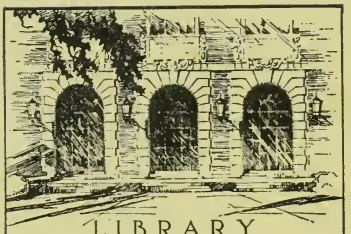

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
823
Sc079o
v.2

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/oldgreychurch02scot

THE

OLD GREY CHURCH.

VOL. II.

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

THE

OLD GREY CHURCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TREVELYAN" AND "A MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE."

"His brow was sad, his eye beneath
Flashed like a faulchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!" LONGFELLOW.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1856.

THE

OLD GREY CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

Dreadful was the lonely Saturday evening which Eustace passed at Ashford, at the end of his dismal journey from London on the following day. It was not however the silent gloom of his little parlour which so depressed him; it was not the contrast between the present, and the preceding evening in Stanhope-street; it was not the feeling, painful as that feeling was, of having parted with Lucy, little knowing when, or if ever, he should see her again. It was not either the cruel state of doubt, in which he was

still left respecting his uncle's feelings and intentions towards him, and his own consequent future fate in life. It was none of all this. It was—what was far worse to Eustace to bear — it was the stings of his own conscience, the humiliating feeling of self-reproach, the restless worry of a mind no longer at peace with itself: in short, it was the consciousness of being again under the complete dominion of a passion, which he had, in his ignorance of himself, fancied he had mastered. Why had he listened to the tempter? Why had he not at once courageously declined Mr. Watson's well-meant, but, as it proved, most ill-judged interference, with the view of bringing about a renewal of friendly intercourse between him and his uncle? What had he gained by the meeting? He was more than ever at a loss as to that uncle's intentions and feeling towards him. He had again beheld her, who he, now to his humiliation, discovered, had still, not-

withstanding all his resolutions, all his prayers even, power not only to disturb the peace of his mind, but to shake his very principles. Why did he ever leave Ashford? The previous Saturday evening he was equally solitary in his little parlour. All around him was equally silent and lonely. His one lamp gave an equally feeble light. The little clock on the chimney (his mother's present on his last birthday, aware that punctuality was not one of his virtues) gave an equally melancholy slow notification of the hours as they passed. But those hours, fully occupied by his parochial duties, by his meditations on the services of the approaching sabbath, and on the blessed truths which he was to proclaim, had passed quickly by, in contentment, if not in actual enjoyment, and with his mind thus at peace he had laid his head on his pillow at night, blessing God for all his mercies; and although in his prayers the companion of his youth was not forgotten, he could

from his heart say, with regard to her, "Thy will not mine be done."

But now—all was changed. Restless in body and mind, Eustace rose from his chair, and paced hurriedly up and down his small apartment; he threw open the window-sash, and looked out upon the night; the stars were beginning to shine brightly in the darkening sky; he gazed upon them long in a dreamy state, wondering *what* they were. Whether other inhabited worlds? blissful abodes, where those who have undergone probation here below meet again in bliss? At length, chilled by the night air, he closed the window, and went shivering towards the fire, casting on a log of wood to make a blaze (his lamp that evening seemed to burn so *very* dimly). As the flame suddenly burst from the freshly-ignited fuel, it brought into light a drawing, enclosed in a very humble wooden frame (made by the village carpenter), which hung over the chimney-piece. It was the

sketch of the Colosseum which Eustace had stolen from Lucy's portfolio, the morning he had left Rome. He gazed upon it attentively for a minute or two, and then, in consequence, apparently, of some sudden resolution, he unfastened it from the wall, and hurried up to his bedroom. He opened his trunk, placed the drawing within it with the face downwards, relocked the box, and returned to the sitting-room; and going up to the fireplace, he withdrew from the wall, the nails by which it had hung. Again he paced his small apartment, again he endeavoured to brighten the fire in the grate, and having, in some degree, succeeded in making the room look more cheerful, he took down from the shelf his large Bible and Prayer-book, and marked in them the Psalms and Lessons for the next day. Gradually he became more calm, and occupied by what he read; his attention being, apparently, especially fixed upon the Psalms. They

were those for the 8th day of the month, and he repeated aloud to himself these verses:—"Withdraw not Thou thy mercy from me, O Lord, let thy loving kindness and thy truth always preserve me. For innumerable troubles are come about me; my sins have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up; yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me."

