do not think me an enemy to all? What can you possibly take me for?"

"I do not know," said she laughing slightly.

"Yes, I see you do not know exactly what to make of me, and are not without your apprehensions. I can perceive that, though you try to conceal them. But never mind, I am a safe person to sit near—sometimes. I am to-day. This is one of my lucid intervals. I'm much better, thanks to my keeper. There he is, on the other side of the table—the tall man in black," (pointing out Mr. Bennett) "a highly respectable kind of person. I came with him

here for change of air. How do you think I look at present ?”

Caroline could not answer him for laughing.

“Nay,” said he, “it is cruel to laugh on such a subject. It is very hard that you should do that, and misrepresent my meaning too.”

“Well then,” said Caroline, resuming a respectable portion of gravity; “that I may not be guilty of that again, what accomplishments do you allow to be tolerable ?”

“Let me see,” said he, with a look of consideration; “you may play a waltz with one hand, and dance as little as you think convenient. You may draw caricatures of your intimate friends. You may *not* sing a note of Rossini; nor sketch gateposts and donkeys after nature. You may sit to a harp; but you need not play it. You must not paint miniatures nor copy Swiss costumes. But you may manufacture any thing—from a cap down to a pair of shoes—always remembering that the less useful

your work the better. Can you remember all this?"

"I do not know," said she, "it comprehends so much; and I am rather puzzled between the 'mays' and 'must not's.' However, it seems, according to your code, that very little is to be required of me; for you have not mentioned anything that I positively *must* do."

"Ah, well, I can reduce all to a very small compass. You must be an archeress in the summer, and a skater in the winter, and play well at billiards all the year: and if you do these extremely well, my admiration will have no bounds."

"I believe I must forfeit all claim to your admiration then, for unfortunately I can do none of all these."

"Then you must place it to the account of your other gifts."

"Certainly—when it comes."

"Oh it is sure to come, as you well know:

but, nevertheless, I like that incredulous look extremely."

He then turned away, thinking probably that he had paid her the compliment of sufficient attention, and began a conversation with the Duchess, which was carried on in such a well regulated under tone, as to be perfectly inaudible to any but themselves.

Nothing worth notice ensued. The business of dining proceeded with dull decorum ; and Mr. Trebeck, though he seemed to amuse the Duchess and her daughter, yet as he spoke of persons of whom Caroline knew nothing, appeared so uninteresting and unintelligible to her, that she saw with pleasure the circulating nod, which proposed to the ladies to repair to the drawing-room.

Thither, as it is not our fate to be of the softer sex, we may not follow them ; nor can we presume to imagine the style of conversation which was likely to have taken place. Thus far only can we venture: if they are willing to

believe that the sole topics of the absent gentlemen are not invariably field sports and politics, we will take upon ourselves, however rashly, to declare, that the eloquent tongues of the female coterie are not always exercised upon dress and scandal.

It was, we believe, rather a dull hour, and Caroline was not a little pleased when the opening doors admitted a reinforcement to break the regularity of their languid circle. Music soon lent its aid. One of the Miss Cliftons began to play some Swiss waltzes out of a marvellously small music book, wherein they seemed to have been written with a crow quill; and Mr. Trebeck attempted and executed with another of the sisters the difficult task of waltzing a figure of eight round two chairs.

Singing followed. Miss Clifton was the chief vocalist; and after a few solos engaged the assistance of Mr. Tarleton. She knew he could sing, she said, for "he looked as if he could—he was fond of music—he had a sister

that sung—he had just been at Italy—he was always at the opera—she had heard him hum”—and sundry other unanswerable reasons—all which at length induced him to confess his powers. With considerable exercise of neck and eyebrow, and at very little expense of voice, he murmured out a low husky “second,” perfectly inoffensive, but not eminently useful. It excited no admiration, and very little remark. Mr. Bennett indeed, the new tutor, who was standing near Mr. Trebeck at the other end of the room, ventured to observe to him, that “singing *piano* was Mr. Tarleton’s *forte* ;” for which piece of wit he was rewarded with a look that ought to have annihilated him—a pun being, in Mr. Trebeck’s estimation, the lowest pitch of *mauvais ton*.

Caroline contributed a few airs, but felt rather alarmed, and was glad to stop; and the occupations of the party took another turn. The Duke began to want his whist; Mr. Trebeck sat down to piquet with the Duchess; while Lady Elizabeth lay on a chaise-longue by them, over-

looking her, and talking to him. Caroline soon found herself included in a pool at Ecarté, where she was much more engaged in looking on than playing, and between the acts of which desultory game she might listen to discussions from the whist table on the odd trick, which ought to have been saved, low tantalizing laughter from the trio at piquet, an indistinct gabble in the next apartment, and the click of billiard balls two rooms off.

That we may not send the reader to sleep by minutely detailing the tame transactions of the evening, we will now take that liberty with the whole of the party, and having supposed them to have slept, risen, and breakfasted, will break abruptly into another day.

CHAP. VIII.

Il y a des gens qui gagnent à être extraordinaires; ils voguent, ils cinglent dans une mer où les autres échouent et se brisent; ils parviennent, en blessant toutes les règles de parvenir.—LA BRUYÈRE.

CAROLINE, upon that dispersion of the gentlemen which generally ensues soon after breakfast, began to see a little more of her cousins, and underwent from them a long examination upon her likings and dislikings, occupations and accomplishments. The Miss Cliftons were good-humoured girls, not handsome, but of pleasing manners, and sufficiently clever to keep up the ball of conversation very agreeably for an occasional half-hour. They were always *au*

courant du jour, and knew and saw the first of every thing—were in the earliest confidence of many a bride elect, and could frequently tell that a marriage was “off,” long after it had been announced as “on the tapis,” in the morning papers—always knew something of the new opera, or the new Scotch novel, before anybody else did—were the first who made fizzes, or acted charades—contrived to have private views of most exhibitions, and were supposed to have led the fashionable throng to the Caledonian chapel, Cross-street, Hatton Garden. Their employments were like those of most other girls: they sang, played, drew, rode, read occasionally, spoiled much muslin, manufactured purses, handscreens, and reticules for a repository, and transcribed a considerable quantity of music, out of large fair print into diminutive manuscript.

Miss Clifton was clever and accomplished; rather cold, but very conversible; collected seals, franks, and anecdotes of the day; and was

a great retailer of the latter. Anne was odd and entertaining ; was a formidable quizzer, and no mean caricaturist ; liked fun in most shapes ; and next to making people laugh, had rather they stared at what she said. Maria was the echo of the other two ; vouched for all Miss Clifton's anecdotes, and led the laugh at Anne's repartées. They were plain, and they knew it ; and cared less about it than young ladies usually do. Their plainness, however, would have been less striking, but for that hard, pale, par-boiled town look, that stamp of fashion, with which late hours and hot rooms generally endow the female face.

With these young ladies, in the course of the morning, Caroline had a good deal of that light, amusing, confidential chat, in which young female friends so liberally indulge, and drew from them many a lively exposé of the characters of their guests, and among others of Mr. Trebeck ; with which latter we shall take the liberty of troubling the reader in our own words.

Vincent Trebeck was the only son of a gentleman of good family, and handsome, though not large independent fortune, who had followed the example of a long series of respectable ancestors, in faithfully fulfilling the few and unobtrusive, but honourable and useful, duties of an English country gentleman. But the enterprising subject of our present narrative was early visited with higher aspirations, and soon learned to despise the undistinguishing praise of humble utility. He was sent at an early age to Eton, where he soon gained that precocious knowledge of the world which a public school will generally impart, even to the dullest comprehension, and where his vivacious talents, well-assured confidence, and ready address, always gave him a considerable ascendancy over his associates. From thence, with matured views of the art of advancement, he repaired to Oxford; and never did any one glide with more ease and rapidity from the blunt unceremonious "hail-fellow-well-met" manner of the schoolboy, into

the formal nonchalance and measured cordiality of the manly collegian.

Nobody carried farther that fashionable exclusiveness which prescribes the narrow local limits of gentility, and denounces all as Vandal beyond its bounds. He immediately *cut* an old school-fellow, because he had entered at a minor college; and discontinued visiting another, because he had asked him to meet two men of —— Hall. He was a consummate tuft-hunter, with an air of the most daring independence, to the preservation of which he usually sacrificed a friend a term. He systematically violated the regulations of the collegiate authorities, and parried their penalties with contemptuous cajolery. He always ordered his horse at hall time; was author of more than half the squibs that appeared upon the screen; and turned a tame jackdaw into the quadrangle at —— in a pair of bands to parody the master.

To the gracefulness of indolence, 'Trebeck contrived to add the reputation of being able to

do a great deal, if he would but condescend to set about it. He wrote one year for the Newdigate prize: it is true he was unsuccessful, but his copy was considered the second best; and it was even whispered among his friends, that he would have succeeded if he had but taken the trouble to count his verses.

The opening world now presented an ampler field for the development of his talents. Fortunately, at his outset he was taken up as a sort of pet by some fine people, of whom he had tact enough to make a convenient stepping-stone in his fashionable nonage, and not too much gratitude to prevent him from neglecting them when he began to move in a higher sphere, and found it useful to assert his independence.

There are many roads to notoriety. Trebeck began with dress; but he soon relinquished that, as unworthy or untenable. He scorned to share his fame with his tailor, and was, moreover, seriously disgusted at seeing a well-fancied waistcoat, almost unique, before the expiration

of its "honey-moon," adorning the person of a natty apprentice. He sickened soon of giving names to cloaks, hats, buggies, and pantaloons; and panted for a higher pedestal than a coach-maker's show-room, or a tailor's shop-board. His coats and carriages were copied by others almost as soon as they were exhibited by him; and as it was his ambition to be inimitable, he found it much better to shun these outward peculiarities, and trust alone to the "nameless grace of polished ease," which he really possessed in a remarkable degree.

He had great powers of entertainment, and a keen and lively turn for satire; and could talk down his superiors, whether in rank or talent, with very imposing confidence. He saw the advantages of being formidable, and observed with derision how those whose malignity he pampered with ridicule of others, vainly thought to purchase, by subserviency, exemption for themselves. He had sounded the gullibility of the world; knew the precise current value of pre-

tension; and soon found himself the acknowledged umpire, the last appeal, of many discontented followers.

He seldom committed himself by praise or recommendation, but rather left his example and adoption to work its way. As for censure, he had both ample and witty store; but here too he often husbanded his remarks, and where it was needless or dangerous to define a fault, could check admiration by an incredulous smile, and depress pretensions of a season's standing by the raising of an eyebrow. He had a quick perception of the foibles of others, and a keen relish for bantering and exposing them. No keeper of a menagerie could better show off a monkey, than he could an "original." He could ingeniously cause the unconscious subject to place his own absurdities in the best point of view, and would cloak his derision under the blandest cajolery.

Imitators he loved much; but to baffle them—more. He loved to turn upon the luckless

adopters of his last folly, and see them precipitately back out of the scrape into which himself had led them.

In the art of cutting he shone unrivalled: he knew the "when," the "where," and the "how." Without affecting useless short-sightedness, he could assume that calm but wandering gaze, which veers, as if unconsciously, round the proscribed individual; neither fixing, nor to be fixed; not looking on vacancy, nor on any one object; neither occupied, nor abstracted; a look which perhaps excuses you to the person *cut*, and, at any rate, prevents him from accosting you.

Originality was his idol. He wished to astonish, even if he did not amuse; and had rather say a silly thing than a common-place one. He was led by this sometimes even to approach the verge of rudeness and vulgarity; but he had considerable tact, and a happy hardihood, which generally carried him through the difficulties into which his fearless love of originality brought

him. Indeed, he well knew that what would, in the present condition of his reputation, be scouted in any body else, would pass current with the world in him.

Such was the far-famed and redoubtable Mr. Trebeck.

CHAPTER IX.

Je consens qu' une femme rit des clartés de tout ;
Mais je ne lui veux point la passion choquante
De se rendre savante afin d'être savante ;
Et j' aime que souvent aux questions qu'on fait,
Elle sache ignorer les choses qu'elle sait ;
De son étude enfin je veux qu'elle se cache,
Et qu'elle ait du savoir sans vouloir qu'on le sache,
Sans citer les auteurs, sans dire de grands mots,
Et donner de l'esprit à ses moindres propos.—MOLIERE.

A VIOLENT snow-storm having driven the gentlemen within doors, the dispersed party now began to reunite ; the sound of the billiard-ball was again heard ; and the baffled sportsmen began to intrude their rough incongruous shooting-dresses among silks and muslins.

Sir Thomas Jermyn was amused and kept quiet by the plans and estimates of *rejected* alterations in the house and grounds. Lady Jermyn was ex-

ercising her ingratiating tactics upon the Duchess, by setting herself to learn of her Grace a new and superior method of netting purses. Lady Elizabeth Belasys was manufacturing some nick-nack at a table by herself. Mr. Trebeck seated himself near, pretending to help her, and they began a lively, but not invariably good-natured review, of several of their acquaintance; among whom they presently touched upon Mr. and Lady Harriett Duncan, who were that day expected at Hemingsworth.

“ I like Duncan,” said Mr. Trebeck, “ he is always a sensible fellow, and sometimes a pleasant one. He is oddly suited in a wife, though perhaps not altogether ill. Some people say he never did a more foolish thing than when he married Lady Harriett. I cannot say I think so. Nobody acts foolishly in pleasing themselves—and she is certainly an amusing piece of silliness.”

“ Oh, I think,” said Lady Elizabeth, “ she is absolutely charming—quite a grown up child,

stopped short at the entertaining age—with her simplicity, and her romance, and her little enthusiastic fancies; and, above all, her blue-stocking airs. The blue improves her wonderfully—there is not too much of it—it is such a delicate light ærial tint—just like that sky you are washing in, Miss Clifton.’

“ You see her just as I do,” said Trebeck, “ I delight in her, and all that belongs to her, from Duncan down to her scrap-book and relic-box. She invariably asks me to contribute to both. She never could get me to write anything, but I have contributed a relic or two: some of my own hair, (pray don’t tell her) which she takes for Buonaparte’s, and kisses night and morning; and the lid of a snuff-box, (a discarded one of my great, great-grandfather) which she verily believes to have been Prince Eugene’s. Nothing is so pleasant as a little enthusiasm—you can generally laugh at it, if you don’t partake of it. By the bye, is it not rather amusing to see the quiet, complacent way in which Dun-

can helps to shew her off? He will always join with the best will imaginable, in any trick you may wish to play her. He is so used to amuse himself with her innocent foibles, that he does not see why others should not do the same."

"That is certainly liberal," said Lady Elizabeth, "and I dare say *you* find it very convenient. Have you seen anything lately of his family, the Allertons?"

"I saw their Lordship and Ladyship last, on their way to Cheltenham, in the Autumn, for change of air; looking outrageously healthy, and both of them sadly *hipped* because they could not think so. I went there soon afterwards, but they were flown. I met there our friend the Daily Advertiser—you know whom I mean—Lady Gableton—and her ancient ally, Mrs. Ingleton. I ought to tell you that Mrs. Ingleton positively opens her matrimonial bazaar with two new nieces and a cousin next season."

"She is really inexhaustible," said Lady Elizabeth, "but I'm afraid the supply rather ex-

ceeds the demand. Did you see any thing of the new batch?"

"Quite enough, I assure you; and they make me admire her courage more than ever, and tremble not a little for her success."

"What! even *her* success, who has succeeded so often? Then they must indeed be hopeless subjects; for I know you have a very high opinion of Mrs. Ingleton's ingenuity."

"I had, but I retract it. She was playing off her old artillery upon two or three very impracticable men, Cecil;—Lord James Denbigh, and of all persons in the world, Mr. Tyrrell."

"Lord Malton's son?"

"Yes, the same, late of the Guards—a fellow that could not marry, even if anybody would have him—almost as much a bankrupt in character as in purse—a choice union of the Palais Royal *roué* with the English blackleg."

While saying this, it did not escape the quick eye of the speaker, that Caroline looked towards

him with apparent attention. "Do you know the gentleman?" said he to her.

"Very slightly," was her answer, "I have only seen him once—he is a sort of relation."

"A distant one, I hope, for my own sake."

"Yes, quite distant."

"It is a relief to hear it. Then, with your permission, I will not retract a syllable. It is very inconvenient among the prudish many, of whom Miss Jermyn assures me by her smile that she is not one, to stumble upon relations of the present company. Poor Catton! I could not help laughing the other day at his sudden rebuff from Sir Henry Deerhurst. He was launching out in his best manner against Lord Windermere; Sir Henry grew stiff, and grave, and angry; and just as Catton was proving the noble Lord an ass, in the most satisfactory manner possible, drew up and said, 'Perhaps you are not aware, Sir, that the person you are abusing is my wife's brother-in-law's half uncle?'"

“I think it was a very just rebuke,” said Miss Clifton, looking up from her drawing, “for confining his ridicule so fairly to Lord Windermere, when he might have extended it to the whole of the family.”

“I hope you except the all-accomplished daughters,” said Trebeck.

“On no account; I have no mercy upon female pedants; and they are insufferable pedants. They are so technical! so professional! I could very generously have pardoned their knowing a great deal more than myself, but their manner of showing it was quite oppressive. To hear them talk of music, for instance! You could not mention an air, but they either asked you or told you what key it was in. They’ll talk to you about the ‘chromatic colouring of an arpeggio passage,’ and a ‘*motivo* in B flat major modulating into D.’ Then, a drawing with them is always apropos of ‘depth,’ and ‘breadth,’ and ‘catching lights,’ and ‘vanishing points;’ and—oh, it’s dreadful—in one short—no,

I beg their pardons—in one long week I was lectured out of as much love for the arts as I had laid up in the ten years preceding.”

“ You have really made out a very strong case of unmerited suffering. It almost deserves the attention of parliament. I think I shall call upon Lord Daventry to second my motion, ‘that female accomplishments have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished.’ ”

Lord Daventry bowed *dissent*; and assuming a parliamentary tone, which was not widely different from his usual flourishing manner, said, he should move as an amendment, that the word “*not*” be inserted after the word “*ought*.”

Lady Jermyn concurred with him in thinking that there was no excess. Accomplishments, she said, were expected in every young person; and therefore must be essential. Lady Daventry saw no harm in any pursuit, provided it did not injure the figure: she had, however, known that effect result from drawing.

Trebeck seemed much amused at the discus-

sion. "Lady Daventry," he added, "what would you say, if I were to tell you of a case of deformity, solely produced by the use of a double-action harp?"

Lady Daventry looked as if she did not know what to say. Miss Clifton pressed him to name his instance. "I could not think of it," said he, "charity forbids. But I oppose accomplishments upon higher grounds, if possible. The fact is, I have a great objection to works of supererogation; and female accomplishments are quite of this description. Miss Jermyn," said he, turning to Caroline, who was nearest to him, "I am a confident person—I am going to take it for granted that you agree with me."

"I fear not," said she, "but I cannot be sure till I have heard your reasons for calling them so. Perhaps I may then become a convert."

"Without a doubt—for my reason is this,—that you have all such a natural fund of agreeableness, that any attempt to increase it is a shameful expenditure of time and trouble, much to

be reprehended in these economizing days. Now, are you of my opinion?"

"I did not know," said Caroline, "how treacherous you were, in asking me to agree with you beforehand. I was not prepared for such a compliment."

"It is not worth having," said Anne Clifton. "Mr. Trebeck, you must be given to understand that we accept only individual compliments. Praise of the sex goes for nothing."

"I solemnly assure you," said Trebeck, "that nothing was farther from my intention than a compliment. Compliments are *mauvais ton*—are not they, Lady Elizabeth? They are quite obsolete—went out with hoops and hair powder. Pray do not accuse me of wishing to revive them. I was merely stating the simple fact, that ladies spoil their natural gifts by loading them with artificial ones. Those who have many accomplishments, are seldom so pleasant as those who have few. They trust too much to what they can do, and too little

to what they can say. I wish the thousand shining qualities, which of course no lady can ever be without, to appear at her tongue's end, and not at her finger's."

"You wish her, I believe," said Anne Clifton, "to play upon her acquaintance, rather than her harp."

Trebeck bowed assent.

"I am afraid," observed Caroline, "the result of such playing is not often harmony."

"Perhaps not," replied Trebeck, "but you are aware, that discords in music are much in vogue. You cannot think with what additional effect a tart remark always comes from a female tongue. The effect, sometimes, is quite electrical. Now occupation, and cultivation, as they call it, tend to injure all this. Accomplishments, and reading, divert the attention sadly from passing events and the news of the day."

"That," said Miss Clifton, "is very bad. Nobody is anybody that is not quite '*au courant du jour*.'"

“ True,” added Anne Clifton, “ and the worst of the Blues, is, that they seldom condescend to scandal.”

“ Except scandal of the worst kind,” said Trebeck ; “ such as ripping up old grievances, and speaking shamefully ill of the dead. I met a Blue the other day, who was discussing the Suffolk Letters, and Walpole’s Memoirs, and then went on to say paw-paw things of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. Now, really, this is quite atrocious. To attack a modern reputation, is venial in comparison. Thank heaven ! with all my faults, it cannot be said that I ever slandered anybody’s great, great-grandmother.”