It was long past midnight when Eustace, worn out in body and mind, ascended the steep narrow stairs which led to his bed-room. Sleep, however, before long, there mercifully visited him—he was so completely exhausted with all he had felt and done since he had last lain upon that bed. Oh, the happiness of sleep to an harassed, troubled spirit! the blessedness of that sort of dreamy indifference to all outward objects, which slowly steals over the senses! the gradual confusion of thought and recollection which makes all real thought impossible, until every im-

pression becomes fainter and fainter, and existence itself seems to come to an end!

Refreshed by these hours of rest, Eustace was enabled to put his whole soul and mind into the service of the following day, and never before, perhaps, had he preached with so much *onction.*

By the time afternoon service was ended, a dismal, drizzling rain had set in. He had not courage to face such another long, solitary evening as the preceding, in his little dark parlour, so wrapping himself in his cloak, he set out to visit a poor man who lived two or three miles distant, and who was in the last stage of consumption. He found him stretched on his bed, the pale hue of death already on his face, and breathing most painfully. His wife was at his side, the Bible on her lap, wiping away the cold perspiration which bedewed his forehead.

"Oh, sir, I am so glad you are come!" she exclaimed, as soon as she perceived Eustace, "for poor Robert has been much

worse, and he has got again into his old unhappy ways, and frets sadly over what he calls his bad life, though I'm sure it would be well were all as good as he. But I dare say you will be able to give him some comfort, you say such beautiful things."

"I have been from home," said Eustace, "or I should have been here before. But what is it which so distresses you?" he inquired, kindly taking the poor sufferer's hand.

"Oh, my sins! my sins! they so haunt me, some new one always starting up before me; and then I feel death every hour, every minute almost, coming nearer and nearer. Oh, it is so dreadful! if I knew what to do!"

"Have you, then, forgot," said Eustace, "all that I told you the other day, about the Son of God leaving heaven, and coming into this world, and dying a dreadful death, in order to save us from the punishment we all deserve, by taking that

punishment upon himself—have you forgotten all that?"

"Oh, no, I remember it all! but perhaps *my* sins were not included; perhaps Jesus Christ did not know how great a sinner I should be."

"Oh, my good friend!" said Eustace, "depend upon it, He then knew, much better than you do yourself at this moment, all the sins you would ever commit. More than half of them you have yourself probably now quite forgotten, and numbers and numbers you never thought of, even at the moment you were guilty of them; but they were all written down in God's book."

"Ay! that's the dreadful thought! that's what so terrifies me," said the dying man, "having to answer for all this."

"Yes, it would be terrible, indeed," replied Eustace, "if that same Jesus Christ, who will be our judge at the last day, had not taken those sins upon himself. I will read to you a very interesting

sort of story in the Old Testament, which will, I think, help to explain all this to you,"—and Eustace turned to the chapter containing the account of the yearly ceremony of the scapegoat, over whose head the chief priest confessed all the sins of the people, and then sent him thus laden, into the wilderness, where he was seen and heard of no more.

The poor awakened sinner seemed much struck, and repeated these words after Eustace—"Aaron shall lay his hands on the head of the goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send him away into the wilderness, and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited; and the goat will be turned into the wilderness, and be seen and heard of no more."

"Oh, how comfortable!" exclaimed the dying man. "What blessed words!—'*they were heard of no more.*'"

"These 'comfortable words,'" continued Eustace, "are addressed, you know, to each of us. God has laid upon his Son our sins; He is our scapegoat; He has taken them all away, and they will be heard of no more against us, if we trust in Him. Now, don't you understand this?"

"Yes, I understand; but still—still I wish I had not been so great a sinner, for I can't help thinking I should have died easier."

"The truth is, I fear," said Eustace, "that you want to be able to claim some *merit* of your own, some reward as your *due*; you will not accept of a *favour*—a *free gift*, even from God himself. Is not that the case? Oh, my good friend! all such self-righteous feelings must be entirely discarded, for you will never be able to look death in the face in that way. But if you are not tired, I will read to you another little story out of the Old Testament, which will still further explain what

I mean,"—and Eustace turned to the 21st chapter of Numbers, in which we find the account of the Israelites being wounded by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, and healed by looking to the brazen serpent raised on the pole. "Now," said Eustace, "do you think these wounded Israelites would have had a better chance of being cured of their wounds if they had applied plaisters and balsams of their own invention, instead of merely doing what they were told, and looking to the brazen serpent? and do you think, my friend, you would be safer, more secure of salvation, if you had your own good works to trust to, than you may be now, knowing that your Saviour is willing to heal your soul, to stand surety for you, having taken all your sins upon himself?"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed the poor man, "and I see now, how ungrateful I should be if I did not trust entirely to Him."

Tears began to run down his pale face.

"I will not talk to you any more, to-

day, said Eustace;" "think over all this, and when I come again, I will read to you some more of these stories, for I know you cannot read."

The sick man shook his head mournfully.

"But your wife can, I believe; so I will mark for her another of these stories," —and Eustace turned down the page in their Bible, at the institution of the Passover, and the marking of the doorposts of the Israelites with the blood of the lamb. While he was doing this, the sick man, with his eyes closed, was repeating to himself, "And their sins were all laid upon the goat, and he was taken away into the wilderness, and seen and heard of no more."

Eustace was so occupied during his walk home, with the scene he had left, and with thinking over all the passages in Scripture applicable to the case of this self-convicted sinner, that he was quite unconscious of the pace at which he had

walked, and of the distance that he had got over, until he found himself at his own door. It was by this time quite dark; he lit his lamp, and immediately took down from the shelf his large Bible with references, marking all the texts best calculated to confirm the faith, and give peace to one troubled in mind; and so entirely was he engrossed by his occupation, that his thoughts never once, during that evening, wandered to Lucy or Stanhope-street.

The next morning he had to examine the school children, and attend to other parish duties, but he did not fail again to visit the dying man, and this he continued to do, day after day, until this object of his anxious interest was brought to cast himself, in humble gratitude, entirely on the merits of his Saviour, and having partaken of the Holy Sacrament, breathed his last in perfect peace. When Eustace, for the last time, crossed the threshold of that lowly dwelling, and left

his humble friend stretched a corpse upon that bed, beside which he had passed so many hours, tears stole from his eyes, but they had no bitterness in them; on the contrary, they were tears of gratitude to his heavenly Father, for employing him in his work, for having enabled him to give comfort to a fellow-sinner, and for still providing him with such strong interests in life. And thus, in the conscientious discharge of his duties, as the servant of God, the mind of Eustace once more recovered its tone, and he experienced such blessed feelings of peace and contentment that, at times, he could almost mistake them for actual happiness.

The twelve months for which he had undertaken the charge of the parish of Ashford were now drawing to a close; and having heard from Mr. Summer, that he should return home at the new year, Eustace began to turn his mind towards the future, feeling that he must now make some sort of plan for himself, preparatory

to the moment, now fast approaching, when he would take full orders. He had had no communication whatever with his uncle, respecting the living of Elsmere, since that day of unlooked-for, ecstatic happiness, now nearly five years ago, when he had been released by him from his former life of irksome drudgery in his banking-house, and when prospects of possible future happiness, of which he had never before even dreamt, had been opened to him; but those bright prospects, he could not but feel, were now completely at an end. "His dream had gone by contraries," as Lucy had foretold it would. His situation in his uncle's family was totally changed—Elsmere was no longer his home; its door was now closed to him; those *cold*, *careless* words of Mr. Lushington, in reply to his confession ("*Under existing circumstances, it will be as well you should not come to Elsmere as formerly*), had sunk deep into his heart, and the prohibition had never been

recalled. It is true, his uncle had, through the medium of his kind friend Mr. Watson, made some advances towards what he called a *reconciliation*, but that was all. Nothing was said (or unsaid) with regard to the future or the past. And as for Mrs. Lushington, she had not, at their last, indeed their only meeting, during the last two years, attempted to conceal how unwelcome a visitor he was in Stanhope-street; and thus, banished from the only home he had ever known, Eustace felt himself to be alone in the world, and that he must, therefore, endeavour in some way to provide for his future existence.