“ I acquit you, for one,” said Lady Elizabeth Bellasys, who had preserved a dignified silence ever since the others had joined in conversation, and who seldom addressed herself to any but Trebeck ; “ but I wonder how *you* should come in contact with a Blue. They are a sort of people one never sees. The only Blue of my

acquaintance—and she is a Light Blue—is our odd little friend Lady Harriet Duncan.”

“ I believe,” said Anne Clifton, looking out at the window, “ our odd little friend is coming now.”

At this moment, a carriage was seen driving up the approach. Doubts began to be agitated about the colour of the livery, and the probability of their reaching Hemingsworth so early : but the question of identity was in a few minutes decided, by the announcement of the parties themselves, and Lady Harriet, a sickly, but rather pretty looking woman, followed by her husband, glided in, with a step half languid, half alert, between a walk and a run ; greeted the Daventry family *en masse* ; began to answer questions about herself, before they were asked ; astonished the Duchess, by running up and kissing her on the forehead ; called the Duke “ a good creature,” and set him laughing for ten minutes ; nodded to Lady Elizabeth ; held out her forefinger to the rest of the circle by way of

shaking hands ; told Mr. Trebeck that she should not speak to him till he had made his peace ; and then remembering that she was tired, made the best of her way to a sofa, from which she frequently started up with childish eagerness, to ask if there were any letters for her. Three were brought to her, which she was in ecstasies at the sight of ; tore open one of them, and throwing the others to Mr. Tarleton, desired him to open them for her, while she was reading the first.

“ And read them ? ” he asked, meaning to be facetious.

“ No, no—take them out of the envelope—there—thanks—and give them to me.”

She then read them eagerly to herself, with perpetual half-whispered exclamations of joy, grief, surprise, and laughter ; and afterwards burst out in praise of her correspondents ; and when tired of endowing them with “ every virtue under heaven,” got up, and began to tumble over the books upon the sofa-tables, asking at the same

time an infinity of questions, addressed to nobody, about what they had or had not read, of the thousand charming things that came out “the other day.” She then set a French clock playing upon the chimney-piece, and said, as she wound it up, looking round at Lady Daventry, “If I spoil it, Tarleton can mend it for you; he has a genius for those things—he mended one at Lady Kidderminster’s.” After exhausting the tunes of the musical clock, she rang to enquire if her bullfinch was brought in, “for I want,” said she, “to introduce him to you—he is such a dear love—you shall hear him sing the Ranz de Vaches.”

The bird was brought, and sung his air with variations, (considerable variations from the original) and was petted and praised to his admiring mistress’s heart’s content; though to most of the company, and especially to Caroline, his mistress herself gave much greater entertainment.

Caroline was much amused with Lady Har-

riety. She had never before seen anything like her ; and though led by the previous conversation to look for a character widely differing from the rational generality, she was by no means prepared for that diverting breadth of singularity which she now witnessed in the little flighty “ *minauderies*” of this very original lady. Her surprise and amusement were still increased, when, on being introduced to Lady Harriet, she shook her warmly by both hands, saying, “ I think I shall like you—if I don’t I’ll tell you—you will like me, I know—new people always do.” She then began to talk to her with great seeming interest, and asked her in the course of conversation, (probably with a view of sounding her capacity,) a multitude of very uncommon and unconnected questions ; “ Whether she believed in craniology ?” “ Whether she could *improvvisare* in Italian ?” “ Whether she had studied the theory of apparitions ?” “ Whether she considered music to be ‘ the food of love ?’” “ What perfume she

was most partial to?" and, "What was her opinion of Mr. Perkins's new invented steam-engine?"

Amused as Caroline was with so singular a person, and engaged in a conversation which embraced so wide a circle of important subjects, it is not wonderful that she should have bestowed a very small portion of her attention upon Mr. Duncan. She could only perceive that he was a gentlemanly man, and had said nothing hitherto that was either odd enough to stare at, silly enough to smile at, or clever enough to be worth repeating. But as this is almost all you can ever say, after half an hour's acquaintance with ninety-nine "gentlemanly men" out of an hundred, the result, though not interesting, was perfectly satisfactory.

CHAP. X.

Vous voulez, Acis, me dire qu'il fait froid ; que ne disiez-vous, il fait froid ? Est-ce un si grand mal d'être entendu quand on parle, et de parler comme tout le monde ? Une chose vous manque ; c'est l'esprit ; ce n'est pas tout ; il y a en vous une chose de trop, qui est, l'opinion d'en avoir plus que les autres ; voila la cause de votre pompeux gallimathias, de vos phrases embrouillies, et de vos grands mots qui ne signifient rien.

LA BRUYERE.

THE dinner-table this day received the farther addition of a personage who was, at any rate in his own opinion, a very important one. Lord Chesterton, son of the Earl of Banbury, was a solemn, heavy, pompous, formal, pedantic young man, deeply impressed with his own consequence, but not at all skilled in the art of impressing others with it. In society he was a long and frequent talker, and flattered

himself that he was entertaining. He gave his opinions gravely, and authoritatively.

“As who should say, ‘I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my mouth, let no dog bark.’”

Periphrasis (next to Catachresis) was his favourite figure of speech; but he did not indulge in fanciful circumlocution, or flowery metaphor. His was heavy amplification—down-right *circumbendibus*—the genuine eloquence of “gentle dulness.” If he wanted to ask you, what news? he enquired, “whether the paper of the day presented any article of more than ordinary interest and importance;” when he would enquire of a lady, if she were tired with her ride, he “hoped she had experienced no very considerable accession of fatigue from the protracted length of her equestrian excursion;” when he wished to observe that it was finer to-day than it was yesterday, he said, “a considerable amelioration had evidently taken place in the

aspect of the weather, during the lapse of twenty-four hours."— But enough, we are becoming infected ourselves: in one word, he was a proser; a character which, as it strengthens with our growth, and is more peculiarly the failing of age, is least tolerable in a young man.

This person very soon manifested a disposition to bestow much of his tediousness upon Miss Jermyn. Independent of the powerful attractions of youth, beauty, elegance, and good humour, she possessed, in his eyes, many negative recommendations to his notice. She was not, like the Miss Cliftons, addicted to quizzing; he did not stand in awe of her, as he did of Lady Elizabeth Bellasys; and she was less talkative, more rational, and much more intelligible than Lady Harriet Duncan. Her youth gave her a preference to the more matronly part of the company; for Lord Chesterton, though not much versed in small talk, and "the little attentions," and though the style of

his conversation was better suited to steady ladies, of a "certain age," yet he maintained as an axiom, that persons of the same age ought to associate, and thought it always incumbent upon young gentlemen, to render themselves agreeable in the eyes of young ladies. He therefore devoted himself to Caroline, with an assiduity which, though very gratifying to Lady Jermyn, was absolute penance to its unfortunate object. Caroline, in her simplicity, viewed him only as a bore; Lady Jermyn, in her wisdom, viewed him only as Lord Cherterton, and smiled, and bridled, and tried to look grave, and indifferent, and "let things take their natural course," and peeped now and then out of the corners of her eyes, and turned away her head, and pretended not to overhear the honied words that dribbled from the lips of the prosy Lord; while poor Caroline sat, with a much enduring civility of face, sighing inwardly, and assenting outwardly to

the pompous truisms which he so elaborately announced.

The next day witnessed the departure of the Duke and Duchess, and their daughter,—happily not until Lady Jermyn had finished her purse, and Sir Thomas had begun to excite the jealousy of Mr. Rigby, by his favour with the Duke; in fact, they had made such successful advances in the good opinion of the Duke and Duchess, that their Graces, who were perfectly good natured, and disposed to be pleased, expressed, with more than usual sincerity, their hope of seeing them when they came to town, and left Lady Jermyn consoled by this prospect, for her early loss of them, just as her acquaintance was beginning to ripen into perfect intimacy.

“*Bon voyage,*” said Mr. Trebeck, as the Ducal party disappeared from their view from the drawing-room windows; “upon my honour, I like that family; they relieve each other so

admirably well; the Duchess and her daughter especially; they are a capital contrast—oil and vinegar; together with the substantial Duke, and the pungent Mr. Rigby, they would make up an excellent family salad. Don't you adore the Duchess, Lady Harriet?—dear, good, civil, little woman! when one tells her the most abominable falsehoods, she thanks one so sweetly for *undeceiving* her! By the bye, I am sorry for the poor Duke; he loses his pocket handkerchief at Bath."

"What do you mean?" said Lady Jermyn, who felt much interested in what concerned them.

"His right-hand man," said Mr. Trebeck.

"What, his valet? his gentleman?"

"Gentleman! really Lady Jermyn you are too severe. God forbid I should so miscall him—No, I was speaking of Mr. Rigby."

"Dear! poor Mr. Rigby! why do you dislike him, Mr. Trebeck? He seems an excellent

sort of man. The Duke says—he was telling Sir Thomas, only yesterday—was it yesterday?—yes, it was yesterday—he was telling Sir Thomas that he was quite a treasure; he should not know what to do without him.”

“That I can easily believe,” said Trebeck; “but you must not misunderstand me—I admire him exceedingly I think he has many rare qualities—he has a great deal of confidence, without a grain of pride; he has perfect subserviency, without any unnecessary formality; and he certainly possesses the art of flattering, without the least appearance of fawning; he has a bold, rough, honest style of toad-eating, which I humbly conceive to be very near perfection; I like his blunt thorough-going manner of doing it. As Charles Temple said, in his metaphorical way, ‘He is a man that butters his bread with a bill-hook.’”

“You are using one yourself, I think,” said Mr. Duncan; “you have hacked him down manfully—and we are the more obliged to you

for this *exposé*, as you don't often stoop to such small deer. It is not every body, Trebeck, to whom you vouchsafe the honour of an attack; you are generally select, even in your enmities."

"Thank you for the compliment—I conclude it is meant for one, though I cannot exactly make out how; unless you allow me to take the converse, and say, that if I am select in my enmities, I am extensive in my friendships."

"You don't expect me to grant that?"

"Not exactly: nobody does grant it; for in fact, nobody understands me; I am not a difficult person to please—I flatter myself that I mix well with people in general—If there is any thing I pique myself upon, it is upon having a little dash of the cosmopolite, being a sort of unsophisticated person, ready to join in with all the odd humours of every class, both high and low."

"Pardon me there," said Duncan, "you can humour oddities as well as any body, but I don't think you are tolerant to the quiet

generality—I think I have observed, that your list of supportable people is rather a contracted one.”

“Why, of course,” said Trebeck, “there *are* persons one wishes to avoid—a man, for instance, who commits a forgery, or a pun—or asks twice for soup—or goes to private balls in Town on a Wednesday. These are offenders one should be sorry to associate with; but as to the quiet, decent, orderly mass, who have no such crimes as these to answer for, nobody is more ready to exchange a nod, or a ‘how d’ye do,’ or give them two fingers to shake, than myself.”

“I am glad to hear you disclaim fastidiousness,” said Duncan, “and I wish to Heaven you would try to explode it; in my opinion it is one of the most prominent blots in the manners of the day.”

“Oh, I agree with you perfectly. There certainly is a horrid deal of vile counterfeit finery afloat—a most disgusting affectation of hauteur and *upkishness*. Society is becoming

one huge oyster-bed, every one entrenched in his own stiff clumsy shell of coldness and consequence. If there is one thing on earth I hate more than another, it is to see your stupid, insignificant people, trying by dint of solemnity, to make themselves both clever and important; affecting to stand aloof from those who would only honour them too much by their society; creatures who don't condescend to be agreeable, because in fact they have nothing to say. In short, its quite the national characteristic."

"It is perfectly true," observed Mr. Tarleton. "I am only just returned from Italy myself. We have a horrid bad character for pride, and finery, and all that. The two marks by which they tell an Englishman, are, white pantaloons, and a stiff neck."

"It shews their discernment," said Mr. Trebeck. "It is impossible to doubt the fastidiousness of a being that wears a stiff black stock and a pair of white trowsers. But really," said he, addressing himself to Mr. Duncan, "if we

are anywhere to give ourselves airs of exclusiveness, and step daintily and pick our way, it surely is abroad. I should advise a friend who was going abroad, to cut every countryman, right and left, and go well provided with introductions to foreigners."

"That was Catton's plan," said Mr. Duncan. "Did you hear of his adventure at Florence? He went there with a letter of introduction to a Conte di — I really forget the name—but no matter. As soon as he got to Florence, he went, as a man of taste should, straight to the Gallery; and in going in, swinging his body, (you know his way) and flourishing his stick, as he always does, he rapped on the nose the poodle of an Italian gentleman who was coming out. Catton, instead of apologizing, bestowed a curse upon the dog. The Italian made use of 'cospetto' and 'bestia,' which Catton very properly applied to himself, and demanded an explanation. Neither well understood the other—high words ensued—

cards were exchanged—and the Italian turned out to be the Marchese di——something. Catton soon began to consider that he could not fight a duel without a second; he had not yet discovered any acquaintance, but he had his letter of introduction to the Count; and an Italian second, he thought, would do just as well as an English one. So he went to him, letter in hand, thinking, by the way, how he should bring in his request—made his bow, and was going to deliver it,—when he found he was addressing his foe the Marchese. The fact was, the Conte had lately changed his title. The thing was too ridiculous: the mistake put them both into perfect good humour, and they finished the business by breakfasting together about the same time that they were to have fought.”

“ Well done, Catton! He is an inexhaustible blunderer; one of the curious in *contresens*; he seems to be wrong-headed by instinct, as Falstaff was valiant.—But, talking of

travelling, whom did you fall in with on your last trip."

"I can give you a long list of names—but very few are worth mentioning. We met at Milan with two pleasant young men,—Mr. Courtenay, Lord Essenden's grandson, and his friend, a Mr. Granby, a relation, I believe, of Lord Malton's. But to balance the account, our friend Baron Crackendorf stuck to us like a leech, and did the honours of every thing visitable. He was no favourite of your's, Harriet."

"I cannot say that he was. He was a heavy person," said Lady Harriet, languidly, "and has very little mind, and is an unmerciful talker. Oh, Mr. Trebeck, you cannot think what he made me suffer."

"I think I can imagine it, as I have the misery of knowing him. He is considered the most powerful proser on the Continent."

"They used to call him at Spa, the Westphalian Bore," said Duncan.

“ I hope, Sir, you endeavoured to *cure* him,” said Mr. Bennett, who had long stood ready to edge in a pun.

Mr. Duncan good-humouredly laughed. Trebeck seemed unconscious that anybody had spoken, and continued, “ and where did this being fasten himself upon you ?”

“ At Florence,” said Lady Harriet ; “ and a tyrannical physician conspired to keep us within his clutches. He absolutely would not let me travel—talked of nervous debility, and I don’t know what—forbad Rome—that was cruellest of all—said a great deal (I believe very well) about Malaria ; but I was too much provoked to admire his lecture. I don’t see what right physicians have to be so despotic. But Duncan supported him in all he said ; so that I really thought we never should have got to the ‘ eternal city.’ But when after all we did get there”——

“ Your ladyship,” interrupted Mr. Bennett,

who had been smirking and wriggling during the last half minute, in all the agonies of a pent-up joke; “ your ladyship, if I mistake not, was questioning the compulsory right and authority of the physician. Permit me to suggest, that doubtless he enjoys that right by *prescription*.”

Lady Harriet nodded and smiled, but looked as if she did not *take*; Trebeck *took*, but did not smile; Mr. Duncan did both.

“ All this is a parenthesis,” said Trebeck; “ but when, after all, you did arrive, you were going to say that you were enraptured, I suppose ?”

“ No; disappointed—shockingly disappointed—every thing so new, and yet so old—you understand me?—I mean, every thing was so modern, and so like what one had been used to; and the people—very worthy, but not intellectual; and then they have no enterprise. I wanted to set on foot an excavation, and not a soul would hear of it. Oh, they think of nothing but taking airings, and siestas, and eating

ice; and they pestered you with their cards, as they might have done in town. The very second day, I found ‘Mrs. Somebody at home’ upon my table. Only conceive!—‘at home!’ in Rome! I regretted nothing when I left it, but the Coliseum, and the dear Pope.”

“Where is your Italian sonnet, Harriet?” said Duncan.

“I have several, you know; which of them do you mean? that on the Pope’s slipper, or the Malaria, or the unknown Statue, or the dead calf in the Campo Vaccino?”

“The first,” said he.

“I don’t know—I believe I have mislaid it. Ah, Mr. Trebeck, I thought I should have written a great deal at Rome. I had just read *Corinna* with intense interest, and was preparing to be inspired by the genius of the place. But I don’t know how it was—I felt paralyzed. I believe it was owing to the unnatural contrast between the vestiges of antiquity and the realities of modern life. No—no—it did not

interest me as it should have done. After all, I know but three truly touching spots;—Vaucluse, Ermenonville, and the burial ground of Père la Chaise. Oh! that last was a sweet, sweet place; there is such a pensive prettiness about it. To me it was quite a moving scene; did'nt you admire it? did'nt you *feel* it? And some of the inscriptions—oh! so lovely. There was one particularly — what could it be?—but never mind—I shall think of it presently. Do you know I was quite angry with Duncan. He did not like it, and he gave such odd reasons! He said it was in rather a frippery taste, and that he did not like the conversion of a burial ground into a fashionable lounge. Wasn't it so?"

"I believe it was," said Mr. Duncan, "and I'm afraid if you were to ask me, I should say so again."

"I'm sure I shall not ask you then; for I don't wish to hear you say anything so horrid. But I must look for the inscription—I have got

it in my album. And now I think of it, do Mr. Trebeck, be a good creature, and write me something clever and original; see, here is a blank leaf left on purpose for you."

"I can only assure you," said Trebeck, "that I would if I could; but really I have not yet discovered any genius for extempore effusions. However, I shall be happy to leave you an impromptu in my will, if you will not object to that mode of receiving it?"

"Oh, I shall like it ten times better; there will be something so new in a posthumous impromptu. Well now," continued she, running on from one thing to another—"what have you been reading lately? Are you fond of poetry? By the bye, do you know *Christabel*?"

"I never saw it—what is it about?"

"About? oh! it's about—I don't know—I cannot exactly describe it—but do read it—it's singularly original, and shews a delicate sense of the beauty of things.—Well—and do you like sonnets?"

“Of all things. I wrote one once on a lady’s eye-brow—a fruitful theme you know with sonnetteers; and I can safely say that mine is the best extant on that subject.”

“Now I hardly know whether you are joking or not. I think not—you look so serious. But do tell me your favourite novels. I hope you like nothing of Miss Edgeworth’s or Miss Austen’s. They are full of commonplace people, that one recognizes at once. You cannot think how I was disappointed in Northanger Abbey, and Castle Rack-rent, for the titles did really promise something. Have you a taste for romance? You have? I am glad of it. Do you like Melmoth? It is a harrowing book. Dear Mrs. Radcliffe’s were lovely things—but they are so old! But then there are ‘Valperga,’ ‘Pour et Contre,’ dear ‘Inesilla,’ and—oh! there are many more—I have not near done yet”—(Trebeck gave a side look of dismay.)

“Do look at Peter Schlemihl and Le Renégat, and the Devil’s Elixir, and Helen de Tour-

non—oh ! I dote upon that last—‘ et les voûtes de l’église repèterent, *jamais,—*’” solemnly casting up her eyes.

“ My dear Lady Harriet, what are you talking about ?” said Trebeck.

“ Oh ! I forgot—perhaps you have not read it. It ends so. Well, and do you know German ? You must learn it if you do not ; and read Goëthe in the original. And now do tell me what you have ever written yourself. Are you sure you are not the ‘ Hermit in London ?’ you are not ? Nor the ‘ Hermit in the Country ?’ Well then, are you the ‘ Amateur of Fashion’ who wrote those books from Long’s and Stevens’s ? Are you not really ? Oh ! I’m sure you have written something—you are so very satirical. Tell me—do tell me, and i’ll keep it such a secret ! did you ever put naughty things into the John Bull ?”

“ Upon my honour, Lady Harriet,” said Trebeck, starting up, “ you are a very dan-

gerous person. This scrutiny is too much for me."

"Ah! guilty—guilty—you dare not answer my last question. I'm perfectly satisfied, and now don't come near me, for I'm going to read."

CHAP. XI.

He has so pestered me with flames and stuff, I think I sha'n't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.

CONGREVE.—*The Old Bachelor.*

THE hours rolled on, and Lord Chesterton continued his assiduities with such encreasing pertinacity, that before the end of another day Caroline had begun to reproach herself for entertaining a very unchristian feeling, as she really felt that she almost hated him ; and his offences, considering their flattering and not unamiable cause, seemed scarcely to deserve such deep displeasure. She allowed within herself, that all he did and said was exceedingly well meant, and that she ought to be grateful for such unremitting attention ; but perhaps this effort to feel

obliged to him only made the matter worse. He certainly was provokingly persevering. At table, at the instrument, riding, walking, sitting, playing, he was always near, always assiduous, always tedious, always unwelcome. But so well did she dissemble her dislike, and suppress her yawns, and smoothe her brow, and look placid and pleasing, and consequently pleased, that nobody seemed at all conscious that the homage of her admirer was in the least degree unwelcome.