Having come to this resolution, he wrote to his friend Neville, acquainting him with his approaching departure from Ashford, and informing him of his future plans:—

"My dear Mr. Neville,—

"Being on the point of giving up

the charge of the parish, with which, through your kind intervention, I have, during the last year, been intrusted, I write to tell you of my movements and future intentions. I trust the past year has not been entirely lost to me, and that I have got some insight into the *active*, *practical* duties of a country curate. Everything in this, your friend's parish, is so well regulated, the ground on which I was to labour so well broken up, I could not possibly have begun my clerical life under more favourable auspices. I have now but another fortnight to remain here, and must, therefore, form some plans for the disposal of myself, my time, and my existence.

"My prospects being so uncertain, or rather, I may say, having no prospects at all, and being, in consequence, quite ignorant as to what and where my future labours may be (should the Lord be pleased to employ me at all in his vineyard), I have taken it into my head to apply for a time

to the study of languages (of Oriental languages, I mean); for, besides the possibility of their being, some day, of use to me, they will, at this moment, be a *stiff* sort of study, which I feel I require—a kind of labour which will oblige me to 'keep up to my collar.' You, my dear friend, with your well-regulated mind, have never, I dare say, needed such self-discipline; but I know I do. For this purpose, I propose, on leaving this, to go for a time to London, where, besides finding, no doubt, the means of obtaining the instruction which I desire, I shall have opportunities of hearing different preachers, and shall, therefore, not lose my time in that way. *That* (I mean preaching) was the part of my duty which I found to be most difficult, being, at first, sad, nervous work. But I am thankful to say, I am now much hardened to it; indeed, I generally am scarcely aware that any one is listening to me, or even that I have any auditory at all. I propose also,

while I am in London, getting some smattering of medicine; perhaps attending the hospitals, as such knowledge may be very useful to me, even as a parish priest at home. I need not add, how thankful I shall ever be for any advice from you.

"I remain,

"Your gratefully affectionate Friend,

"E. G."

Christmas-day was the last on which Eustace performed Divine service at Ashford. On entering the church that morning, his attention was immediately attracted by the bright holly and ivy wreaths, with which it was decorated, recalling to his mind the similar winter garlands which he and Lucy had together fabricated for the "old grey church" at Elsmere, during the Christmas holidays, in his schoolboy days. A pang shot through his heart—the past was in an instant conjured up before him; and it

required all his self-command to banish these thoughts from his mind while going through the services of the day.

The many "Merry Christmases," too, with which he was greeted by his parishioners, as he passed through the churchyard on his way home, vibrated dismally on his heart, recalling also bygone days. How few there are who, after the very first years of life are fled, can hear those words of Christian congratulation on the anniversary of the Saviour's birth, without a sensation of pain, without past days of happiness—friends who once enjoyed them with us, and who are now in their graves—being painfully recalled. A very few years had, as yet, passed over the head of Eustace Grey, and yet already how totally changed were his prospects and views in life! Already, he had a *past* existence to sigh over—already, he lived in recollections which were too sorely sensitive to bear being touched.

As he, on that Christmas evening, after the duties of the day were over, sat alone in his little parlour, again his lamp and fire both seemed to burn unusually dimly; again Lucy's image haunted him. Was she at that moment at Elsmere? Was she there alone, in that solitude to which she had looked with such apparent dismay?

Unable to banish these thoughts from his mind, or to fix it on any occupation, and having in vain taken down book after book from the shelf, and almost immediately replaced them, finding it impossible to make sense of the words before him, although reading them over and over, he at length gave the matter up; and, opening his desk, wrote to Ned Watson, begging for some news of the Lushington family, where they were, and what they were about; and also informing him of his intention of being soon in town, and requesting he would find him some cheap residence for a few weeks.

By return of post, he received an

answer from poor Ned, delighted at the prospect of seeing his good friend Grey so soon, and informing him he had secured a lodging for him in the neighbourhood of Westminster, but that his father hoped he would consider his house as *his club*.

"As for the Lushington family," Ned continued, "all I know about them is, that they have had a large Christmas party with them at Elsmere, Lord and Lady Rainsforth, and a heap of *fine* company, and that they have been acting charades and plays, and I don't know what all. Mr. Lushington himself was not there (as you may guess, when hearing of such gay doings), being detained in London, so 'while the cat was away, the mice did play.' It is *said*, that Miss Lushington has dismissed her slow-coach lover, notwithstanding the four balls on his head; so there is still a chance for you, if you look sharp.

"Yours,

"Ed. Watson.

"*P. S.*—There is a delightful harlequin farce at Drury-Lane now acting, 'Mother Goose.' I am sure you will never resist that, and I trust you have, by this time, thought better upon the subject of theatres."

"Lucy acting charades and plays with a heap of fine company at Elsmere!" Eustace repeated to himself, in a dejected tone, as he folded up Ned Watson's letter. "Lucy is, indeed, lost to me."

CHAPTER II.

Eustace had now been nearly three weeks in London, and had not as yet called in Stanhope-street; many feelings making him shrink from doing so. He sometimes, after a morning spent in hard application, strolled towards the park, and always entered and left it by the Stanhope-street gate, in the hope of accidentally seeing his uncle; but chance had not yet favoured him, and this delay, of course, only increased his nervous dread of the interview.

His uncle's manner to him was always so inexplicable, Eustace never knew what his own should be towards him; and as for Mrs. Lushington, hers was most decidedly not encouraging: but what he dreaded most was the revival of

those agitating feelings which he knew the sight of Lucy would occasion. At length, however, one afternoon, after he had for some time paced up and down the opposite pavement, feeling it in a manner his duty to call on his uncle, he resolved to take courage, and boldly crossing the street, knocked at No. 14, inquiring whether Mr. Lushington was at home? "I will see, sir," said the servant, who recognised him, and in a minute or two Eustace was admitted into that same room on the ground-floor where he had been before. His uncle was lying back in a chair near the fire, and apparently unoccupied—a most unusual occurrence with him—although the table behind him was, as usual, covered with letters and papers. His looks were still more haggard and worn than when Eustace had seen him last, his face more drawn and sallow, his brow more contracted. He welcomed his nephew (for him) kindly; bidding him immediately sit down by him, and in-

quiring, with some appearance of interest, into his present life and occupations, and where he was living?

Eustace told him of his being now in London, in the interim of his taking full orders, and of his studying Sanscrit and other languages.

"Studying Sanscrit and Hindostanee languages!" exclaimed Mr. Lushington. "Will that be of any use to you in your profession?"

"Oh, I don't know, perhaps not, but whatever exercises the mind, and forces attention, is good for one, and at this moment I have no employment."

Mr. Lushington made no immediate reply, but after a minute's pause, and as if he had not attended to what Eustace had said, he inquired whether he had yet taken priest's orders?

"No, not yet, but I shall before very long."

There was another pause, during which Mr. Lushington sat with his head resting

on his hand; at length he abruptly said—"I am sure my mind needs something to put it in better state, but I fear the remedy you prescribe for yourself, will not do for me. The truth is," he added, in a dejected tone, "with me the machine is fairly worn out."

"You overwork yourself, sir, I fear," said Eustace, much moved by his uncle's apparent suffering condition; "you need more rest."

"I suppose I do, but it can't be helped now. Look there," he continued, pointing to the piles of papers which lay on the table beside him, "How can I rest with all that? and there is that tiresome Elsmere bailiff of mine, who is always bothering me with his accounts and statements. I wish with all my heart—" Mr. Lushington suddenly stopped, and the blood for a minute rushed into his face—"The truth is," he resumed, "I am not nowequal to these things, and that Elsmere property is more trouble and worry to me

than it is worth; however, all this happens at this moment to be worse than usual, for I have been forced to give that poor devil Ned Watson a fortnight's holiday, as I could not spare him at Christmas."

While Mr. Lushington was thus confessing his total unfitness for business, Eustace was summoning courage to offer his assistance, and at length said, but in so low a voice as scarcely to be heard even by himself, and without looking at his uncle—"You have formerly employed me as your secretary, would you not do so again? It would give me so much pleasure, if I could be of any use to you."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Lushington, turning hastily towards his nephew, with an odd sort of sarcastic sneer on his face —"You! Oh, you are now *above* such *drudgery* work, you know; I could never think of employing *you*."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," Eustace again repeated, his voice actually trembling with agitation; for