But there was one person, who, though he seemed as unconscious as the rest, not only accurately read every feeling of distaste which arose in her mind, but even interested himself in her situation, and diligently, though unobtrusively, laboured to alleviate and divert the little annoyances to which she was thus singularly exposed; and this person was one of all others the most unlikely so to act, for it was no other than Mr. Trebeck. That he, with his natural quickness, should have understood her feelings, was not at all surprising; but that he should have

interested himself at all about her, or taken any trouble to alleviate her persecution,—this was indeed a subject for wonder, and this she felt at first some difficulty in believing. But her incredulity was soon dispelled, by a conversation which he took an opportunity of introducing, the first time he found her alone ; in which he gave her so exact a picture of her own sentiments, and talked over her feelings and opinions on this delicate subject with so much discernment, frankness, and playful good-humour, that she could not either deny or conceal the truth of a single syllable he said ; and strange and awkward as was the topic for a young lady to discuss with a gentleman of whom she knew so little, yet there was such a mixture of plainness and delicacy, friendliness and intelligence, in his manner and language, that she knew not how to withhold the confidence which he exacted, or reject his offers of co-operation. Besides, she had been hitherto taught to hold him in such awe, she was so confounded by his unexpected language, and found

him so thoroughly in possession of her thoughts, that she dared not utter a word of contradiction or demur, and considered herself too much at his mercy to have any course left but acquiescence.

Nor did she owe her conviction to words alone. She soon became sensible of many little expedients thrown ingeniously in her way, for saving her from the wearing fatigue of too much attention; amusements started, to supply her with an excuse for change of place and occupation; discussions entered into with Lord Chesterton, which a look from Trebeck would clearly inform her, were incurred solely on her account; and diversions thrown in his way, which but for the same silent, but expressive testimony, might have been considered as dictated by no other motive than civility to him.

These attentions were so delicate, so unobtrusive, so indirect, and at the same time so useful, that she could not but feel obliged to the person who paid them. Mr. Trebeck had from the

first paid her very little outward attention, less, perhaps, than to any other lady in company, and no difference was now perceptible. Though he contrived to make Caroline fully sensible that his thoughts were frequently occupied with her, nobody in their company ever suspected that he stooped from his height to bestow any but the most trivial notice. When he did address her, (and it was rarely that he did so) he trifled with the same condescending indifference, the same air of mock deference, and civil superiority.

Caroline was glad that it was so, and that his newly awakened interest was not accompanied with any change of manner; for sinking as she was under the oppressive notice of one admirer, she would have been quite overwhelmed had she at the same time felt that she was the marked object of the more flattering attentions of Mr. Trebeck. Flattering they certainly were; as flattering as they seemed extraordinary. Mr. Trebeck! the fastidious, the indifferent, the self-sufficient, the all-courted, all-neglecting gentle-

man, whom she had hitherto looked upon with so strange a mixture of awe and curiosity—that he should glide at once into the attentive friend, the careful confidant! it was certainly more than she, in her modesty, could possibly account for by any merits of her own. She sometimes feared that his secret end was merely ridicule; but then she reflected that he must indeed be possessed with a strange love of laughing in his sleeve, if he could so sedulously pursue so poor a joke, without any accomplice to share in the amusement. Besides, she could not perceive that any of his manœuvres could have other objects than her gratification; and he seemed at the same time particularly careful to attach no needless ridicule to Lord Chesterton. He gave her constant opportunities of admiring his address in devising means for her deliverance, either by informing her of the motions of the enemy, or by throwing diversions in his way. Whenever she began to be tired of being talked to, Mr. Trebeck was always at hand, either to take the

part of listener on himself, or to start something new to supersede the necessity.

The next morning, as Lord Chesterton was showing a strong disposition to be more than usually prolix, Trebeck, after first catching Caroline's eye, broke up the lecture by making his poodle perform some laughable tricks, and diverting the attention of the company to the beauty of his dog. "Come here, Polisson, come and shew yourself. Is not he magnificent? Look at these tufts. I had him shorn by the best *tondeuse* in Paris. Lady Harriet, I'll give you her direction."

"Oh! thank you. How handsome he is! He must be quite a treasure."

"Oh, invaluable. When Polisson dies I shall steal for him Lord Byron's epitaph on his Newfoundland dog. Then I shall say, with my hand on my heart, (speaking of my friends,) 'I never had but one, and there he lies,' " pointing to the dog, who was stretched upon the hearth-rug.

"You shocking person!" said Lady Harriet.

“ Those sweet lines ! I know you are laughing at them. But you have no feeling.”

“ I thought,” said he, “ I was showing a great deal.”

“ Oh, no, no ; you are quite incorrigible :” and then she went on to talk about sympathy, and sensibility, and standards of taste ; and Lord Chesterton had resumed both his seat and his subject ; and Trebeck, finding that some other attack became necessary, after a little confidential whispering with Lady Harriet, came up to him, saying, “ Chesterton — Miss Jermyn, — excuse the interruption. I am come from the sofa, on a special mission. Your Lordship is found guilty of being a poet.”

“ I,” said his Lordship, “ upon my honour—”

“ Oh, ay—I understand all that—‘ your modesty’s a candle to your merit—it shines itself, and shews your merit too’ — Don’t disguise it. It is not your fault if ‘ the gods have made you poetical.’ Lady Harriet charges me, ‘ who am no orator, as *your Lordship* is,’ to say

every thing that is proper and persuasive, and to inform you from her, that she has a blank leaf in her album which is dying to be filled— (Is that correctly worded, Lady Harriet?)—dying to be filled by an offering from your pen.”

Lord Chesterton bowed, and hemmed, and shrugged, and shook his head, and exhibited an interesting picture of amiable perplexity.

“My dear fellow,” said Trebeck, in a whisper, “for God’s sake don’t refuse; if you do, she will come upon me. Give her some of your best nonsense—you can whip up an elegant trifle in no time. Anything will do for her: but I need not talk of that to *you*, who have good things always at your command.”

Caroline distinctly heard this whisper, though Lady Harriet did not, and she was not a little amused by the simple gullibility of his Lordship, who, after a tedious exhibition of becoming diffidence, retired to a bow-window, paper in hand, and began casting up his eyes, knitting

his brows, and drumming upon his chin, with a golden pencil, in all the agonies of reluctant inspiration. Caroline was truly happy in seeing him so employed, and sincerely hoped that the unpropitious Muse might long detain him; while Trebeck, with a short glance of much meaning, plainly told her that he understood her thoughts, and that his principal object had been her deliverance.

Trebeck had now stayed a week at Hemingsworth—an honour which Lord and Lady Daventry had not anticipated when he first condescended to give them his company. This day, immediately after the receipt of his letters, he informed them, that as he was prevented by circumstances from visiting a friend to whom he had intended to go, he proposed, with their permission, to prolong his visit a few days more, and then go with Lord Chesterton to join a shooting party at the Duke of Ilminster's. They very gladly closed with the offer, for Trebeck was an entertaining inmate, and by

remaining with them he was conferring a favour which he seldom allowed to any but a distinguished few ; rightly judging, that the eclat of his character would be somewhat sullied, if he were often to expose it to the rude test of that familiar intimacy, which is nowhere so little avoidable as in the society of a country mansion.

Caroline was not vain enough to imagine that she was instrumental in influencing his stay ; but she was rather glad to find that she should see more of him ; for he was an useful ally, and an entertaining companion, and the little vanity which she did possess was gratified by his notice. Yet she did not like him, and often wondered by what fatality it should have come to pass that a sort of confidence should exist between them ; as he was decidedly the last person to whom she would voluntarily entrust a secret, and whom she would dare to rely on as a friend. There was a heartlessness in his character, a spirit of gay misanthropy, a cynical, depreciating view of society, an absence of

high-minded generous sentiment, a treacherous versatility, and deep powers of deceit, to which not all his agreeable qualities and fashionable fame could effectually blind her. She was also struck with some inconsistencies in his conduct; his affectation of independence, contrasted with his slavish method of appreciating persons according to their reception in certain *sets*; and his uncompromising arrogance, viewed together with those petty arts of flattery and finesse to which he daily had recourse. With his talent for playing with the foibles of others she had been much amused; but it was an amusement which, as she felt that it was connected with unamiable feelings, she generally reproached herself for enjoying. It was a talent which she saw him frequently display, and to which the visits of the neighbouring country families, who came occasionally for a single night, gave frequent opportunities. Most of these, if persons of elegance and information, in whom he could find out nothing to quiz, he merely treated

with repulsive coldness; but if they exhibited any broad traits of coarseness, ignorance, and rusticity, he instantly assumed an air of cordiality, and did his best to draw them out.

CHAP. XII.

It is meat and drink to me to see a clown. By my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for: we shall be flouting; we cannot hold.—AS YOU LIKE IT.

“WE are going to have two of our country neighbours to dine with us to-day, Mr. Trebeck,” said Lady Daventry, one morning, in a soft and apologetic tone; “excellent people, I assure you, though quite homely—not at all people of the world; but very passable, good creatures. We thought you would excuse it. They always dine here every year. One is obliged, you know, to do those things in one’s own immediate neighbourhood, that one should never think of doing in town.”

“I cannot really allow you to apologize,” said Trebeck. “You are doing me a favour. They are the very people I wish to meet. I want to fall in with a native or two; it improves one’s knowledge of natural history. ‘It is peculiarly advantageous,’ as Chesterton would say, ‘to extend one’s familiarity with the productions of the soil.’”

“You speak of them,” said Anne Clifton, “as if they were vegetables.”

“I beg their pardons,” said Trebeck; “but I dare say they have vegetated long enough to deserve it. But, Lady Daventry, I hope they are originals. Are they vulgar? Do they talk broad —shire, and eat with their knives?”

“I don’t know—I think not—though it is almost two years since I have seen them. But they really are not particularly odd—they are excellent people, I assure you.”

“Oh, I believe it every bit. But I had much rather they were odd.”

“ It is rather new,” said Anne Clifton, “ to see you patronize provincial oddities.”

“ Oh, you don't know me—I like them exceedingly now and then. You may depend upon it, Lady Daventry, there is nothing so intolerable as well-bred dulness. Give me vulgarity—broad unsophisticated vulgarity—good homespun characters, with all their natural mould on, bristling all over with native rusticity.”

“ Well! I am sure I thought you would not have liked them,” said Lady Daventry.

“ Then, I have the high satisfaction of un-deceiving you; but what are their names?”

“ Hawkins—Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins.”

“ And what is he?”

“ Oh, why he is a—I hardly know—it is difficult to describe people—he is a country gentleman; I believe, too, he is a bit of an agriculturist.”

“ Ah, I think I understand the sort of person,” said Trebeck; “ curious in turnips,

knows the points of a pig, and can set you right on the state of the markets. And what kind of woman is she?"

"A quiet civil creature—rather dull, perhaps—but I do not at all dislike her. Lord Daventry calls her a 'Becky.' I don't know exactly what he means, but, I suppose, it is no compliment."

"Not a very high one. Pray, have the Duncans ever seen these people?"

"I think not. They have never met them here I am sure."

"Nor Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn?"

"No—never."

"Then pray don't say anything about them to Lady Harriet, and ask Daventry, when you see him, to be equally silent."

"Well, I will. But what mischief are you going to do?"

"Nothing that deserves so harsh a name; only the most benevolent experiment in the

world. I want to cement an eternal friendship between Lady Harriet and Mrs. Hawkins."

The Miss Cliftons burst into a loud laugh.

"What an idea!" said Lady Daventry: "Well! now I am sure you cannot be serious."

"Yes, I am—remember your promise, and leave me to manage the preliminaries."

Lady Harriet soon afterwards entered the room. Trebeck immediately began to talk to her, and presently contrived to bring the conversation round to the Hawkins's. "An interesting couple, Lady Harriet. He is quite another Sir Roger de Coverley; and she is what one so eternally looks for and seldom finds—a natural character—perfectly natural—and yet not one of those insipid specimens of which one seems to understand all the excellencies at once; but I think I may say, profoundly natural—without disguise, and yet requiring patient study in order to discover her bright points. Now this I call a desirable acquaintance."

“ I long to see her,” cried Lady Harriet,
“ when shall I see her?”

“ This evening.”

“ No! shall I? I’m quite delighted. My dear Lady Daventry, I am so much obliged to you for asking her to meet me!”

The Miss Cliftons scarcely suppressed a giggle. Trebeck looked at Lady Daventry, to prevent her from answering.

“ Do tell me more about her,” said Lady Harriet. “ Is she of a sportive turn?”

“ I really hardly know whether she shines most in displaying wit herself, or appreciating it in others. But her humour is of a grave kind. You probably may not at first discover it. The truest kind of wit, they say, is that which raises only a smile: now, her’s is precisely of that description.”

“ I care very little about her wit,” said Lady Harriet. “ Women have no business with wit or humour. It is not their province: it only spoils them.”

“I am perfectly of your opinion,” replied Trebeck, “but you will not think she has too much. Perhaps, also, you will not discover that she is a little—a little too romantic. I am well aware of your penetration, but I do not think you will find it out.” And then followed a whimsical dispute: the lady assuring him that she should certainly convict Mrs. Hawkins of romance, and Trebeck with pretended earnestness maintaining the contrary.

Punctually at six did the Hawkins's arrive; she, a quiet, simple-looking woman, whom no description would enable our readers to distinguish from ten thousand other ordinary persons; he, a hale, blunt, artless soul, full of hearty good humour, but loud in speech and ungainly in deportment. At first he was rather stiff and silent, as if a little out of his element; but he soon became ‘himself again’; compared his family repeater with the French clock in the saloon, and chuckled at the superior correctness of the former; began to inveigh with much spirit against the shameful state of a ratty cross-

road which they had to traverse in their way thither; and then got to farming, and gave due praise to Lord Daventry's bailiff, but told his lordship that he thought he did not keep stock enough.

“What is s o c k ?” said Trebeck, with a demure face of modest ignorance.

“What is stock ?” said Mr. Hawkins promptly, desirous to inform his querist. “Why I'll tell you as well as I can. Stock stands for many things in the way of farming. Stock stands for cattle—I don't mean horses, though they call them cattle now and then. Oxen are stock—sheep are stock—”

“And pigs, Sir; are they stock ?” said Trebeck, in a humble, hesitating tone.

“Pigs! why no—I don't know what to say to pigs; I have not much acquaintance with them.”

“Indeed!” said Trebeck, with an air of surprise. He then prepared to put fresh queries, and draw out his companion further; but seeing in the faces of some of his audience strong

symptoms of a disposition to laugh, and fearful lest his play should seem too broad, he prudently refrained for the present, and politely thanking Mr. Hawkins for his information, walked away to watch the success of his practices upon the romantic simplicity of Lady Harriet.

From the first entrance of Mrs. Hawkins, she had regarded her with great curiosity and interest; thought there was something *piquant* even in her want of polish; took her stupid placidity for the "repose of talent;" thought it indicated "depth of character," and expected to discover under the "impassive ice" of this lady's exterior, a glowing current of hidden fire. She took an early opportunity of entering into conversation with her, and after a little trivial introductory small talk, launched eagerly into a higher sphere; and taking up an Italian book which lay upon the table, asked her whether she believed that Petrarch's Laura was a real personage.

Mrs. Hawkins had never heard of Petrarch's

Laura, but as she did not wish to confess more ignorance than was necessary, she thought to compromise the matter, by pleading guilty to the minor offence, and therefore said that she had “never *seen* her.”

“Never seen her!” thought Lady Harriet, “she was not very likely to have seen a person who, if she ever did live, must have been dead these four hundred years.”

On second thoughts, however, she regarded the reply as a stroke of humour, and in this idea she was confirmed by Trebeck, who interposing, added, “Seeing is believing, you know. Mrs. Hawkins means to convey, that so doubtful is she of the existence of Petrarch’s Laura, that she could hardly credit it, unless she were to see her.”

“She lives in our hearts at any rate,” said Lady Harriet, with a sigh; “but do you really think she lives no where else?”

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Hawkins; and she added, with an air of interest unusual in her,

“but I hope she does, if she is an acquaintance of your Ladyship’s.”

“So,” thought her Ladyship, “she is caustic and satirical; I begin to understand her character.” She then dropt Laura, and according to her custom of starting subjects in succession as dissimilar as possible, she presently asked her what she thought of the new method of incubation by steam. If she had said “hatching,” all would have been right; but when she had to choose between a scientific phrase and a common one, she almost invariably used the former. Now Mrs. Hawkins did not know the meaning of the word “incubation;” and it so happened that the last apparatus connected with steam, which had come under her observation, was a patent steam kitchen. Her mind running instantly to this, she rather rashly concluded, that “incubation” was only another term for “cookery;” and promptly replied, that she believed it did not answer.

“ Really ! you surprise me ; but how so ? ”
said Lady Harriet.

“ It does not do things well,” was the reply.

“ Things ! do you mean chickens ? ”

“ Yes—chickens—or anything.”

“ I thought,” said Lady Harriet, “ chickens had hitherto been the only things tried, though I believe there was an idea of making the experiment upon an Ostrich’s egg.”

“ Are those good to eat ? ” asked Mrs. Hawkins, with a stare.

“ I really do not know. Perhaps they are. But you said, it did not *do things well*—how not well ? ”

“ It gives them a taste,” said Mrs. Hawkins.

“ A taste ! for what ? ”

Mrs. Hawkins stared, for she did not comprehend the question, and after a moment’s hesitation, simply answered, “ I don’t know ; but it does not answer much better for vegetables.”

“ Hatching vegetables ! ” said Lady Harriet, half aloud, and looking puzzled in her turn.

“ Steam quickens the growth of plants,” said Trebeck, aside ; and then, fearful of a premature disclosure of Mrs. Hawkins’s ignorance, he prevented further discussion, and mutual *eclaircissement*, by beginning to talk of something else.

Lady Harriet returned to her charge, though not to her subject, and wishing to elicit the sweet spark of romance which Trebeck had said would escape her penetration, she began to question Mrs. Hawkins whether *first loves* ought to be perpetual ; and whether want of constancy to an early passion were more excusable in man or woman. “ Mrs. Hawkins,” said she, “ what is your opinion ? ”

Mrs. Hawkins shuffled about in her chair, and simpered and looked down, and at length said, she thought it was “ much of a *muchness*.”

Lady Harriet’s countenance evidently shewed that she did not comprehend this phraseology, and Mrs. Hawkins, seeing that she was expected to elucidate, obligingly added, “ Some people

say one thing, and some people say another, just according to their own fancies, but I think it is *all one*."

"Mrs. Hawkins's style," said Trebeck, with great politeness of manner, "is very diplomatic: she does not commit herself;" and then turning away his face, so as to be seen only by Lady Harriet, he added in a low tone, with a grave mysterious expression, "she has her reasons."

"What reasons? how? why? tell me," said Lady Harriet softly, but eagerly.

"Another time," said Trebeck in a whisper; and Lady Harriet went to dinner, with the delightful idea that Mrs. Hawkins was the interesting object of an unfortunate attachment.

Meanwhile it was equally admirable to see how Trebeck had won upon the husband; and the tone of instruction, and air of dictation which the latter assumed, and the former encouraged. Poor Mr. Hawkins's totally mistaken view of the character of his companion, almost

discomposed the gravity of many of the company, however little it affected that of its ingenious contriver. Trebeck drew out his man upon several topics; played him up and down stream, as an angler does a trout; got him at last to town; had excellent sport in extracting his wild notions upon London life and manners; enjoyed his recommendation of snug places for lodging and dining, which he would not have approached within half-a-mile; was in raptures at dinner, when asked to drink wine, and good-humouredly desired to "name his own liquor:" and his delight was at its height, when kindly pressed, before parting in the evening, to "put up" at Sedgeley Hall, before he left the country, and "eat a bit of mutton with him;" and by all means to call upon him, if they happened to be in town at the same time, and take a chop at the Salopian Coffee House.

Caroline's keen and lively sense of the ridiculous, was strongly at war with her better feelings of kindness and propriety, during the whole

of this evening; but the latter happily so far prevailed, as to raise a conviction that Mr. Trebeck, however entertaining, was not a person in whom she could place the slightest confidence, or for whom she could feel the smallest portion of esteem. She also felt some little anxiety about the strange understanding which subsisted between them, and which she ardently desired if possible to terminate.