cold and uncongenial to his nature as was that of his uncle, still his heart yearned towards him. He was also so much associated in his mind, with those former happy days, when he had been sheltered under his roof; and being again in any-way employed by and connected with him, would restore to him, perhaps, his former position in his uncle's family, and relieve him, in some degree, from the painful feeling of utter loneliness which oppressed him; and, besides all this, Mr. Lushington actually moved his compassion!—such a wreck of what had once been a powerful mind! There was a silence of a few minutes, when Eustace, at length, gaining courage, again returned to the charge. "Could I not, at least, count up for you some of these awful columns of figures in your bailiff's letter? Merely tell me what you want done, or write a little memorandum at the corner, as you used formerly to do, and I am sure I should soon get into the way of it all again—although

possibly I may be a little out of practice, for my own accounts are certainly easily cast up and settled."

Eustace had no sooner uttered these words, than he regretted having made this careless allusion to the smallness of his own means; and to conceal his confusion, when conscious of their possible interpretation, he stooped down towards the writing-table, and took up the Elsmere bailiff's letter—

"Now, do set me my task, my dear uncle, and I will at least do my best."

"Oh, as for your *best*," rejoined Mr. Lushington, "you always understood me at a word; always saved me trouble. Poor Ned Watson, I believe, does all he can; but it is a very different story from what it was when you were with me."

The colour deepened in Eustace's face. "Well, do try me again," said he, as he sat down at the table, and prepared pen and paper before him.

Mr. Lushington actually smiled upon

him, and, looking over the various calculations and letters, made the necessary notes as formerly at the corner of those to be answered. While doing this, his eye seemed by chance to fall upon a paper in his own hand-writing; he hastily caught it up, and put it into one of those strong messenger-boxes, which shut with a Bramah-spring lock, and in the same nervously-hurried manner, he directly locked up the box in a drawer of his writing-table. He then, after carefully examining every paper which lay on the table, went up to Eustace, and, familiarly laying his hand on his shoulder, bent down to see whether he was doing what he wanted.

"Quite right, quite right," he said, after a minute, in an approving tone.—"Well," he continued, "if you are really going to take this trouble for me, I will go out, and get a little fresh air, before it is quite dark; and I shall find you here at my return, for you have a pretty tough

job, I can tell you; that bailiff of mine is so dreadfully confused and long-winded in his stories."

Mr. Lushington took up his hat, and went to the door, then, hastily returning, "Of course you will stay and dine with us. You have no engagement?"

Eustace made some attempt at an excuse, but could think of none.

"That's right," added his uncle, taking apparently his silence for consent; "I shall not be absent long."

He then left the room, and Eustace heard the hall-door shut after him.

The minute he was gone, the pen fell from the hand of Eustace; the bailiff's accounts became all confusion before his eyes; and after two or three fruitless attempts at resuming his employment, he rose from his seat, and paced the room. What his thoughts were he scarcely himself knew, they were so contradictory; but he could not but be painfully sensible, that, notwithstanding all his past strug-

gles, all his fancied victories over himself, joy, tumultous joy, predominated. "Fool! madman! that I am, again to expose myself to trials which I know I have not strength to contend with! again to put myself in the way of temptation!" Then he endeavoured to quiet his conscience with the thought, that he had in no way sought this approaching meeting with Lucy—that it was actually *forced* upon him. Thus engrossed by his own thoughts and feelings, Eustace scarcely noted how the hour was passing, and the Elsmere bailiff, and his accounts, for a time went entirely out of his head; so that he had made but little progress in his task, when his uncle, ready-dressed for dinner, re-entered the room. Eustace attempted at some excuse for his dilatoriness.

"Oh, never mind," said Mr. Lushington, quite good-humouredly; "I told you, you were not aware what a troublesome job you had undertaken, but leave it all now, and you can return to it again after

dinner, for it is near seven; so you had better go and wash your hands in my dressing-room, and I will go up, and let Mrs. Lushington know she will have a guest at dinner; and, thank Heaven! you are our only guest to-day!" So saying, after showing Eustace the way to his room, Mr. Lushington went up stairs, and informed Mrs. Lushington of Eustace Grey being in the house, and that he would dine with them.

"Eustace Grey!" exclaimed Mrs. Lushington, in no very joyful or welcome tone and expression of countenance, "What! has he started up again? what a plague! I wish he would mind his own business, and remain at his college!"