Circumstances which occurred the following evening, tended not a little to strengthen this wish. After dinner she sat down to the instrument, to play an air from memory; an open music book stood before her; in an instant the assiduous Lord Chesterton was at her side, and at the same moment Trebeck advanced and extended his arm, as if to turn over the leaf of her music book, and then suddenly drawing back and checking himself, resigned, with a bow, that place and office to Lord Chesterton, and coming round, leaned upon the piano-forte opposite to Caroline, fixing his eyes upon her with a look of

peculiar meaning, which at first she did not comprehend. Somewhat abashed at being so gazed at, she cast down her eyes, and Lord Chesterton thinking that she had got to the bottom of the page, took the hint, and turned over the leaf. Caroline looked up for the purpose of undeceiving him, but in doing this her eye met the quick, penetrative glance of Trebeck, which so completely fixed and arrested her, that she felt quite unable at the instant to say what she intended, and looking down again, went on mechanically with her air; and presently another leaf was turned over. Caroline, though rather amused, did not quite like to be made a principal in this trick, innocent as it was, and again looked up, that she might release the young Lord from his superfluous office; but she was once more met by Trebeck's forbidding eye, and felt Anne Clifton's hand upon her arm, and was again persuaded by this double injunction to suffer his Lordship to depart, in the persuasion that he had gracefully rendered an acceptable

service. Unluckily, at this moment, she heard Lady Jermyn's voice behind her. "Caroline! Caroline! Lord Chesterton is very good, I'm sure,—how can you let him turn over those leaves for you? You are not playing out of that book, you know. She is so absent! Thank you my Lord, pray don't trouble yourself; it is only an air from memory."

Lord Chesterton drew up and coloured; the Miss Cliftons could not restrain a laugh; Caroline was going to apologize, when Trebeck prevented her, by saying promptly, "All my fault, I assure you, Lady Jermyn—Chesterton you saw through it all, I'm sure, and only shammed ignorance, to humbug me in my turn."

Lord Chesterton was weak enough to fall into this trap, and admit that, in fact, he "did entertain a considerable suspicion, almost amounting to certainty, of the little stratagem which was intended to be practised;" upon which Trebeck, with a satisfied smile directed to the rest of the company, took him by the arm, and led

him off in a confidential manner into another room. What passed between them, Caroline could not tell, but they soon returned, his Lordship with unruffled brow, and Trebeck with his usual easy air of self-satisfaction. The latter soon entered into conversation, and appeared to exert himself to be entertaining more than he usually condescended to do; told many good things of "my friend such-a-one;" ripped up a good deal of private history; followed an acquaintance to Paris; got to the French theatre; talked of their *petites comédies*; mentioned the old story of the Abbé de l'Epée and his dumb Elève, which was turned into an interesting little afterpiece; went from thence to Abbé Sicard, and the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and their mode of talking with their fingers; and then carelessly inquired, if any of the company could practice that method of conversation. "Miss Clifton? Duncan? Lady Harriett? Chesterton? nobody skilled in this noble art? Oh! Miss Jermyn, perhaps you are?"

Miss Jermyn was. She had told Miss Clifton so the morning before, and she thought within herself, that Mr. Trebeck might possibly have remembered it, for she believed she told it in his hearing.

“ Oh! ” said Trebeck, “ you are an adept in this silent mode of conversation. And which method is it your pleasure to use? the English, or the French? ”

She said—“ The English.”

“ The English one? ah—I knew them both once, and now I believe I can practice neither. I am afraid I scarcely know my letters. Miss Jermyn, will you act the governess, and see your pupil say his alphabet? ” and then with a ludicrous imitation of the manner of a child who was going to say his lesson, he spelt upon his fingers the words, “ *Do not ride to-morrow Chesterton joins the party to Hadley.* ” “ Is that right? ” said he, when he had finished his sentence. Caroline only nodded assent.

“ Your manual alphabet, ” observed Miss Clif-

ton, "seems to consist of more than four and twenty letters."

"Ah!—you forget the diphthongs," said Trebeck.

"Diphthongs? what are there signs for them too? what are they?" pursued his troublesome querist.

Caroline knew there were no such signs, and trembled for Trebeck; but he with great readiness and unconcern immediately invented some; and took good care to direct the conversation very soon into a different channel.

Caroline was rather provoked at him for his conduct. She had, hitherto, felt obliged by his delicate and unobtrusive attention; but this evening gave her a double cause for displeasure. In the first place, she was angry with him for entrapping her into a scheme for amusing themselves at Lord Chesterton's expence; a scheme which she did not think quite in accordance with the retiring modesty which became her youthful character. She was also

angry with herself for yielding; and part of this displeasure, as is usual in such cases, fell to the lot of her partner in the offence. Then, why have recourse, with such laborious ingenuity, to so circuitous a method of communicating what was of little consequence, and what he might so easily have told her, unobserved, in the course of the evening? Why bring himself unnecessarily into a dilemma, from which he could be extricated only by falsehood? Did the arrogant Mr. Trebeck, even for his amusement, stoop to equivocation? or did he perhaps think, that his adroitness sanctioned his deceit? She could not account for his behaviour, unless he was vain of such petty address, or perhaps, (and the thought glanced suddenly across her mind), he wished to ensnare her by a forced participation in secret stratagems, and make her feel that she was under his control, and effect a degree of confidential intimacy, from which she shrunk at the very thought. She had also blamed herself for allowing him to assume so

much the air of a confidant, though in fact she knew not how she could have avoided it. However, she was now determined to resist, and as actions were more forcible indications of the intention than words, she resolved to despise his warning, and join the party on the morrow to Hadley, though she should thereby incur an additional portion of Lord Chester-ton's society; and with this resolution she retired to rest.

But the best resolutions often fail. Her's was very excusably abandoned; for she rose next morning with a head-ache, and the heat of her displeasure towards Mr. Trebeck was so far abated, that she did not think it worth her while to brave on his account the rigours of a raw uncomfortable day: nay she even began to think that it would be making him of too much consequence, to be influenced by him, either one way or the other; and would, therefore, maintain her independence by doing exactly as she felt inclined. She was, however,

rather annoyed, on declining the excursion at breakfast, by the fear lest he should suppose that she had so acted in obedience to his injunctions; and was summoning a look which should convey all this, when she perceived that she might spare herself that trouble, as he did not seem to be thinking about her.

Though relieved from the pain of having her motives falsely estimated, she felt a little mortified, she scarcely knew why, at this instance of inattention. The party dispersed—Mr. Trebeck, she heard, was to join the riders—Lady Daventry and Lady Jermyn were gone to pay a morning call; and she, finding the saloon quiet and vacant, took a book, established herself in the warm corner of a sofa, and sat down with the pleasing prospect of an undisturbed morning, in all the comfortable self-indulgent langour of slight indisposition.

CHAP. XIII.

I am much sorry, Sir,
 You put me to forget a Lady's manners
 By being so verbal; and learn now, for all,
 That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce
 By the very truth of it, I care not for you.

CYMBELINE.

CAROLINE had not been long in the saloon before somebody entered. It was Mr. Trebeck. "I thought," said she, laying her book down, "you had gone out riding."

"I changed my mind," said he, rather significantly; "but where are all the ladies?"

"Mamma and Lady Daventry are gone to Claverton; they were talking about it, if you remember, at breakfast; and Miss Clifton, and

Anne, and Maria, are riding ; and Lord Chesterton, and Mr. Duncan, with them ; and Lady Harriet is gone to her room with a new novel ; and now, I believe, I have told you all the arrangements for the morning."

"Are you sure Lady Harriet is not in the music room?" said he, and going to it, shut the farther door which opened to the staircase, and returned, leaving the nearer one a-jar. Caroline was surprised at this precaution. "I was mistaken," said he, returning, "and you are right — it is a disagreeable day, and I'm glad I did not join the riding party."

"But the Miss Cliftons will not thank you for deserting them."

"Oh—I shall make my peace with them. Besides, they have Duncan and Chesterton—poor Chesterton! he'll give them an edifying lecture on the picturesque. I dare say he has already quoted Price, Repton, Gilpin, and heaven knows what besides, to each of them—depend upon it, they can do very well without me.

But I'm afraid the fact is that I *am* wanting in attention to ladies—I mean *generally*. I believe, if the truth were known, I am considered a sort of woman-hater.”

“ You are not drawing an amiable picture of yourself, but still you might have said worse ; for I believe that hatred is considered by our sex more pardonable than indifference.”

“ Very true ; but unfortunately, the word ‘ indifference ’ is much more applicable to my case. It is in fact, my fault—I *am* indifferent. Ay, you look incredulous ; but so it is. I can talk, laugh, and philander, and keep up a little silly *persiflage*, with the thousand pretty nonentities that one meets in society ; but it is mere habit, or mere idleness ; they excite no interest, and they seem to know it. And then the stuff ! good heavens ! the mere stuff they are flattered and amused with ! I am sometimes quite out of the habit of talking sense ; and why should I talk it, when they are contented with an easy substitute ? In fact, I talk like a reasonable

being only to those few who do excite some interest."

"Excuse me," said Caroline, "as I am going to be very impertinent. I will not be so presumptuous as to set myself up as a defender of my sex; but I really cannot think that you were perfectly serious in what you have just been saying."

"You may fairly suspect me; it is so seldom my case to be so. But I was serious; or if you cannot believe this, at any rate," said he, seating himself by her, "I will be. I have said that your sex in general does not interest me; but did I say that no one ever could? No, I could not say that, for I cannot feel it. I am no rhapsodist; but I have formed in my mind a standard, which is but too seldom even approached; and that is the cause of my general indifference. But ask yourself, Miss Jermyn, whether there is no lady from whom my thoughts hardly ever wander; whose looks I can read; whose slightest wishes I can guess, and I flatter myself am not unsuccessful in trying to anticipate? Yes, there

is one lady whom I have often endeavoured to protect from an annoyance of a very peculiar nature, but to which she of all others will ever be most liable,—the annoyance of unwelcome admiration. But, perhaps," (added he, with a sigh) "she is subject to it still, and I have only changed the tormentor, without removing the evil."

"I will not," said she, colouring, and speaking with forced composure, "pretend to misunderstand you. You are alluding to Lord Chesterton. Certainly his attentions were unwelcome, and I ought, I suppose, to be obliged to you for your diversion of them. But you must be aware, that any such step on your part was utterly uncalled for and unexpected by me."

"And is it laid to my charge as a crime, that I voluntarily lent my services in a case, where I knew, that however required, they never could be asked? Do you blame me for anticipating your wishes?"

"My wishes, Mr. Trebeck!"

“ Excuse the word—call them what you will—your sentiments—your—”

“ I beg your pardon—I only meant to say, that you are really taking for granted more than I ever expressed ; and indeed you have somehow or other drawn me into a sort of understanding—a collusion—a confidence into which I think I ought not so readily to have fallen.”

“ Do not blame yourself for what was unavoidable. We cannot always bestow our confidences when and where we choose. There are minds which think and feel alike, and will confide in each other in spite of themselves. There is a sort of mental free-masonry, a secret sympathy between some people ; and this I flatter myself has been our case.”

“ I do not know,” said she, hastily, a little alarmed at the course the conversation was taking, and gaining a desperate courage at the same time, “ but allow me to say, that I think you were principally influenced by a love of ridi-

cule, and the desire of amusing yourself at Lord Chesterton's expense."

"Principally influenced!" said Trebeck with an air of astonishment, "and by that! you must not so totally misunderstand my motives. Can you suppose that the paltry pleasure of teasing and thwarting that poor creature Chesterton, could have any weight with me one instant. My dear Miss Jermyn, you have only to reflect one little moment on your own charms and perfections, and you will be well aware, that there was an object more than worthy of all my labours."

"I cannot," said she, much confused, and making a desperate effort to change the subject, "I cannot much approve of personal ridicule; and I do not think it at all commendable to draw others into absurdities for the sake of exposing them."

Trebeck gave a hasty glance at her agitated countenance, and prudently following her lead,

calmly replied, "Ridicule, you know, has been said, by many wise people, to be the test of truth; I do not know with what correctness; but, you see, at any rate, I have authority for using it; and as for bantering the unwary,—I assure you I always keep people in agreeable error, upon the most humane principles. But you think this is trifling, and I see you don't like it. I will be serious. Your observations have struck me; and I wish to know your sentiments more thoroughly, and to learn of what points of my character you chiefly disapprove; for I fear—nay, I am sure, that you do in fact disapprove of some."

"I have no right, Mr. Trebeck, to make myself the judge of your conduct and character. It would be very presumptuous, and I really have no wish to assume such a privilege."

"You do not assume it—it is I who give it you; and I give it with pleasure: surely I may bestow that power on whom I please. Ah! you will not speak—but I know what you think

of me. You think me cold, and selfish, and frivolous, and worldly, and incapable of warm and constant attachment. You do—you do—you cannot deny it;—but you do not know me, and few, if any, do. I am not what I seem.”

“And why are you other than what you seem? Why do you disguise your real character, and act a part?”

“Why?” said Trebeck, with a significant smile; “Miss Jermyn, allow me to be explicit, and say to you what I have never said to human being yet, and never, perhaps, may say again. What are the pretensions with which the proudest people in the land invest the humble individual who addresses you? Ask any—all—of your exclusive aristocrats, whether my suffrage does not exalt their fashionable fame. Ask their Graces of Ilminster, if they would dare to shrink from an equality, or if even *their* rank would not tremble at a sarcasm from me. This may look vain and boastful,

but it is the truth, and nothing more, and I wish to speak without disguise. Why am I courted by persons who, both in rank and fortune, are immeasurably my superiors? Is this eminence obtained without an effort? Certainly not; and this is my answer to your question; it is for this that I have acted a part; and why should we quarrel with the means, if they lead to success?"

"I think we *should* quarrel with them. I cannot think the end justifies the means. We should never do evil, even that good may come."

"A charming moral, and charmingly delivered. But my dear Miss Jermyn—nay,—do not draw back at that little harmless expression of regard;—I was going to observe, that even admitting what you say, still you have not proved the *evil*. I trust that no part of my career deserves to be designated by so strong a term. My errors, be they what they may, should be attributed partly to my associates. We adapt

the bait to the palate for which it is intended ; and if that with which I amuse the world, offends your judgment, it is only because the generality do not possess that delicate tact, that refined moral sense, which renders you (excuse my freedom in saying so) fastidious even to an injustice. Do not associate me with the silly, worldly characters around me. I laugh at them, while I laugh with them. They are mere steps in my ladder. I regard them as tools, and treat them accordingly. Do not think that I am really heartless. How can I show that I have a heart, while I live with people who have none? Our best and warmest feelings require reciprocity for their display. With the world at large, I see the tone which best suits it. To you I am addressing a different language. Towards you I have no disguise. I wish to unbosom myself completely. You already understand me better than your thousand keensighted, thorough-paced people of the world ; and I wish that you should know me entirely."

“ I thank you for the compliment; but surely people are not always best known from their own descriptions.”

“ Do you mean that I am insincere in what I have been saying? I am sure you cannot mean it. Does anything I have uttered carry with it the smallest indication of deceit? Is there any want of sincerity in my manner? Its very difference from my usual manner ought to prove the contrary.”

“ You are aware, it seems, of that difference; and I should have judged you more sincere if you were not. When a person is conscious of a change in his manner, it rather seems to show that the change is assumed.”

“ I will not dispute the principle, but you are too severe in applying it to myself. But I see that it is vain to look for anything but severity.”

“ Nay, Mr. Trebeck, I trust I have given you no reason to say that.”

“ I am but too well convinced of it,” said he,

in a desponding tone ; “ your usual charitable feelings, I can plainly see, are not extended to myself.”

“ I do not know why you should think so. I am sure what I said was not uncharitably meant.”

“ I wish I could be persuaded of it ; but I see that I have given you some deep offence. Heaven knows how !—I certainly have.”

“ Oh, no, no—no *deep* offence.”

“ To offend unknowingly,” continued he, not seeming to hear her, “ is hard indeed ; but I have been too aspiring. I have thought too much of my own importance, and too little of your’s. I have not bowed sufficiently low at the shrine of wealth ; and I have used language which only high rank and fortune are permitted to address to the heiress of Brackingsley.”

“ Mr. Trebeck, you astonish me by such imputations. I could not have supposed that you would have ventured to suggest them, or that you should have known me so little as to sup-

pose them true. How can you think me influenced by such unjustifiable, sordid views? No, Sir, even if I were the heiress. I mean—I mean—” she stopped much confused. Hurried on by the eagerness of self-vindication she found herself on the point of discovering her secret; and her presence of mind so utterly failed her at this crisis, that she felt unable to give a different turn to the sentence.

“ You mean,” said he, after a momentary pause, in a calm tone, which considerably reassured her, “ that were you heiress of ten Brackingsleys you never could entertain the unworthy feelings which I hastily imputed to you.”

She scorned to adopt a meaning that was not her own, and was silent.

“ I ought,” he continued, “ to be convinced, and I am inclined to think that there are other reasons, by which your evident reluctance to admit my addresses may be more easily accounted for. Yes, Miss Jermyn, there are other reasons, which it is much more painful for

me to admit, and to which, therefore, I have abstained hitherto from alluding. But the time for concealment is now past, and allude to them I must. Two words will explain your conduct."

"And what are they?" said she, turning pale.

"Pre-engaged affections."

She coloured violently, and her previous paleness only served to render her emotion more visible. She could not deny it; nor dare she look up and meet his eye, which she felt convinced was fixed upon her in calm, acute, deliberate scrutiny. But indignation at his boldness came seasonably to her aid, and she said with warmth, "Mr. Trebeck! you forget yourself. This behaviour is unwarrantable. You have no right to impute such sentiments; it is a liberty which, in justice to myself, I ought not to permit."

"Pray forgive me. I am more deserving of your pity than your anger. The truth of the suggestion ought in some degree to excuse its boldness."

“The truth, Sir !”

“You have not denied it.”

“Why should I be called upon to deny what you have no right to assume ?”

“You shall never be called upon by me to make an avowal unpleasant to yourself ; but permit me to say, (which I do with the most unfeigned sincerity and respect), that you have no friend to whom such an avowal might be made with more safety than to me ; and let me assure you that your secret shall be religiously preserved, and that through me no part of this conversation shall ever transpire.”

“I make no claim upon your secrecy.”

“I know you do not. You would scorn to ask it. I can appreciate the dignity of your feelings, but I can also read your wishes ; and I feel bound to a fidelity which is not less due than if you had solicited it. Time will come when this temporary displeasure will have passed away, and you will do me more justice than you can at present ; but I cannot omit

this opportunity of expressing my warm conviction, that there is no one to whom your happiness and welfare will ever be an object of more deep and lively interest, than it is to me."

So saying, he pressed her hand between both his own, and bowing with an air of friendly respect, gravely left the room.

CHAP. XIV.

Benedict. Do you question me as an honest man should do for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claudio. Nay, I pr'ythee, speak in sober judgment.

Benedict. Why, i' faith, methinks she is too low for an high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

It will appear evident, from the foregoing conversation, that Mr. Trebeck was not deeply in love, and that his happiness did not promise to be dangerously affected by the unauspicious result of his conference with the lady. But at the same time it is not to be imagined that his object in addressing her was merely mercenary.

His motives, like those of most other people, were of a mixed character. He had no intention of ever making a sacrifice to wealth. Rank he disregarded,—flattering himself that the object of *his* choice would always be possessed of sufficient consideration in the world of fashion; and his natural extravagance, and the diminished state of his finances, did not admit of his uniting himself with a pennyless charmer. He, therefore, wisely resolved to combine, as far as was possible, all the requisites of rank, beauty, fortune, and fashion; and to please his eye and gratify his taste as well as he could, consistently with a prudent attention to that first great indispensable—money. In Caroline Jermyn he found a sufficient union of requisites to justify his choice. She was, he presumed, a considerable heiress, well-born, and well-connected. She had beauty which satisfied even his fastidious eye; sufficient accomplishments; manners which would pass muster in any circle; and, above all, a *naïveté*, a sort of intellectual verdure, which, to use a

hackneyed expression, was perfectly “refreshing.” The circumstances, too, under which their acquaintance had strengthened, seemed to invite his subsequent approaches. He saw her exposed, against her will, to the awkward and tedious attentions of one whom he had never failed, upon any fair opportunity, to make his butt. He could thus, in the pursuit of his ultimate object, gratify his malicious love of ridicule. He could at once establish himself in the intimacy of the lady, by appearing to enter into her feelings upon a subject on which, if confidence is once seized by a *coup de main*, it is not easily withdrawn; and he could strengthen his hold upon her, by the flattering interest which he so unobtrusively betrayed, and the collusion into which he forced her, with his daily plans for protecting her from the petty annoyance of her unwelcome admirer.

He had also a rival to supplant; but of this he thought little; for he was not of sufficient consequence to add much to the piquancy of

the pursuit. He was, however, aware that he had but slight grounds to proceed upon. He had not even her esteem; nay, he was not certain that she did not at heart dislike him. He trusted only to the trifling gratitude which his attentions might, and, as he thought, ought to have excited, and to the naturally flattered vanity of a youthful mind, on finding itself an object of admiration to the most fastidious fine gentleman of his day, and at once the constituted judge and ruling motive of his actions. He, therefore, wisely abstained from assuming a warmth which he was sure would not be met by anything like a corresponding feeling, and for the truth of which she probably would not give him credit; but rather brought into view his claims upon her gratitude, and his high standing in the fashionable world, and endeavoured to flatter her vanity by a laboured endeavour to justify his character in her eyes.

But Caroline had not sufficient vanity for his purpose, nor was she sufficiently conversant

in the ways of the world ; consequently, he could not impress her with an adequate notion of his real elevation, nor could she sufficiently appreciate the homage which rank and fortune submitted to pay to the magic influence of adroit audacity.

But, besides all this, her unguarded expressions concerning her inheritance, changed in an instant the course of his proceedings. The words were few and simple, and their sense incomplete ; but, coupled with her hesitating, embarrassed manner, they were sufficient to inform a man of Trebeck's penetration, that her fortune, at best, was an uncertain one. His plan was therefore instantly changed, and as quickly acted upon ; and, pretending to give another meaning to her words, he sought to secure a graceful retreat. With this view he struck the chord of pre-engaged affections ; but was not prepared to find it answer so readily to his touch, and felt for a moment some apprehensions. However, concluding that he could securely pounce upon his

quarry at any time, he determined to prosecute his enquiries concerning the nature of her expectations; and, in the meantime, he could quietly repose upon the safe basis of friendly intimacy.

Caroline was much surprised and agitated by the singular interview which she had undergone, and for which no part of his previous conduct, however remarkable, had in any degree prepared her. That he either would or could admire her, she, in her humility, had never imagined for an instant; and she had always been inclined to regard his attentions as the mere result of a compassionate whim. As for a proposal, it was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. About her two secrets she felt some anxiety; for she feared, in spite of his protestations, that they were not in the safest hands. She had least apprehension about the inheritance; for he had given an opposite meaning to her words, and she could not imagine that the little which escaped could convey any definite idea. She was angry with

herself for being so unguarded, and was also mortified at the necessity of such unworthy precautions. She longed to avow her situation at once. But this, she reflected, she had no right to do. The secret was entrusted to her by her parents, under the condition of her silence, and it was not for her to follow the dictates of her own feelings, in opposition to their positive injunctions.

That Mr. Trebeck should have discovered that she had an attachment, although he did not know to whom, was to her a subject of much greater uneasiness. She felt a considerable dread of meeting him again, and knew not where to turn her eyes when she found him seated directly opposite to her at dinner. She actually trembled, as she thought of encountering that look of his, which she seemed to view in imagination—so keen, so scrutinizing, with such an air of cruel meaning and malicious intelligence.

It was not long before she did encounter it—and what after all was the formidable look? Mild, calm, impenetrable, utterly devoid of significance or consciousness—a look that conveyed absolutely nothing—a look like that with which you meet the eye of a person you barely know to speak to. He soon afterwards addressed her; and his tone was as composed as his countenance. She was re-assured by this, and felt obliged to him for the delicacy of his behaviour. She also observed, with pleasure, that he paid this evening more than usual attention to her mother.

Trebeck did this in pursuance of his plan, of being upon friendly terms with the family during the course of his investigation; and though he had hitherto rather neglected Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn, he now began to think it advisable to win their favour by a little condescension. The lady wearied him most of the two; for in cajoling Sir Thomas he contrived to find some amusement.

“What have you been doing with yourself, Trebeck?” said Mr. Duncan the next morning.

“You would not easily guess,” said he; “I have been playing the sociable—keeping up the ball with Sir Thomas Jermyn. He is really a treat for a little time—but I believe” (yawning) “I have had rather too much of him.”

“You do look rather bored. What were your topics?”

“Politics, politics; I won his heart by calling him a Radical; and he brought out all his best common-places to prove that he was not. And I have been asking him for some half dozen franks, one-half of which I shall throw in the fire. I got them purely to oblige him. He likes, good man! to exercise his privilege.”

“I see you can tolerate a proser occasionally.”

“Why, there certainly is some pleasure in

watching a machine that you have wound up and set a-going yourself. But when they presume to work on their own accord, then I grant you they are perfectly intolerable. In fact, Sir Thomas would not do for long."

"You would not like him, I presume, for a father-in-law."

"Oh, God forbid!—That is not to be thought of on any account."

"Not on his, perhaps, or his Lady's either; but surely the daughter is a charming girl."

"Why! what the deuce!—do you want me to marry her?"

"Not unless you like—I was simply praising her."

"Simply!—ha!—ha!"

"Why, what do you think of her?"

"I think her tolerable, all things considered; but she is quite an uninformed country girl; and as for beauty—she looks well enough here, where there is not a face, except Lady Harriet's,

that does not serve as a foil to her own ; but in town, you really would not look at her."

"Well," said Mr. Duncan, "there is no accounting for tastes ; but with all due deference to your judgment, I must say, I admire her extremely. She seems particularly amiable ; she has great natural elegance of manner, and a good deal of pleasing accomplishment, which she certainly exhibits most unaffectedly ; she seems to have very sufficient information, and considerable quickness and intelligence ; and what I particularly like,—a quiet subdued turn for pleasantry ; as much in fact, as a woman should have ; for I positively hate a female wag. Then as for externals, she is sweetly pretty, in my opinion, particularly when she smiles."

"Bravo ! rapturous Sir !—I hope Lady Harriet is not within hearing."

"Lady Harriet entirely concurs with me in this opinion—nay, more than that—"

What farther encomiums he was going to add,

upon his wife's authority, we cannot say ; for at this instant the door opened, and in came Mr. Bennett, with his usual placid, complacent look.

“ I am come,” said he, “ on a special embassy, in quest of the Honourable Mr. Clifton. Perhaps you, Sir,” (addressing himself to Mr. Trebeck), “ can inform me where he is to be found ?”

“ I am truly sorry to say that I cannot ; but perhaps the Honourable Mr. Duncan can.”

The Honourable Mr. Duncan professed inability, and the Rev. Mr. Bennett smirkingly withdrew.

“ A choice specimen of a clerical prig,” said Trebeck, as the door closed.

“ A prig, if you will,” said Duncan, “ but don't say ‘ clerical,’ for I do not think *that* essential to the character. The man is a puppy, and happens to be in orders ; but had he not been ordained, he would probably have been a greater puppy still.”

“ Well, well—I know you can be eloquent upon this subject, but I don’t mean to give you an opportunity ; for, to cut the matter short, I perfectly agree with you in all you have said, and were about to say.”

“ I thank you for saying so at any rate—but what were we talking about when the tutor came in ?—Miss Jermyn, was not it ?”

“ I believe it was—but I’m sure you had gone through all her perfections, so I’ll trouble you to recapitulate. By the bye,” said he, looking out of the window, “ there is your charmer’s own sweet self, going down the walk with Lady Harriet. Suppose we join them ?”

The party at Hemingsworth was now soon to be broken up. Trebeck and Lord Chesterton were going on the morrow, and the Jermyn family were to make their departure on the day following. Lord Chesterton, during the three last days of his stay, had been less an object of

Caroline's aversion than during the preceding part of it; and this, for a reason which, with persons in general, would have operated differently. He had considerably relaxed in his attentions; a change which Caroline thought observable since the circumstance of the music-book. She was sorry that so trifling an offence should so seriously have displeased him, and though glad of the result, hoped that she might be mistaken in the cause. But she was not mistaken; for this slight circumstance, heightened by the ingenious misrepresentations of Trebeck, and the artful colouring which he contrived to give to it, effectually convinced Lord Chesterton that Miss Jermyn was one of those persons whom of all others he dreaded most,—a female quizzer; and that, mild and placid as she seemed to be, her only object, while admitting his attentions, was to find some opportunity of turning him into ridicule. Lord Chesterton, who was pride personified, easily took fire at this idea, and determined from

that time to dedicate his dulness to those who could appreciate more worthily the honour of the offering.

The inauspicious result of this affair was a cruel blow to Lady Jermyn, for she was by this time far advanced in castle-building, and had fixed very firmly a prospective coronet upon her daughter's brow. She watched his Lordship with mournful interest throughout the day preceding his departure, and saw with a sigh his last cold farewell-bow, as he passed her daughter in his way to his carriage. The rattle of its wheels sounded in her ears like the dismal knell of departed greatness, and she grieved to think that a young man, who seemed so steady, should so little know his own mind.

Lady Daventry was not unmoved on this occasion; but her grief was of a decidedly less poignant character. In fact, it principally arose from regret at having committed herself with her friend, Lady Gableton, "The Daily Advertiser," by prematurely announcing the mar-

riage of Lord Chesterton with her niece, Miss Jermyn, as "a thing that was to be."

As for Trebeck, he completely succeeded, before his departure, in gaining the favour of Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn, who warmly pressed him to visit them at Brackingsley, and declared when he was gone, that he had not half so much finery and nonsense about him as the world supposed, and was remarkably pleasant when you came to know him. Even Caroline felt considerably disposed in his favour, by his conduct during the two last days; though she still thought that she never could accept him, even if there were no such person in the world as Henry Granby.

And now the day and hour arrived when she was to quit this gay and amusing scene, which in so short a time had opened to her youthful mind so wide a field of new ideas. The carriage, with its ponderous trunks and towering imperials, was actually at the door; adieus were thickly showered upon her, and clusters of hands

extended to be shaken ; the carriage was entered, the door closed, the vehicle in motion ; and she kissed her hand for the last time, and bad farewell to Hemingsworth.

CHAP. XV.

Une paine dont personne ne vous parle, une paine qui n'éprouve pas le moindre changement, et n'est susceptible d'aucun événement, d'aucune vicissitude, fait encore plus de mal que la diversité des impressions douloureuses.—DE STAEL. *Corinna*.

FOUR months have now elapsed since we took our leave of Henry Granby. We then left him musing mournfully on his hopeless alienation from the Jermyns. We shall now find him still pursuing the same subject of meditation. His grief had a double cause. First and chief was the estrangement of Caroline. Next was regret at being opposed in his plan of entering a profession. He did not feel that "ambition" would "soon ease" him "of love;" nor did he court employment for the purpose of diverting his thoughts from Caroline; for it was love of her

which first roused him to exertion, and the generous ardour thus communicated had glowed steadily ever since. But though regretting the inactivity to which he was doomed, he did not suffer his energies to stagnate through despair; and though precluded from striking at once into any one road to eminence, he resolved to render himself more competent to the pursuit of any course which might be hereafter open to him. He therefore applied himself resolutely to the improvement of those talents with which he had been endowed in no sparing degree.

But the best resolutions often fail; and it was even so with Henry Granby. In his case, those very feelings that were his incentives to exertion, formed the bar which precluded it. Often, when labouring to confine his thoughts to the present object of speculation, Caroline's form would rise unbidden to his view; now with her soft sweet smile lapping him in temporary forgetfulness of all but his own delusive dream of bliss; now with the frown of displeasure chilling him into

listless despair. Often would his eyes travel mechanically down the page, when, with a sudden start of recollection, he became conscious that he had long been reading mere words, whose sense had totally escaped him, while his mind was wandering to a dearer subject. He endeavoured sometimes to divert his thoughts, and rouse himself to gaiety, by moderately partaking of the pleasures of society, and the recreations of the season. But things which interested before, failed to interest him now. In all he did there was an evident want of animation; and the youthful buoyancy of spirit which characterized him once was gone.

In the General, this change in his nephew's deportment did not excite particular attention. He was not one of those who search very deeply into the recesses of the mind, or who are prone to attribute the fluctuations of the spirits to any but the temporary influence of the most obvious causes. He sometimes indeed noticed his nephew's occasional fits of abstraction, and would

jocosely attack him upon that point, whenever they interfered with his own natural love of cheerful converse. But it would have been not a little difficult to persuade him, that the various instances of depression which were spread over the surface of four months, were all to be traced to one prevailing cause. At any rate, he would have acquitted Caroline; for as her name was never in his nephew's mouth, he thought her image was never in his mind.

“Harry,” said he one day, after receiving a letter with a Bath post-mark, “I'm glad you have left off thinking about Caroline Jermyn.”

“Why so, Sir?” said the nephew, who was thinking of nothing else at that very moment.

“Why, I learn by this letter—it is from an old friend of mine, General Killerton—a fellow-campaigner—he is at Bath now for his health—he goes there every year—he's quite an invalid—had the gout these ten years—you have seen General Killerton?—”

“ Oh yes, Sir—know him perfectly. But about the letter—you were going to say—”

“ Oh, ay!—well—he says that Caroline is going to be married.”

“ Married! impossible!—” said Henry, with a start that would have made the fortune of a theatrical debutant.

“ Why impossible?” replied the General coolly. “ I don’t see any impossibility.”

“ N-no—perhaps not—of course, if you say so—that is—I mean—I suppose the letter gives its authority.”

“ Oh, yes—it gives its authority—you may see it if you like—and very good authority too. Killerton had it from a friend of his, who heard it mentioned by Lady Gableton, who received the account in a letter from Lady Daventry, Caroline’s aunt—and I hear the Jermyns have been staying some time at Hemingsworth—so, you see, there cannot be the smallest doubt of it.”

“None in the world, Sir,” said Henry, trying to be calm; “and what may the gentleman’s name be?”

“Why, the name is not very plain—but it is a Lord somebody—Ches—Chesterton—here—your eyes are younger than mine—just look—is it Chesterton?”

“Yes, Sir—Lord Chesterton—he is Lord Banbury’s eldest son.”

“Ha! a good match—I’m very glad to hear this, Harry. This is doing well for the girl—very well, indeed, I call it. Why! what the devil!—you don’t seem pleased.”

“No—I don’t think it is so well.”

“No!—why?—where’s the objection? Do you know anything about this Lord Chesterton?”

“I do not know him myself, Sir, even by sight; but I have heard him spoken of by some friends of mine, as a stupid, formal, affected sort of person, and a fellow of whom they always made a laughing-stock at Oxford—a sort of man, that

I am sure, by what I have heard of him, it is quite impossible Miss Jermyn can like."

"Oh, she'll like him—never fear. Why should you be so ready to suppose she will not? You don't consider that it's a very great match for her."

"Certainly, Sir," said the nephew, in a tone of pique, "if a high connection is necessarily a good one. But I cannot say I think that follows. It is really what I did not expect—and upon so short an acquaintance too! They did not know him four months ago."

"And what of that?" said the General. "It shows they have made good use of their time."

"Yes—that is the worst of it. There is something so indelicate in this violent haste."

"But they think differently, you see."

"Yes, Sir, I dare say they do. Their feelings on this subject are very different from mine. It is really too bad—a mere paltry match of ambition!—to be bartered for a coronet!—to be made a Smithfield bargain of! Oh, Caro-

line! Caroline!—I never could have believed it. If there is any sort of marriage I do utterly despise and abhor, it is one of mere convenience and aggrandisement. It is such a compromise of female delicacy!—It never does any credit either to the promoter or the parties. And that *she* should fall a victim!”

“Victim—nonsense! What makes you so warm about it? I’ll be bound she is perfectly satisfied—and if she is, I’m sure I am.”

“But it is impossible, Sir, unless she is strangely altered. She cannot like the man; and there is the evil.”

“Ay!—well—I understand you—that *would* be an evil—if it were really the case. You would be quite satisfied—(that is your meaning, I suppose)—if you thought she married this Lord Chesterton, because she really was attached to him.”

This was an awkward alternative—Henry could bear the subject no longer, and turned away to conceal the agonized expression of his

countenance, which he thought must be evident even to the General; feeling also no inclination to prolong the discussion of so painful a topic, with one who could so little enter into his real sentiments.

Upon calm consideration, however, he began to find materials for comfort, which had previously escaped his notice; for, in the first frenzy of disappointment, he had been perversely disposed to see every thing in the worst point of view—to conclude the marriage positively fixed, and Caroline irrevocably lost to him. But now, upon sifting probabilities, and remembering by how circuitous a course the intelligence had reached him, and that Lady Gableton was an arrant news monger, he came to the conclusion, that though the report must have some foundation, yet that no marriage was actually settled.

Henry hoped to be in town in the spring, where it was probable that the “high contracting parties”—if such they were—would shortly assemble. To follow them thither was therefore

his immediate determination. The day of his journey was soon fixed, and accordingly about the last week of "the month before the month of May," Henry Granby went up to town.

And now, did we live in happier times, how bright a field of interesting incident would open to our view! How rich a harvest might we freely glean from the perilous adventures of the road! Farewell those golden days when an hundred miles' journey was an era in the life of him who undertook it; when the making of a will was the proper preface to a journey to London; and when a public vehicle, with a careful driver, was advertised a fortnight beforehand, like an outward bound packet, to set out from London (if its complement was full) and "arrive (God willing) on the fourth day at Oxford."

The happy annalist of those times was not compelled to dismiss his hero with a dry announcement of departure and arrival. Then it was chiefly at the outset of a journey that he plunged with him into the thickest medley of

conflicting events—an inn became the hot-bed of incident—and fear and laughter dogged the wheels of the heavy vehicle which there deposited its load. Witness the rambles of a Jones; the slow, but varied and eventful progress of a Roderick Random in the stage-wagon; and the fortunes of the day that exposed an Andrews to the tender mercies of a couple of footpads. Shades of Turpin and of Blueskin! and ye other rival worthies whom abler pens than mine have heretofore commemorated! 'Twas your's to keep alive the stagnating spirit of adventure, to lighten the burden of the way-worn traveller, to throw a fearful interest over the heavy annals of an inland excursion, and with vigorous touches, peculiarly your own, to heighten the romance of real life. But the age of highwaymen is past; that of horse patrol and light coaches has succeeded; and the glories of the road are extinguished for ever.

But there is still food for observation and amusement. The annals of the road, though

not now the source of high-wrought interest and perilous adventure, might still furnish subjects for sportive delineation, and shine once more in the pages of our novelists, could pens be found, which, like that of the ingenious annalist of "The Stout Gentleman," could throw an interest even over the tame adventure of a wet Sunday in a country inn. The modern mail-coach, with its motley complement of attendants, presents a scene as strictly national as any which this country can produce. - The sturdy, thick-set, waddling coachman ; his purple face just visible between a broad-brimmed hat and a hill of drab cloth ; his reduced edition, in the more active guard ; the knowing, straight-haired, bustling helpers, with their bare heads and short jackets ; the listless lookers on, with their comments on the "cattle ;" the vacant civility of mine host ; all—down to the ruddy-faced chambermaid—all are true, genuine, downright English—all bear a deep-grained national stamp,

which the members of scarcely any other class faithfully exhibit.

Nor must the passengers be forgotten. Few situations are more favourable to a display of character than that close, casual, unsought, unceremonious communion into which fellow-travellers are thrown in the course of a journey. The snug incognito, the levelling jumble of ranks and professions, the intimate contact of opposite character, the absence of adventitious elevation, the depression of real consequence, and the wide field for impudent pretension—all conduce to this one point; all tend to expose the character, while they conceal the circumstances. When is vanity more actively employed, in dilating the insignificant and brightening the obscure? or when is it cloaked under more ingenious disguises? How artfully sometimes is a little sly trait of importance carelessly dropt, as if inadvertently, with a well contrived look of absence, or followed perhaps by a

bridling air of gravity, as if the *real* situation had been too much exposed! And what an excellent vehicle can modesty be rendered! How much may be done by an humble disclaimer! We remember a gentleman of this sort—a master in his way—who impressed us with a high opinion of his dignity, without sacrificing an iota of truth, or even making a single direct assumption. He was not, he assured us, at the last Levee, nor was he personally acquainted with one of the ministry who happened to be named. It was perfectly true, without a doubt; but what did his tone and manner imply? That it was almost the only Levee he had ever missed, and that all the rest of the cabinet were his intimate friends. We were also solemnly assured that he was *not* the author of an anonymous work, of some merit, that happened to be mentioned. We did not suspect him; but his manner denoted that he had frequently been taxed with it; and as it seemed a sore subject, we abstained from questions. Hence, however, we gathered,

that though he was not the author of the book in question, he was thought very capable of having written it. Who could he be? A friend of the cabinet, at any rate, and a reputed man of talent! Our veneration for him grew prodigiously, and we amused ourselves with working upon his imperfect hints, and investing him with proper dignity. But, alas! about a mile from Liverpool, our speculations and the coach were rudely arrested by a greasy footboy on the look-out, near a prim villa with green palisades; and our dignified companion shrunk at once into Mr. Stephen Wilcox, late Appraiser and Auctioneer.

CHAP. XVI.

Early in the morning he again set forth in pursuit of Sophia ; and many a weary step he took to no better purpose than before.

TOM JONES.

WE may now safely suppose Granby to have arrived in London, and to be finally set down at one of those huge caravanseras, where so many daily come and go, and few, if any, wish to stay. We shall pass over the busy blank of the next twenty-four hours, at the expiration of which we shall find him established in Mount-street, actively engaged in the pleasing task of informing his friends of his life and presence.

His few first days passed heavily enough: His was the fate of many in London. Daily did he empty his cardcase at the doors of his ac-

quaintance; and daily did he view upon his table, in return, similar indications of their remembrance of him. But by some fatality, they never met: and in truth, this fatality is easily accounted for, considering that everybody calls upon their friends just about the same hour, and, consequently, everybody is out at the usual hour of calling.

This is a tantalizing state of things; and, alas! is not peculiar to the commencement of the sojourn. Often, too often, with the best intentions, excellent friends will have passed the season without any memorial of each other's existence more satisfactory than the copperplate impression of their respective names. An altar of friendship, with a pediment of pasteboard! The material certainly is slight; but it is a convenient vehicle of civil meanings to the many with whom five minutes chat is the utmost of one's intercourse, and with whom society, like a tontine, requires little more than the periodical certificate of one's being still alive.

One of the first persons whom Henry Granby met in town, was his cousin, Mr. Tyrrel, who received him again with that same air of friendly interest, which created so pleasing an impression in his favour, during the latter part of his short stay at Tedsworth.

Thus greeted, and by one with whom, though so nearly connected, he had so lately become acquainted, he was eager to cultivate his society; and his intentions on this point were strongly supported by the recommendations of the General, who before his departure, had made it one of his last and most particular injunctions, to see as much as possible of his cousin Tyrrel, and, since he was favourably disposed towards him, to lose no opportunity of cementing their friendship. This request, coming from one who, of course, must know a good deal about Tyrrel, and had probably not urged it without sufficient reasons, was necessarily of much weight. Henry himself knew no more of him than that he was Lord Malton's only son, and his own cousin; and

he saw no more than that he was a lively, sociable, conversible man of the world, an entertaining, and, in all probability, an useful companion.

But the probable merits or demerits of Tyrrel, and all that he did and said, were, to Henry Granby, subjects of infinitely inferior interest to the grand question, whether the Jermyns actually were or were not at that time in town. A Morning Paper had rather perplexed him, by announcing among the fashionable arrivals, “ Sir J. and Lady *Jarmyn* and family.” He had no Baronetage to apply to—and, then, if he had, the person might not be a Baronet. Thanks to foreign orders, &c., “ Sir,” since the peace, had been almost as good a travelling name as “ Captain” heretofore. But still it might be meant for Sir T. Jermyn—papers were sometimes so inaccurate—and yet “ family” was an odd expression for an only daughter. A friend of his, who called soon afterwards, also helped to puzzle and provoke him ; for, in discussing the comparative state of female beauty during

the last and present season, he adverted to a new face which he had seen the night before at Lady Somebody's—"rather striking," he said, "but not exactly one of your regular cried-up beauties—more pretty than handsome—but with a good deal of expression. A Miss St. Germain, I was told."

"Jermyn, probably, without the St.," said Granby.

"No—I'm certain about the St.; I repeat the name exactly as I heard it. She is the daughter of a baronet—only daughter."

"Exactly—so is my Miss Jermyn."

"But you know," said the other, "there *is* a Miss St. Germain, only daughter of a baronet of that name."

So there was. Provoking coincidence! Then it might perhaps be this lady after all. He was afterwards informed, by another friend, who was slightly acquainted with the Jermyn family, that he thought he had seen Miss Jermyn somewhere, or, at any rate, somebody very like her;

but whether it was at Lady C.'s, or Cramer's Concert, or Almack's, or the British Gallery, or riding in the Park, or eating ice at Gunter's, he could not, for the life of him, recollect.

Thus foiled in various quarters, Granby repaired, as a last resource, to his aunt, Mrs. Dormer, whom, though he had already called upon, he had not yet seen. Mrs. Dormer was the elder and only sister of his mother, and, like her (for they were co-heiresses), inherited a considerable fortune, which she was induced to bestow, at an early age, upon Mr. Dormer, the younger son of a nobleman. But her husband had been dead some years; and she was now a wealthy widow, in a handsome town house, with numerous acquaintance, and the *entrée* of the best society.

It would be difficult to find a more pleasing example than Mrs. Dormer, of that much libelled class of elderly ladies of the world, who are presumed to be happy only at the card table; to grow in bitterness as they

advance in years, and to haunt, like restless ghosts, those busy circles which they no longer either enliven or adorn. Such there may be; but of these she was not one. She was the frequenter of society, but not its slave. She had great natural benevolence of disposition; a friendly vivacity of manners, which endeared her to the young, and a steady good sense, which commanded the respect of her contemporaries; and many, who did not agree with her on particular points, were willing to allow that there was a good deal of reason in Mrs. Dormer's *prejudices*. She was, perhaps, a little blind to the faults of her friends; a defect of which the world could not cure her; but she was very kind to their virtues. She was fond of young people, and had an unimpaired gaiety about her, which seemed to expand in the contact with them; and she was anxious to promote, for their sake, even those amusements for which she had lost all taste herself. She was—but, after all, she will be best described by negatives.

She was not a match-maker, or mischief-maker ; nor did she plume herself upon her charity, in implicitly believing only just half of what the world says. She was no retailer of scandalous "*on dits.*" She did not combat wrinkles with rouge ; nor did she labour to render years less respected, by a miserable affectation of girlish fashions. She did not stickle for the inviolable exclusiveness of certain sets ; nor was she afraid of being known to visit a friend in an unfashionable quarter of the town. She was no worshipper of mere rank. She did not patronize oddities ; nor sanction those who delight in braving the rules of common decency. She did not evince her sense of propriety, by shaking hands with the recent defendant in a Crim. Con. cause ; nor exhale her devotion in Sunday routs.

At any rate she was an excellent person for our hero to apply to ; for independent of her knowing the Jermyns, she was, in general, excellently acquainted with her neighbours' movements,—being an extensive correspondent, a

great giver and receiver of visits, and one into whose obliging ear many loved to pour their tale of joy or woe. For once, however, she failed in giving the desired intelligence; and after a good deal of lively conversation about people for whom Henry cared comparatively little, and provision on her part for his future amusement, in the shape of cards for balls to be given by two of her friends, Lady Drayton and Mrs. Henley,—Henry Granby took his leave.

XVII.

Oh! pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And; self-condemned, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory!
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly thine.

BYRON.

A CARD had been offered to Granby, the day before, for a ball that night at Mrs. Clotworthy's, and having despatched his other engagements, about the "witching hour of night," he repaired to that lady's well thronged mansion. He had heard that all the world were to be there; and it really seemed as if for once all the world had kept their word. The street was blocked up with a treble line of carriages,

extending above and below the house for a considerable distance. Frequent was the slashing of whips, and the wrangling of rival coachmen, while the strong harsh voices of the police officers were occasionally audible through the din, enforcing regulations. Ladies thinly and elegantly dressed, weary of the tedious process of gaining the door by regular approaches, were now and then seen tripping hastily along the flags, and gliding fearfully through the mob of idle spectators which lined the entrance upon this occasion.

But what a feeble foretaste was this of the crowd within—which gradually increased in density and consequence, from the liveried throng in the entrance hall, which barely afforded a lane for two, to the concentrated haut ton of the inner saloon, where standing room for one was not easily obtainable.

Granby got out at the first check to the advance of his vehicle, and soon made his way into the house; and his progress to the scene

of action was then rapid and uninterrupted, until within a few steps of the lowest landing place. From thence upwards, the staircase was completely full; his progress seemed almost at an end; and the gaining a step in five minutes, appeared to be the rate of the most successful. But the difficulties though great, were not insupportable, and Granby with some patience, and the advantages of a slender form, got in due time to the envied summit, and added his quota to the many bows which Mrs. Clotworthy was there stationed to receive.

The poor woman seemed half dead with fatigue already, and we cannot venture to say whether the prospect of five hours more of this high wrought enjoyment tended much to brace her to the task. It was a brilliant sight, and an interesting one, if it could have been viewed from some fair vantage ground, with ample space, in coolness and in quiet. Rank, beauty, and splendour were richly blended.

The gay attire ; the glittering jewels ; the more resplendent features they adorned, and too frequently the rouged cheek of the sexagenarian ; the vigilant chaperon ; the fair but languid form which she conducted ; well curled heads, well propped with starch ; well whiskered Guards-men ; and here and there fat good-humoured elderly gentlemen, with stars upon their coats ;—all these united in one close medley—a curious piece of living mosaic. Most of them came to see and to be seen ; some of the most youthful professedly to dance ; yet how could they ? at any rate they tried—they stood as if they could, with their vis-à-vis facing them, and sidled across and back again, and made one step, or two if there was room, to the right or left, and joined hands, and set perhaps, and turned their partners, or dispensed with it if necessary—and so on to the end of “ La Finale ; ”—and then comes a waltz for the few who choose it—and then another

squeezy quadrille—and so on—and on, till the weary many “leave ample room and verge enough” for the persevering few to figure in with greater freedom.

But then they talk ; oh ! ay ! true, we must not forget the charms of conversation. And what passes between nine-tenths of them ? Remarks on the heat of the room ; the state of the crowd ; the impossibility of dancing, and the propriety nevertheless of attempting it ; that on last Wednesday was a bad Almack’s, and on Thursday a worse Opera ; that the new ballet is supposed to be good ; mutual enquiries how they like Pasta, or Catalani, or whoever the syren of the day may be ; whether they have been at Lady A.’s, and whether they are going to Mrs. B.’s ; whether they think Miss Such-a-one handsome ; and what is the name of the gentleman talking to her ; whether Rossini’s music makes the best quadrilles, and whether Colinet’s band are the

best to play them. There are many who pay in better coin; but the small change is much of this description.

As for Granby, he amused himself with walking about, and picking out his various acquaintance. He soon found a friend upon a similar cruize, whom he had not seen in town before, and whom he had great pleasure in recognizing; a Mr. Courtenay, whom he had intimately known at College, and in whose company he had travelled abroad. He was about Granby's age, and was a young man of lively talents and agreeable manners. He was the grandson and heir of an elderly peer, and his expectations were good. He had lived a great deal in town, and in the world; knew perfectly well, at least by sight and reputation, all the prominent characters in high and gay life, was tolerably versed in secret history, and was a pretty keen guide to the leading foibles of all aspiring figurants.

“You are no acquaintance, I presume, of

Mrs. Clotworthy's," said he to Granby, after they had come from their own affairs to the subject of the ball.

"No," said Granby, "I certainly am not—though you might, I should think, have presumed the contrary, from finding me here."

"Quite the reverse, I assure you," said Courtenay. "Mrs. Clotworthy has not ten friends in the house."

"Not ten friends!—How do you mean?"

"Why she gave the ball under that condition. Besides, after all, it is not *her* ball."

"Not her ball!"

"Lord bless you, no—it has as many patronesses as the Caledonian. There is Lady A., and Lady T., and the Duchess of H., and Mrs. W., and many others that I could name. Mrs. Clotworthy only keeps the mill, and these ladies send the grist to it. She makes her's a reception-house for their acquaintance—in return for which, she is *taken up*, and introduced by them; bears the honours of the fête; sends her

list, with a request to be puffed, to the Morning Post ; gets the *eclat* of supposed intimacy with people who perhaps never spoke to her ; and then, you know, from henceforth, she has them all on her visiting list, and they, perhaps, will have her on their's ; but that is as it may be."

" I did not know that Mrs. Clotworthy's was a ball of this description."

" Oh, a most flagrant specimen, I assure you. There are many ways of *getting on*, and this is not a very uncommon one, and is pretty well understood by your *nouveaux riches*. It is not a very exalted way of getting into fashion, but people must creep before they can climb."

" True," said Granby ; " they gain acquaintance, and a sort of name ;—in short, they are *heard of*. That is enough in the outset ; and of the secret sneers of their new visitors they hear about as much as Mrs. C. does of our conversation."

" About as much ;—but ' *parlons bas*,'—she is drawing near. Poor little soul," said he,

looking compassionately at her, she creeps about without any body to speak to. Granby," he added, after a short pause, "take care of your heart, if you have got such a thing about you, for here comes Mrs. General Brankstone, with deep designs for the good of posterity upon every one that is disengaged."

"She aims at higher marks than I; I'm safe, you may depend upon it."

"Don't be too sure; you know you cannot be included in what she calls 'that detrimental class, the Scorpions.'"

"What do you mean?"

"Why younger brothers—I thought you had been acquainted with the slang."

"No, quite a novice. But where is the lady?"

"There, just opposite, sweeping across like a comet, with a long tail of ugly daughters."

"Oh, I see her—she is talking now to Count Kalydor, alias Mr. Burrell Westby," said Granby, looking towards a handsome young man,

dressed rather in the extreme, the chief fault of whose appearance was too much effeminacy and prettiness of air.

“ Oh, hang him,” said Courtenay, “ he is a walking essence bottle. His bill at Smith’s was quite a curiosity ;—twenty pounds more than mine at Stultze’s. That’s the man (you must have heard) who sleeps with his whiskers en papillotte.”

“ I have heard it, but did not believe it.”

“ Oh, it is a fact. It transpired through his valet. By the bye—apropos of whiskers—did you ever see such a figure as our college friend Allerby has made of himself? There he is, fresh tipped and tufted, with his new pair of mustachios. Upon my honour, I hardly knew him. He was fond of *tufts*, if you remember, at Oxford.”

“ Who is that ?” said Granby, shortly afterwards, directing the attention of his companion to a young man, whose dress exhibited a stu-

dious selection of the chief peculiarities of the existing mode.

“ Don't you know who that is ? ” said Courtenay. “ You really surprise me. ‘ Not to know him argues yourself unknown. ’ That is Mr. Jones Briggs. ”

“ Jones Briggs ! ” said Granby, smiling ; “ and how came two such high-sounding names to fall to the lot of the same individual ? ”

“ Why, his original name was Jones ; but upon succeeding to a large property, he assumed, in gratitude to the donor, the name and arms of Briggs. ”

“ The arms ! what can they be ? ”

“ God knows !—two puncheons *proper*, or three herrings *gules*, perhaps. ”

“ Then the original Briggs made his fortune by trade, I suppose ? ”

“ Exactly so. ”

“ And the heir is a gentleman of fashion ? ”

“ Um—fashion ?—I hardly know what to say

to that. A good many people will tell you he is. The fact is, he lives well, dresses well, drives—no, not well, but the best horses in town ; is understood to have the best of every thing about him, and goes to the outside of all *proper* expence. Of course he derives his distinction through the medium of his tradespeople ;—a spurious kind of fashion, but it goes down with some people. In fact, fashion is not so aristocratic as many imagine ; it may be bought, like most other things. We, who had great grandfathers, ought to wish it were otherwise.”

At this moment a lady came up, who, after a short conversation with Courtenay, put a card into his hand, and passed on. “ That is Lady Maxtoke,” said he,—“ a very valuable person in her way. She is a sort of Fête Jackall, or Ball-giver’s Provider ;—the most useful body imaginable—a very convenient caterer, both for those who want to fill their rooms, and for those who wish to go and fill them. You see,” (show-

ing the card), "she wants me to assist in breaking down some friend's staircase. Before my time she was a great giver of parties herself; but she ran out a little, and consequently is now on the reduced list; so there is an end of her own fêtes. And now she is a kind of dry nurse to young ball-givers; she helps to make out the cards for them, and perhaps carries off a third in her reticule to dispose of; undertakes to send to Colinet and speak to Gunter about the supper; decides the question of 'chalk or no chalk.' And then you may often see her standing by her pupils in the doorway. I noticed her at Mrs. Davenant's the other night, helping her to receive people—teaching her young ideas to courtesy—whispering 'who's who,' as they came up."

"And pray, does she ever engage in any party-giving on her own account?"

"On her own account?—Why, really that is such an equivocal question, that I don't know exactly how to answer it. But I'll tell you

what she does, that you may answer it for yourself. She opens her house once or twice every season, for some singer's benefit, if not for her own; she then expects you to take a ticket; and this, I can do her the justice to say, is the only tax she lays upon you."

A short pause now ensued, which was first broken by Courtenay suddenly exclaiming, "Ha! here is royalty!"

"Where?" said Granby.

"Straight before you--the Crown Prince of Oonalaska--Stare at him well, if you would not be singular."

Granby saw before him, in the crowd, a short squab, copper-coloured man, with straight black hair, high cheeks, small pig-like eyes, and an uncouth carriage, who stared about him, as if ill at ease, with a pitiable vacancy of countenance.

"Look--there is a lion hunter, if there ever was one--old Mrs. Biddulph. She has fastened upon his Highness already. Do observe her, and

him too—ha! ha! I will bet you a sovereign she has him at her rout on Friday. She never misses any thing that will raise a stare. Did you ever hear of Spencer Saltash going to her party dressed up and disguised in a wig and spectacles, and introduced as Dr. Gall? Saltash played his part admirably, but Mrs. Biddulph found him out. However, instead of exposing him at once, as ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would have done, she very admirably kept up the deception, for the sake of hoaxing the rest of the company—Lady Harriet Duncan was one of them. She quite adored the doctor for his jargon.”

“ Oh! what our Florence friend, Lady Harriet? she’s a person I very much wish to meet. I was excessively amused with her. We had some good scenes, if you remember. Besides I want to revive my Italian recollections.”

“ I have been talking to her already.”

“ When do you mean? what here? to-night?”

“ Here—to-night—nay, she is not far from you at this moment. By all that is lucky, there she is—her own little eccentric self—talking, too, to Mrs. Biddulph—charming pair ! With their leave I shall make a third. Come along,” said he, taking hold of Granby’s arm ; “ we have stood in this corner long enough. Who are you staring at ? Well, if you mean to grow to the dado, I don’t—so fare you well ;” and away he went, to speak to Lady Harriet,—leaving Granby apparently unconscious of his retreat.

The attention of Granby was at that moment totally absorbed, in watching the motions of two persons, who were retiring at some little distance into another room. He could not identify the elder lady, nor did he, indeed, give her much of his attention, but chiefly directed it to her youthful companion : and with some reason ; for he thought, as he looked at her, that the neck and head could belong only to Caroline Jermy.

But they went forward in an undeviating straight line, now lost, and now re-appearing in the same provoking uniformity of direction, till a closing group of tall people hid them entirely from his view. His first impulse was to follow them. They were going towards the staircase; probably to their carriage; in a few minutes they would have left the house; and he should sleep another night in ignorance—an ignorance which the prompt exertion of a few minutes might remove. But after all the circumstances that had passed, a marked pursuit, a forced rencontre, when they perhaps were endeavouring to avoid him, was a mode of meeting repugnant to his feelings of pride and delicacy. But then, these might not be the Jermyns, and he wished not so much to accost them, as to satisfy his doubts.

All this passed across his mind much faster than he could have uttered it; so that he did not lose much time in mental debate His

last resolution, like his first, was to follow ; and accordingly follow them he did. But this was not an easy task. He had lost sight of them, and they were more than a room's length in advance ; and a room's length in a crowded party, is a distance not very speedily traversed. A side door, (the only short cut), was then in an impassable state of blockade ; acquaintance whom he had not met before, sprung up provokingly in his path ; and these obstacles, if the parties pursued were bent on departure, rendered his chance of overtaking them almost hopeless. In short, like " panting Time," he " toiled after *them* in vain." That head and neck, were no where visible, and he was forced to conclude that its fair owner had left the house.

As a last sad chance of arriving at the desired intelligence, he asked the groom of the chambers, who was at the bottom of the stairs, whether Lady Jermyn's carriage had been announced ;

but the gentleman could not “charge his memory,” and would not take the trouble to inquire.

Thus foiled, and bethinking himself that it was not prudent to be very pointed in his inquiries, he immediately left the party, and returned disconsolately home. It was useless to him now to know whether the Jermyns had really been at Mrs. Clotworthy’s; but his curiosity was not extinct, and he reflected with much pleasure that one chance still remained—the list of the company in the Morning Post. And in this he was not disappointed; for on the second morning he read at breakfast the following article. “*Mrs. Clotworthy’s First Grand Ball.*—On Monday night, this new bright star in the hemisphere of fashion, opened her unique residence in ——— Street, toupwards of five hundred distinguished leaders of the ‘*haut ton.*’ The admiring crowd began to arrive about eleven o’clock, and the carriages

continued to set down until three in the morning. A splendid suite of rooms was thrown open, of which the blue drawing-room and the new saloon were appropriated to dancing. The matchless beauty of the latter room excited the most lively admiration. The style of its decorations is perfectly unrivalled, the whole having been executed under the direction of Messrs. Simkins, of the Strand. The recesses were filled with the choicest exotics; and a sumptuous banquet was set out in the suite of apartments on the ground floor, where the tables groaned under every delicacy in and out of season. Dancing commenced about half-past eleven—consisting of quadrilles and waltzes alternately; and was kept up with unwearied spirit by the fashionable votaries of Terpsichore, till a late hour. The exotic plants were furnished by Messrs. Jenkins; Gunter prepared the supper; and the band was led by Colinet, in his highest style. Among the company we noticed Princes Jablanowsky, Mitchimikilikoff, &c. &c. &c.”

The reader will perhaps dispense with the list, and let it suffice to say, that it extended in goodly array from Dukes, Duchesses, and so on, downwards in regular gradation, to Messieurs, Mistresses, and Misses ; and that it contained two names which Granby noticed with even more satisfaction than he did his own ; those of Lady and Miss Jermyn.

It was very provoking to have missed so fair an opportunity of getting through the embarrassments of a first meeting ; but at any rate it was satisfactory that the point of uncertainty was now removed.

CHAP. XVIII.

Nothing more aggravates ill success, than the near approach to good. These kind of hair-breadth missings of happiness look like the insults of fortune, who may be considered as then playing tricks with us, and wantonly diverting herself at our expense.—FIELDING.

GRANBY went that morning to call upon Mrs. Dormer. There was a lively good sense and playful good humour about this lady, which rendered her society always agreeable to him; and there were few, if any, of his young acquaintance, with whom he could pass an hour more pleasantly than in the company of his elderly aunt. After tattling of many other people, she fortunately proceeded to mention the Jermyns; a name which Henry longed to hear, but which, for rea-

sons which we can easily understand, he scrupulously abstained from introducing.

It would perhaps have been fortunate for him had he been more open in his communications to Mrs. Dormer—had he told her the origin of the misunderstanding which existed between himself and the Jermyns, and the peculiar and ambiguous state of feeling under which they were again to meet. As reconciliation was undoubtedly an object which above all others he desired, he could not have put the affair into a better train for that purpose, than by submitting it to one who, like Mrs. Dormer, would have been a kind and active mediator, and was intimately acquainted with both parties. But Granby had in his composition a degree of reserve, a shrinking delicacy, which, though generally allied to many estimable qualities, is often productive of difficulties, which a more open disclosure might have prevented. In the present instance he encouraged himself in this propensity, by the reflection that he was but a sharer in the

secret—that in the disclosure, should he make one, Caroline's name must mingle with his own. He remembered, too, that his worthy uncle was implicated in putting a finishing stroke to the quarrel; and that without the joint permission of these, he was perhaps not at liberty to disclose all he knew concerning it. Consequently he had never hitherto volunteered the slightest remark to Mrs. Dormer respecting any member of that family, but waited till they should be introduced by her in the regular course of conversation. On this occasion she informed him, that since he last called upon her she had seen all the family, and that he would probably meet them on the morrow at Lady Drayton's.

The morrow came; and never was the mind of man more cruelly stretched on the rack of anticipation, than was Henry Granby's in the prospect of meeting the Jermyn family that night. It was a meeting in which the sweets and bitters would be curiously blended, and it were hard to say which would predominate. He was to meet

for the first time under altered circumstances, circumstances to what extent altered he hardly knew,) not only his early friends, but one whom he would gladly call by a dearer title. Happily he should meet them in a crowd, where the awkwardness would be less, and he should have a better chance of seeing and talking to Caroline separately; and this was a considerable consolation. He balanced probabilities and proprieties a thousand times; considered how they were likely to receive him; and, what was more important, how he ought to receive them. He tried and adopted by turns the distantly dignified, the modestly apologetic, the grave respectful, and the gay forgiving; made many proper speeches from them to himself, to which he furnished very neat and appropriate replies; in short, if they would but speak and act as he expected, he could play his part extremely well, and stand before them in a very dignified point of view.

So full were his thoughts of this subject, that at the dinner-party which he joined that evening,

he was certainly not considered as an acquisition. The dinner-party was irksome to him, and he was not much better disposed towards "a small evening party," where he looked in on his way to Lady Drayton's, and at which he left rather more than two hundred "distinguished fashionables." He then got into a coach; found that he did not recollect Lady Drayton's number, but told the coachman that it was in Upper Grosvenor-street, and that he would be sure to know the house by the crowd and the lights; and to avoid delay directed to be set down at the end of the string of carriages.

He soon arrived; got into the house; gave his name, "Mr. Granby," as he thought very distinctly; heard it undergo the successive versions of "Cranberry," and "Banbury," in passing through the mouths of several quick-eared domestics, between the entrance-hall and the ball-room; just saw the head of the noble hostess turn abruptly as it caught her ear; made his

bow; read in her well-bred air of suppressed astonishment, a total ignorance as to who he was; advanced and uttered something about "Mrs. Dormer," and "honour of her card;" saw that she was not much enlightened, and was going to correct the report of his name, when her attention was diverted by a fresh arrival, and his incipient explanation sunk under a thick shower of "how do's," from a large party of her intimate friends. He therefore resigned himself quietly to the misrepresentation; and turned his thoughts to the pursuit of the Jermyns, who, he doubted not, were already in the house.

He edged his way about the rooms; looked through every quadrille for Caroline, and along every wall for Lady Jermyn; searched the supper room; stood on the staircase, watching the arrivals; penetrated to the boudoir; looked everywhere again and again: but alas! no Jermyns were to be seen.

There were many people at the ball whom he knew; and at length, the better to cover his

chagrin, and control his impatience, he determined to dance; but, though his partner was well calculated to engage his attention, he was ever and anon considerably "*distract.*" At last, one of his reveries was broken, by the young lady with whom he was dancing asking him if he had been that night at Lady Drayton's.

"Lady Drayton's!" said Henry, with a look of surprise.

"Yes," said his fair querist, "she gives a ball to night—it is in this street, at the other end."

"Oh!" said our hero, in a grave quiet tone; and however greatly he was surprised and disappointed, this was all he uttered on the occasion.

Now, the non-appearance of the Jermyns was sufficiently accounted for; and he had been passing three hours in a house, of which he did not know the owner's name! At this moment he saw Tyrrel at the other side of the room; and

as soon as he had resigned his partner to her chaperon, forced his way through the crowd towards him. "Come this way," said he to Tyrrel, drawing him by the button to a less crowded corner; and then in a kind of whisper, said, "I am going to ask you an odd question—whose house am I in?"

"What do you mean?" said Tyrrel, staring.

"I mean that I have been two or three hours in this house, thinking all the while I was at Lady Drayton's."

"No! you hav'nt! Gad! that's capital! and you don't know whose it is after all?"

"Not the least—I want you to tell me."

Tyrrel was excessively amused, and it was some time before Henry could learn from him that the name of their hostess was Lady Charleville.

"And now," said Henry, "I shall look for the lady, explain the mistake, and make my exit."

"What are you talking of?" said Tyrrel,

holding him by the arm. " I did not think you had been half such a *green* one. Why my dear fellow, there is not the least occasion for any sort of apology. I'll bet you five to one, in anything you like, that there are fifty others in this room of whom she knows as little as she does of you. It is the commonest thing in the world to go to a ball without an invitation. I know one or two, (I shall not mention names), that always go into the first lighted house they come to—they ask no questions, and nobody asks them any. Besides, you had much better stay where you are, than go to Lady Drayton's. This is much the better ball, I give you my word—the other was thinning very fast when I came away."

" Was there anybody there that I know ?" said Henry.

" Yes, there were the Polesworths, and the two Lady Grafton's—tall thin girls, and just of a height—" number eleven," as somebody called them ; and then there was Lady Jermyn,

and her daughter. A fine girl the daughter is —she would really be perfect if she would but waltz. I saw them off, just before I came here —I was in hopes they were coming too.”

“ Are you sure they are *not* coming ?”

“ Quite sure—I heard them say ‘ home.’ Come,—stay where you are, and never think of explanations.”

Henry was not at all convinced that his case, however common, was one that required no apology. He, therefore, found out Lady Charleville, and explained the cause of his singular mistake. The Lady laughed good-humouredly at the circumstance; mentioned some instances of similar mistakes which had fallen within her knowledge; and concluded by saying; that if he would leave his address, she should be happy to send him a card for her second ball, on that day three weeks. Granby bowed his thanks, and soon afterwards left the house which had been the scene of so singular a mistake, and so cruel a disappointment.

This awful first meeting was still to come; and the opportunity was so good, and he felt so well prepared for the interview, that it was very provoking to have missed it. He should now meet them, doubtless, in some awkward, embarrassing way; perhaps in the presence of a few strangers, or, what was worse, of a few observant inquisitive friends: and he straightway began to figure to himself all the disagreeable circumstances which might attend a first interview. One comfortable thought did enter his mind,—that it was fortunate they did not know, as doubtless they did not, that he was to be at Lady Drayton's, or perhaps Caroline might fancy that he wished to avoid her. This, to be sure, was not very probable, but singular to say, it was strictly the fact; for Caroline had been told by Mrs. Dormer that Granby was to be at Lady Drayton's, and that she had held out to him the prospect of meeting them there. We shall not enter into any explanation of the

feelings with which, after this information, she looked forward to Lady Drayton's ball; we have described them already; they were an exact transcript of Henry Granby's.

CHAP. XIX.

Now am I in the region of delight !
Within the blessed compass of these walls
She is : the gay light of those blazing lamps
Doth shine upon her, and this painted floor
Is with her footsteps pressed.

BASIL.—*Joanna Baillie.*

TWICE already had the expected meeting been cruelly prevented by untoward chance, and Granby now could only feed upon the hope that fortune might favour him at Mrs. Henley's. Having dined in a party where Tyrrel was also present, whose destination for the evening was the same as his own, they went together to the ball. On their arrival, their names were announced, and they ascended the stairs, and

saw few symptoms of a crowd till they came to the top. At this point there was a stoppage, and they were obliged to bow from a distance to the lady of the house, and remain stationary on the upper landing place.

Mrs. Henley was at that time standing in the entrance to the ball room, talking to a gentleman who was leaning with his back against the wall, his head inclined slightly forward with a graceful condescending bend, and with the air of one who was conferring a greater honour than he received. "It is Trebeck," said Tyrrel, "do you know him?"

"Only by sight and reputation," said Granby, "and I do not expect to be honoured with a closer acquaintance."

"Ay, he is cursedly fine—but a good fellow when you come to know him; I shall be glad to introduce you some time or other."

Immediately after this, on seeing him look up, Tyrrel bowed, but Trebeck appeared not to see him, as he did not take the slightest

notice. "He's as blind as a beetle," said Tyrrel, with a forced laugh.

An acquaintance of their's, a Mr. Selby, who was standing near them, smiled as he caught Granby's eye, and appeared to think that Trebeck's blindness was in this instance of a convenient nature. "Tyrrel, I'll bet you a guinea," said he, "that he does not go beyond the door-way." Tyrrel shook his head, and declined the bet. "He never does," pursued the other, "but at some select houses. He stands at the entrance, and pays the compliment of a few minutes talk with the lady of the house, and does not commit himself by jostling within."

"Horrid nonsense, all this," said Tyrrel—"I never knew a man in my life so much afraid of losing *caste*."

"Well he may," said Mr. Selby, "for he has now got so high, he can scarce change his place without falling. He is quite of the *recherché* few—the pet of the exclusives."

“He is a sad puppy, begging his pardon,” said Tyrrel, who was not a little piqued at being *cut*.

“But he is no shallow coxcomb,” said Mr. Selby. “Trebeck is a clever fellow, you may depend upon it. He had his object, and he has gained it. No man has played his cards better. Only consider what his address has made him—what he would have been without it, had he gone to sleep at his country seat, and been the plain quiet person his father was.

At this moment, two ladies who were behind evinced a wish to pass by them—“I beg your pardon,” said Tyrrel, stepping over to the other side to make way for them, and then exclaiming in a lively tone of recognition, “Ah! Lady Jermyn, I did not see it was you.”

“How do you do, Mr. Tyrrel?—long in town?” said Lady Jermyn.

“Not long,” and the ladies passed on.

Granby started at the voice and name, and

turning, saw Caroline and her mother for the first time, not only near him, but so near that Lady Jermyn's silk dress rustled against him as she passed. Their faces were both turned towards Tyrrel, who was on the opposite side. Lady Jermyn must have seen him ; Caroline, who was on the other side of her, certainly did not ; but neither of them looked his way, or appeared to know that he was there, but went straight on towards Mrs. Henley.

“ Granby, they *cut* you,” said Tyrrel, jokingly, as the ladies moved out of hearing. Granby coloured deeply, and stung, with the remark,—which had a keener effect than it was meant to have,—without returning an answer to Tyrrel, instantly followed them in a momentary fit of desperate feeling to the ball-room,—determined if possible to break the ice, and know at once upon what terms they were henceforth to meet.

He came up to them at the moment when

Lady Jermyn was bent upon saying something very gracious to Mr. Trebeck, and she was in the middle of her speech, when the apparition of Henry Granby, whom she flattered herself she had dexterously avoided, broke abruptly on her view. She stammered—hesitated—seemed to forget what she was saying—and made such a lame and impotent conclusion to the civil speech she was narrating so prettily, that Trebeck looked up to discover the cause. He saw Granby, with an eye wandering between Caroline and her mother; a step that knew not whether to advance or recede; a hand half extended, half dropt; and a lip that moved, but uttered nothing audible. Caroline visibly started on seeing him, and then, with heightened colour, and a countenance in which confusion glowed with mingled feelings of pain, pleasure, and surprise, gazed for an instant as if upon a statue, forgetful of returning his imperfect greeting; while Lady Jermyn with one of the

coldest smiles that ever froze on mortal lips, slightly and stiffly bent her head, and quickly turned her face away.

The irritated feelings with which Granby had advanced towards them, had subsided as suddenly as they were roused. He meant to have accosted them with stubborn coolness; but his intended bravado was happily dispelled by Caroline's involuntary gesture of surprise, which at once convinced him, that she had not, as he at first imagined, affected ignorance of his presence. Then there was a glow of something on her cheek, which a liberal interpreter might construe into pleasure; and mixed as it was with great embarrassment, it instantly disarmed his angry pride, and he stood before her irresolute and confused. He did not address her—he knew not how—there was no form of words that did not seem either too trivial or too strong. A faint “I am glad to meet you” died upon his tongue; so faint that no one heard it. She did not speak—at least,

not audibly—but her lips moved, and her hand was half raised,—she knew not why. He saw it, stepped forward and touched it as it was about to be withdrawn, and then without another look, passed hastily by her into the thickest of the throng.

All this took place in a much shorter time than is occupied by the narration; and from the silence and brevity of the interview, was by no means likely to excite attention. But there was one standing near them, who already possessed a clue to Caroline's sentiments, and on whom the slightest indications were seldom lost. Trebeck's calm, keen, deliberate eye had accurately noted every thing that occurred; and with his usual skill in drawing inferences, he instantly detected the true state of their respective feelings. But he was not satisfied without surer grounds; and after a short pause, as soon as Granby was out of hearing, turning to Lady Jermyn, quietly asked her, "Who is that?"

“ A Mr. Granby,” she replied, looking uneasy at the question beyond all power of dissimulation, and shewing a wish to change her place.

Trebeck *forgot* to make way for her—“ A fine looking young man,” he observed, “ and pray who is he ?”

“ I believe he is a relation of the Malton family.”

“ Then he is not a person you know much of ?”

“ We have seen very little of him lately,” was the answer ; the indirectness of which was not unnoticed.

“ Ay, ay, a comparative stranger—I understand—a mere dancing acquaintance of Miss Jermyn’s,” fixing his eyes full upon Caroline with a disconcerting look.

She was not proof against this attack. She turned her eyes, she knew not where—nor cared she, provided they did not encounter those of Trebeck ; while the “ eloquent blood”

which mounted to her cheek, stoutly denied the truth of the supposition. Lady Jermyn hemmed, twitched her daughter's arm, and tried to talk of something else; but, driven out of her usual address, she could only complain of the heat of the room.

Trebeck made no attempt to resume his subject. He had both heard and seen sufficient. He therefore allowed them to pass, but remained near them, and presently found an opportunity of saying to Caroline in a low tone, "Pray excuse my unlucky *contretemps*. Am not I a sad blunderer? But forgive me this once; speak my pardon, or look it."

Caroline did neither; and after a short silence, he added in the same under tone, "I know it is your wish that our acquaintance should appear to be slight. It shall, since you desire it. I will endeavour to obey you, even in this. Do not think that I have forgotten my promise. It shall still be inviolable, though I now

possess the name." And here, with a melancholy and expressive look, and a half checked sigh, he left her.

There is an animating influence in a well filled ball-room, which soon breaks the current of anxious thought ; and Granby, after parting with the Jermyns, found himself engaged, in a few moments, in gay and careless conversation. The feverish excitement of his spirits had even given him a more than usual animation ; and ten minutes after his agitating interview, the most intimate of his friends would probably have said, that some peculiarly pleasant circumstance had been the cause of his increased vivacity. He fell in with Mr. Duncan, and had been talking for some time cheerfully with him, when Trebeck gradually approached them, and taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, stepped forward, and asking a trivial question about somebody at the other side of the room, obliged Mr. Duncan to turn from his companion. Henry's attention was at

the same time diverted by a lady who was near him; and Trebeck watching this opportunity, said to Duncan in a low voice, "Introduce me to your friend Granby."

"Certainly," said Duncan, looking surprised, and with an enquiring face, that seemed to ask the motive of so unusual a request, from a person of such uncompromising fastidiousness in the admission of an acquaintance. Trebeck smiled at his air of astonishment, and seemed to understand his thoughts—"His father, and mine," said he, "were old friends." In fact, their fathers were acquainted; but the supposition of their friendship was a licence of his own. However, the reason seemed to pass current with Duncan, who, turning round, immediately executed the office required, to the no small astonishment of Granby, and then left him and his new acquaintance to a *tête-à-tête*.

Trebeck immediately entered into conversation, and began by speaking very handsomely

of Mr. Duncan, and in a way which led Granby to conclude that he owed the unexpected honour of this introduction to the good offices of that gentleman. From thence he got, somehow or other, but very naturally, as it seemed at the time, to Lord and Lady Daventry.

“Lady Daventry,” he said, “was a Miss Jermyn, a sister of Sir Thomas Jermyn—I have met him at Lord Daventry’s—he is in parliament—member for Rottentown.”

“He is—I know,” said Granby.

“He has a place in ——shire—Brackingsley, it is called.”

“It is— I have seen it.”

“Perhaps you know him?” pursued Trebeck.

“Yes, I do.”

“Oh! you do! What family has he?”

“Only one daughter.”

“Only the girl that is here to-night?”

“No other.”

“Then Brackingsley will be her’s, I suppose.”

“ I suppose so, of course.—I never heard any thing to the contrary.”

“ Nor I,” said Trebeck. “ Well! *tant mieux*—it is lucky for her that her face is not her only fortune. But, perhaps you are one of those who think her handsome.”

“ Certainly, I am,” said Granby.

“ So you really admire her?” said Trebeck, perseveringly.

This was rather a home question, but Granby boldly answered, “ Yes.”

“ A frank confession!” said Trebeck, with a smile.

“ Confession! of what?” said Henry, alarmed, —“ I only said—”

“ Only twice as much as you meant,” said Trebeck. “ As it is said *entre nous*, I will note it at that. Had you been talking to a lady, I should have thought you meant nothing.” And then, more effectually to quiet the apprehensions which his vigilant eye had clearly marked, he changed the topic, told him a ludicrous anecdote,

and walked away before his laughter ceased ; leaving in Granby's mind a pleasant impression of his companionable qualities.

Granby was soon joined by Tyrrel and Selby, the former of whom had been much surprised at seeing him talking to Trebeck. " Why, Granby," said he, " I suppose I misunderstood you—but I certainly thought you told me just now that you knew Trebeck only by sight."

" No more I did at the time I told you so."

" You have made devilish good haste then in getting an introduction," said Tyrrel, with an air of pique ; " but I suppose you were led to it by the complimentary things you heard us say of him."

" The introduction was not of my seeking," said Granby ; " I owed it, I believe, to a common friend, a Mr. Duncan. It was quite a matter of surprise to me."

Tyrrel made some remark upon this, to which Granby did not attend ; for he heard at that

moment the words "Chesterton how are you?" from a gentleman behind him, and "How do you do, my Lord?" in various agreeable keys, from several silver-toned female voices; and he instantly turned to catch a glimpse of the person who was thus addressed. His curiosity will not excite surprise, when it is remembered that this was the person to whom fame, "that incorrigible gossip," assigned the hand of Caroline.

"Now," thought Granby, as he made himself acquainted with his Lordship's exterior, "I shall probably have an opportunity of judging, from their manner of meeting, of the accuracy of that report." With this view, he diligently observed his Lordship's movements, and was soon rewarded by seeing him approach Lady Jernyn and her daughter. He was fortunately so situated, that he could securely watch them unobserved. He saw Lord Chesterton slowly advance—make a cold and languid salutation, which was evidently his first greeting to them that

night—say something, which it did not take half a minute to utter—and then with perfect indifference pass on; while Caroline saw him come and go with undisturbed serenity of countenance, and a faint smile of mere civility; and Lady Jermyn let him escape with easy unconcern, and a something of hauteur, which considering his Lordship's expectations, those who best know her would have been most surprised at.

It is difficult to describe the pleasure which this short scene conveyed to Granby. It was conclusive. The report of the engagement must have been erroneous, and Caroline was still unshackled. It was next to an impossibility, that such a meeting, so tame, so frigid, so indifferent, so utterly deficient even in common cordiality, should have taken place between persons who were soon to be united to each other. His heart was suddenly lightened of a load which had long pressed heavily upon it—a load which was rendered still more galling by the sense of uncertainty, which completely pre-

vented him from seeking relief in the sure balm of patient endurance.

The removal of an evil of long continuance, is perhaps more delightful than the accession of many a positive good. Most of our readers must some time or other have revelled in the joyousness of a lightened spirit, suddenly relieved from the bondage of calamity; and all such will comprehend that state of unalloyed content, in which Henry Granby remained long rapt after his fortunate discovery. He could think of nothing else, until he saw at a little distance Lady Jermyn and Caroline, going from the ball-room towards their carriage. His eyes, which were brightened with pleasure, met Caroline's as she passed near him. It was, in fact, the first time they had met that night. The expression of his was too catching to be resisted, and in this short interchange of looks, she smiled. The smile was seen but for an instant, and the face in which it shone turned hastily away; but fleeting as it was, it was full of eloquence to him. It revived

a host of recollections, which he had long secretly, but fondly cherished. It spoke of many happy hours, of joyful days, of unrestrained communion, of scenes too precious to be lost. It put to flight all thoughts but of the present, and, forgetful of the prudence which he had enjoined himself, and of the presence of Lady Jermy, he was stepping forward to hand Caroline to the carriage, when a gentleman who was nearer to them interposed with the offer of his arm, and led her away.

Granby followed them with his eyes; and now, too full of happiness to be accessible to any feelings of jealousy or repining, after a short reverie of the purest satisfaction, he left the ball, and sallied out into the fresh cool air of a summer-morning—suddenly passing from the red glare of lamplight, to the clear sober brightness of returning day. He walked cheerfully onward, refreshed and exhilarated by the air of morning, and interested with the scene around him. It was

broad day-light, and he viewed the town under an aspect in which it is alike presented to the late retiring votary of pleasure, and to the early rising sons of business. He stopped on the pavement of Oxford-street, to contemplate the effect. The whole extent of that long vista, unclouded by the mid-day smoke, was distinctly visible to his eye at once. The houses shrunk to half their span, while the few visible spires of the adjacent churches seemed to rise less distant than before, gaily tipped with early sunshine, and much diminished in apparent size, but heightened in distinctness and in beauty. Had it not been for the cool grey tint which slightly mingled with every object, the brightness was almost that of noon. But the life, the bustle, the busy din, the flowing tide of human existence, were all wanting to complete the similitude. All was hushed and silent; and this mighty receptacle of human beings, which a few short hours would wake into active energy and motion, seemed like a city of the dead.

There was little to break this solemn illusion. Around were the monuments of human exertion, but the hands which formed them were no longer there. Few, if any, were the symptoms of life. No sounds were heard but the heavy creaking of a solitary waggon; the twittering of an occasional sparrow; the monotonous tone of the drowsy watchman; and the distant rattle of the retiring carriage, fading on the ear till it melted into silence: and the eye that searched for living objects fell on nothing but the grim great-coated guardian of the night, muffled up into an appearance of doubtful character between bear and man, and scarcely distinguishable, by the colour of his dress, from the brown flags along which he sauntered.

Granby was in a frame of mind to be agreeably struck by the peculiarities of such a scene. The prosaic part of him lay dormant, and the more imaginative faculties of his mind had been called forth into vigorous activity by the excite-

ment of recent circumstances. He gaily pursued his homeward course ; reached his door just as the sun burst full upon it ; and retired to rest with spirits lighter than it had lately fallen to his lot to possess.

CHAP. XX.

As thistles wear the softest down
To hide their prickles till they're grown,
And then declare themselves, and tear
Whatever ventures to come near ;
So a smooth knave does greater feats
Than one that idly rails and threats.—BUTLER.

THE first visitor whom Granby saw on the morning after his meeting with Caroline, was his cousin Tyrrel, who called upon him while he was leisurely finishing his mid-day breakfast. Among his various associates, there was no one whom he saw more frequently, or with greater pleasure, or by whom he seemed more sought in return. After the first coldness had subsided, Tyrrel manifested towards him a warmth of friendship, which their close relationship and the contrast of his previous conduct, could not fail to render peculiarly gratifying. There was a frankness in Tyrrel's manner which invited familiarity; and the circumstance of his being

nearly ten years older than Henry Granby, did not at all appear to check the unreserved freedom of their intercourse. Tyrrel was a cheerful entertaining companion. He knew the town and all its characters, and was an amusing Cicerone, either in the park or on the pavé, at opera or ball,—as he had generally something to say about “the gentleman in the cabriolet, with the pyebald horse,” or “the lady that is waltzing, with the diamond head-dress,” or “that person in the pea-green coat, who is just turning into Bond-street,” or “the fat man that is going to sleep in White’s bow-window.”

It, therefore, needed not the force of the General’s injunctions, to induce Henry to cultivate the society of such an associate, for whom he really began to feel considerable regard. He was not, however, blinded to his faults. He noticed and lamented an occasional laxity of principle, and an intimate acquaintance with the worst parts of a town life, which did not betoken any very scrupulous degree of purity.

But young men are not prone to suspicion; nor was Henry Granby disposed hastily to condemn his cousin. Gratitude for many kindnesses might perhaps ill qualify him for the office of censor. He was not, however, unconscious of one strong trait in his cousin's character: a love of play. But he did not think himself in much danger of acquiring that pernicious taste through this connection: for Tyrrel did not appear to play much himself; nor did he press him violently to engage in it. He seldom proposed any game of chance, and seemed careless about it when they did play. He was, however, very fond of betting, and took frequent opportunities of so doing, on any little doubtful point which might arise in conversation. But he always betted low, and not very judiciously; so that by the time Granby had won a tolerable number of half-sovereigns, he began to feel some inclination for this method of closing an argument.

Tyrrel spoke charitably and pleasantly of

play and its votaries, but at the same time, calmly and temperately, and without any enthusiasm; describing it as a pleasing, and by no means a dangerous recreation; in which, in fact, everybody indulged in a more or less degree, and which was only injurious in its excess.

Then he had a few axioms which he frequently brought forward. Persons, he would say, could seldom be ruined who played systematically, and for the same stake. They could win in one night what they lost in another. There was less cheating in the world than people imagined. Sharpers were bugbears, that were much talked of and little seen. A regular *leg* he declared to be the best person to bet with at a race; and, he said, Gambling houses were in general particularly correct, as they had a character to lose. He seemed knowing, but not eager, in every thing connected with the hazard table and the turf; but of his own proceedings he said little, so that Henry could not possibly judge to what extent he had engaged in either.

“Granby,” said Tyrrel to him, on the morning after the ball at Mrs. Henley’s, as he sat and saw him eat his breakfast, “what do you do with yourself this evening?”

“Nothing—anything. I have no engagement but this ball,” (pointing to a card) “to which I am very doubtful whether I shall go. I believe I shall fill up my time with the opera.”

“Well, I’m just in the same situation. I wish you would come and dine with me.”

“Very willingly—but where?”

“Oh! *chez moi*—I hate your coffee-houses, and we don’t belong to the same club.”

The hour was named, and as little after it as could reasonably be expected, Henry was at Tyrrel’s lodgings, in Jermyn-street. He found there two other persons; a gentlemanly foreigner, a Viscomte de Labrosse, and a Mr. Althorp, a soft civil sleepy-looking man, with a gentle voice, an obsequious bend, a quiet stealthy gait, and a peculiar heaviness of eye and demureness of expression.

Granby was introduced to them by Tyrrel as a friend and relation, with a marked and flattering emphasis on the word "cousin." He was treated by them with great politeness and attention. Mr. Althorp, in particular, shewed peculiar deference to his opinion; and such was the civility and liveliness of the party, that the hours glided pleasantly away. After wit and wine had long and freely circulated, Tyrrel began to think of some amusement. "There are just four of us," he observed; "Granby, you are a whist player—what say you to a game?"

"With all my heart; but I thought you were going to the opera."

"Oh! damn the opera—opera and ballet are both as old as Adam, and it's Thursday night; nobody will be there. Let us have some whist. Althorp—Labrosse—you both play."

They could both play *a little*, by their own account; so the card-table was wheeled round, and down they sat to whist; and Henry had for his partner the Viscomte de Labrosse. The

stake was not what would be called high, at any fashionable club, but it was higher than Granby was accustomed to play, and this he ventured to mention; but he was soon made to understand, that comparatively speaking, it was in reality so infamously low, that except in a private way, *pour passer le temps*, nobody "that was any body" would venture to play it; and he was therefore compelled to retract his observation.

They began to play, and Granby soon found reason to think that it was no false modesty which made the party, especially his opponents, declare they could play only a little. Game succeeded game, and he became a considerable winner; and this not always in consequence of his own good cards or skill in the game, but from the bad play of his opponents. His sleepy-looking friend, except during the time that he was Granby's partner, appeared to play peculiarly ill; and yet there was a quiet adroitness in his manner of dealing, shuffling, and going through all the business of the card-table, which

seemed to denote the practised player. Probably though unskilled in whist, he was in the habit of playing a good deal at other games. Tyrrel, rather unusually, as Granby thought, took very good care that none of his blunders should pass unobserved, and, as if out of humour, even blamed him without a cause, and accused him, to Granby's surprise, of an awkward manner of dealing and shuffling. All this Mr. Althorp bore with the most laudable good humour—confessing that cards were not his province; and, as if hurried by a desire to do better than well, he became really awkward, dropped almost half the cards in shuffling, and made a missed deal when it came to his turn.

Meanwhile Granby's winnings increased, and after he had four by honours in his own hand, it was proposed by Tyrrel, that the stake should be doubled. The Frenchman shrugged, and talked of the run of luck against him; but made no real opposition. Mr. Althorp, who was now Granby's partner, closed readily with the pro-

posal. Granby alone objected. Tyrrel looked surprised, and hardly seemed to think him in earnest.

“ I had rather not play so high,” persisted Granby; “ it is a larger stake than I like to play for.”

“ That is cautiously said for a winner like you. Why, with your cards—(for a run of luck almost invariably lasts the evening)—with your cards, I would venture to play for four times the stake.”

“ But,” said Henry, “ I do not wish to win from others what I cannot afford to lose myself.”

“ A liberal sentiment, undoubtedly—a very liberal one,” said Mr. Althorp—“ excellent in theory; but, between ourselves, unknown in practice. So now that we have applauded your sentiment, as it certainly deserves, I am sure you will indulge us in our little request.”

“ I am sorry,” said Granby, “ to be obliged to say more; but I really was serious in my first refusal.”

“ So, then, you have fleeced us to our last

shilling," said Tyrrel, in a tone of half-pique, "and will not give us our revenge."

"If you are so reduced," said Granby, smiling, "you have less reason for doubling the stake. But, as for giving you your revenge, if you want to win your money back again, I shall be happy"—(pulling out his watch)—"to give you that opportunity for another hour; but at the same rate of play, if you please."

"My dear fellow," said Tyrrel, "you really surprise me. To be so scrupulous! and a winner too! Now, what reason on earth can you possibly have for refusing to play, in a small quiet party, at this very, very trifling stake—for it is trifling comparatively."

"I have told you my reasons," said Henry, "and I am sorry you should wish me to repeat them. It is quite unnecessary, for they remain the same. Pray, let the discussion end. I will play on, as I told you, at the former stake: You can have no objection to that; and I *have* an objection to any increase. Surely, we had

much better do that in which all the party can agree.”

There was a firmness, mixed with the good-humour of his refusal, which effectually precluded all further attacks. Mr. Althorp smiled as obligingly as if, in following Granby's will, he had been secretly gratifying his own. Tyrrel, at first, was serious and silent; but soon roused himself, and was presently in higher spirits than before. The hour quickly rolled away; and Granby, much lightened of his previous winnings, took his leave of them for the evening.

He called upon Tyrrel the next day, and something being said about his new acquaintance, and particularly the obliging Mr. Althorp. “Oh, ay—Althorp,” said Tyrrel, carelessly—“what do you think of him? A quiet simple creature—isn't he? He'll never set the Thames on fire; but he is as good a fellow as ever breathed. Oh, you'll like him amazingly.”

“Perhaps,” said Granby, doubtingly, “I may upon farther acquaintance.”

“What! don’t you like him already,” said Tyrrel. “Gad! you surprise me. Everybody likes Jack Althorp.”

“I dare say I am to blame,” said Granby, “in not liking him more than I do. But you know my acquaintance with him has been very slight.”

“True, so it has, and I hope you will improve it.”

“Certainly; upon your recommendation.”

“Oh, I don’t press you—remember that; I only thought you would like to know him.”

“I shall be very glad, as a friend of yours. Perhaps, you can give me his address.”

“I can,” said Tyrrel, and immediately wrote it upon a card. “There’s his address—but—no—nothing—there it is. You need not call for a day or two.”

Granby observed his hesitation, and was rather surprised, but took no notice, and so they parted.

CHAP. XXI.

L'on confie son secret dans l'amitié ; mais il échappe dans l'amour.

LA BRUYERE.

IT is not to be supposed, that since the meeting with Caroline at Mrs. Henley's, Granby's mind had not frequently dwelt upon that event. He often recounted to himself every circumstance, even the most trivial, by which her manner was then characterized ; and he laboured to draw from these slender materials some judgment of the state of her feelings. He was deeply plunged in this interesting study, and was aiding his meditations with the long-treasured lock of her hair, which lay on the table before him, when Tyrrel's step was heard upon the stairs, and he had scarcely time to cram it hastily into

his pocket, between the leaves of his pocket-book, before the door was thrown open, and his visitor entered.

After talking some little time about the other day's Levee, Eton Montem, state of the odds for the Derby and Oaks, a trotting-match on the Richmond road, and sundry other topics of the day, he came to the real purport of his visit, and asked Granby if he had yet called upon Mr. Althorp. Granby had not.

“Then you need not; he is out of town. By the bye, I gave you a wrong address; will you give it me again?”

“I shall make no use of it, if it is a wrong one; but do you want the card again?”

“Yes—yes, give it me,” said Tyrrel, impatiently; “where is it? Of course you can find it. I remember you put it into your pocket-book; just see if it is not there.”

Granby took out his pocket-book, opened it, found the card, and delivered it; and at that unlucky moment the lock of hair, which he had

slid in, he did not know where, between the leaves, dropped out, and fell on the ground.

“ A prize, by Jove ! ” said Tyrrel, seizing it ; “ a lock of hair, and a woman’s too ; nay—keep off—as I have got it, I’ll see it ; ” retreating all the while with the lock.

“ Pshaw, nonsense ! Tyrrel, what can you want with it ! come, give it back.”

“ Not till I’ve looked at it—I dare say the name is in the paper.”

“ You will not find it.”

“ No more I can, so I’ll trouble you to tell it me.”

“ Tell you ! not I.”

“ You won’t ? ”

“ Certainly not.”

“ Hem, hem—it is so, is it ? ” said Tyrrel. “ You are troubled with delicacies on that head ? Come, I’ll guess, to break the ice. I think I know the sort of person ; some damsel, retired from the cares of the world, in a snug white house, with venetian blinds, an easy mile or two out of town.”

Henry indignantly repelled the charge.

“Aye, that’s right—look properly shocked; but you know, my fine fellow, honest people will make strange guesses, if gay Lotharios, like yourself, carry locks of hair in their pocket-books, and are so shy of accounting for them.”

“I am not obliged to account for them to any one; but I’ll thank you, notwithstanding, to be less free in your reflections upon the lady whose hair it is.”

“I humbly beg the incognito’s pardon, with all my heart and soul,” said Tyrrel; “but since it is a modest flame, I think that, without any prejudice to your prospects, you might contrive to gratify my innocent wish for information. So, who is your fair friend?”

“I don’t mean to tell you. Come, return it.”

“Softly, Sir, another look. If you won’t tell me, I shall try to guess.”

“It is to no purpose.”

“Is it not? Let me see—I have it, Granby. Five to one I name the *winning* one. It is

Miss Jermyn. Ha ! I'm right ! It is—it actually is ; you have not the face to deny it."

It was with some reason he said this ; for his unexpectedly lucky guess seemed at once to electrify Granby, who hastily restored the hair in silence to the pocket-book, and did not attempt even the faintest denial ; while Tyrrel rubbed his hands with triumphant glee, and freely indulged in long and loud laughter.

"And pray, sweet Sir," continued he, "allow me to ask, how long have you carried this costly relic ? and how was the rape of the lock contrived ?—was it a free gift, or a case of lover's larceny ? and was it 'stolen from the person,' and 'in a dwelling-house,' or gratefully tendered in the open air, embowered with myrtle, in the presence of a conscious bed of heartease ?"

"You are asking an infinity of questions, not one of which will have any answer."

"Never mind, I can fancy it all. You first carried her work-box by storm, and secured the scissors ; then you introduced the subject with a

satire on hair-dressers, or said something *à propos* of ringlets; then talked of love-locks, and 'absence,' and 'lasting memorials;' and then you made bold to insinuate your request—beating the devil's tattoo all the while with your foot, and looking, I warrant you, any way but the right; and then, after reasonable delay, she cut off the lock with her own fair hands, and you received it on one knee, after the manner of the ancients, and she gave you the tip of her finger to kiss; and then—”

“ No more of this, for heaven's sake; I cannot bear much more provocation, so quit the subject—”

“ —And the room, eh? Neither, by your leave,” throwing himself into an arm-chair; “ I have a deal of curiosity to satisfy, and I don't mean to quit this chair 'till I have heard both the long and the short of this affair of yours. But, really, Granby, I had no suspicion of this at all: and yet, now I know it, I can call to mind some things that passed the other night, that I could

not account for at the time. I remember you looked as if you could have stabbed me, when I only observed that the ladies had *cut* you. And then, Lady Jermyn—I remember her face; warm and friendly, wasn't she? very ingratiating in her manner, eh?"

"It is past now; it does not signify what she was."

"Oh no, not at all; but I think I begin to understand. The old she dragon guards the fruit a little too closely—eh? doesn't she? Well, well, it is a nice little golden pippin, really, and well worth the watching, and the gathering too, my boy; and, if you are bent on a 'lass wi' a tocher,' I don't see how you can choose much better."

"Your imagination is really very active; it is a pity to check such flights of fancy; but I must take the liberty to remind you, that you are making up a story that has not been supported by a single syllable from me."

"No, certainly, to do you justice, you have

been confoundedly uncommunicative ; you have said nothing, I verily believe, that might not be trumpeted at Charing-Cross. But you have denied nothing—remember that ; and ‘ silence gives consent,’ you know ; so spare yourself the trouble of explaining it away ; my mind is made up ; I see it all ; and I’ll leave you at parting an old saw to work upon : ‘ Faint heart never won fair lady.’ So, my dear fellow,” (slapping him on the shoulder) “ as this is the crisis of your fate, be advised by a friend in need ; adjust your thoughts and your hair, your speech and your cravat ; and then rise, go forth, and propose yourself.”

“ Enough of this, in all conscience, Tyrrel,” said Granby, impatiently.

“ Or if,” continued the other, without noticing his manner, “ you cannot pluck up courage, intrust it to me, and I’ll engage to propose for you.”

“ You had better propose on your own account,” said Granby, in an ironical tone.

“ You advise me, do you ?”

“ Oh, certainly ; and set about it while you think of it.”

“ Very well ; adieu,” said Tyrrel, taking up his hat.

“ Stay one instant Tyrrel,” said Granby, who began to consider that as his companion was now in possession of the secret, it became desirable to treat with him for the safe custody.

“ Stop one instant.”

“ Why what’s in the wind now ?”

“ I must request,” pursued Granby, seriously, “ that you will never mention to any person what has passed between us this morning.”

“ Well !” said Tyrrel, shaking him heartily by the hand, “ I *will* promise truly and faithfully—subscribe to articles in writing—do anything in the world to comfort you. Will you have my promise under hand and seal ?”

“ No, of course not. Give me your word.”

“ Well then ; stay, let me rehearse. What

have I engaged to do? To keep inviolably secret your possession of a lock of hair, once the property of Miss Jermyn, and to conceal your unhappy attachment to the said Miss Jermyn, even, I suppose, from the lady herself."

Granby smiled and nodded assent.

"But I do not see," pursued Tyrrel, "after all, why you are so anxious about it. If the world *were* to know of the gift, it might be supposed to have been received and kept by you without any serious meaning on either side."

"I made a promise at the time," said Granby, "that it never should be seen or mentioned, and that is the reason I make such a point of exacting this secrecy."

"That explains it perfectly," said Tyrrel; "and now, after all the nonsense that I have been talking, let me tell you plainly and simply before I go, that this discovery gives me great pleasure—that I congratulate you upon your situation—and that you have my best wishes for

a happy arrangement." Having said this with great friendship and sincerity of manner, he took up his hat and left him.

Granby was much mortified by this little discovery. His cousin's raillery had acted powerfully upon his galled feelings; and though much comforted by his promise of secrecy, and the softened tone with which he left him, the vexation long continued, and he frequently recurred to the untoward accident which revealed his secret. However, he bore the evil as well as he was able, and as he could not help what had happened, he resolved to think no more about it. His principal object was a second meeting with the Jermyns. The first, but for the parting smile of Caroline, would have left no feeling but disappointment; and even with that, it was barely consolatory. Besides, as no conversation had yet passed, he felt that the ice was scarcely broken, and the awkwardness of a first meeting by no means satisfactorily removed. Thus circumstanced, he evidently longed for a second

opportunity of seeing them, and internally resolved, that when such might occur, it should not pass like the first in silence.

But day succeeded day, and the wished-for opportunity never came ; and for almost a fortnight did Henry Granby industriously frequent every likely place of public resort, without seeing the only face he cared to meet. He could not account for this. Perhaps she was unwell. Perhaps she was out of town. No, that was not probable. They had but lately come up ; and he read in a morning paper, in the report of the debates, the gratifying assurance that “ Sir T. Jermyn supported the Bill, and expressed his entire concurrence with the sentiments of the last speaker ; ” it was therefore plain that he was still in town.

END OF VOL. I.

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