"He is minding *my business* just now," said Mr. Lushington, sharply, "and has been acting as my clerk all this afternoon."

"Your clerk! What! have you engaged him again? I am very sorry for it! I suppose he has got tired of his piety, as I

always said he would, and wishes to get back to the banking house."

"Engaged Eustace again as my clerk!" repeated Mr. Lushington: "why you forget that he has actually taken orders!"

"Well then, why don't he keep to his orders?" rejoined Mrs. Lushington, her manner becoming more and more excited. "I did not think that parsons came to London for the season of balls and operas and such things, not good parsons at least!"

Mr. Lushington was so much in the habit of letting his wife talk on, without taking any notice of what she said, that he made no comment on these words, and Mrs. Lushington continued—"I hope at any rate, you are not going to encourage him in coming to this house, for that is a thing I cannot allow of."

"You forget," said Mr. Lushington, angrily, "that Eustace is my nephew."

"Nephew or no nephew, I shall certainly set my face against his visits here," continued Mrs. Lushington; "he is a regu-

lar nuisance, frightening every one away!" and so saying, Mrs. Lushington hurried out of the room, and going straight up to Lucy's apartment, she dismissed the maid who was dressing her, and at once broke forth—"There is Eustace Grey below, and your father—"

"Eustace!" exclaimed Lucy, starting up, and the colour deepening in her cheek, evidently with pleasure, "Oh, how glad I am! thank you, I shall be down directly."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Lushington, "there is no need to be in such a fluster about Eustace Grey! and I only came up to tell you of your father's having asked him to dinner, in order to warn you that I will not allow of your behaving as foolishly together as the last time he was here, sitting side by side on the couch, like a couple of babies, and speaking in whispers, and all that childish sort of thing. And I give you warning, if that is to be the way again, I shall in pretty plain terms tell Mr. Eustace that his absence is better than his company; so

remember!" and with this warning Mrs. Lushington left the room.

Dinner was announced before Lucy had made her appearance, and Mr. and Mrs. Lushington, followed by Eustace, went down to the dining-room. The latter maintained his composure as much as possible, and succeeded tolerably, endeavouring to talk on some of the usual topics of the day to his uncle, although all the time straining his ears to catch the first sound of the well-known footstep.

Ever since his uncle had proposed his remaining to dinner, Eustace had been planning in his own mind what his manner towards Lucy should be—how he should meet her, and what he should say to her on meeting. But he might have spared himself all this trouble, for the moment she appeared, he totally forgot all his preconcerted plans, and starting from his chair, he rushed up to her and grasped her outstretched hand. Neither of them said a word, and both with flushed cheeks immediately took their places on the oppo-

site sides of the dinner-table, and both for some minutes continued silent; for Mrs. Lushington had, by all her cautions and prohibitions, occasioned an embarrassment of manner on the part of Lucy which otherwise would not have existed; and Eustace felt he must recover his breath before he attempted to speak.

Lucy was going to some fashionable *West End* evening entertainment, and was dressed and decorated as Eustace had never seen her before; indeed as he had never seen any one, his life having been passed so entirely out of the world of fashion and dissipation. She had now recovered from that state of nervous depression occasioned by all the sad scenes at Elsmere, at the time of her brother Frederick's death. She seemed improved in health, and consequently in looks; and although her brilliant worldly decorations gave a pang to his heart, Eustace could not but acknowledge to himself how much they added to her beauty; and when he

ventured occasionally to raise his eyes towards her, they were actually fascinated.

Eustace so sincerely, so ardently *loved* Lucy—for herself—he had scarcely ever asked himself whether he *admired* her beauty, the feelings she excited in his breast being far beyond those of mere admiration. But now he could no longer doubt how much share her personal attractions had in his captivation; but he stood even this additional trial bravely, and soon overcoming his agitation, he continued the subject on which he and his uncle were conversing before Lucy entered; for Mr. Lushington had been asking for information respecting those Oriental languages which Eustace had said he was now studying, which inquiry led to various topics connected with India generally, on all which subjects he found Eustace to be remarkably well informed.

"Well," said Mr. Lushington, after a pause, "perhaps all this study of languages may, as you say, be good exercise for the

mind; but I must confess it seems to me that you are rather wasting your time, by giving up so much of it to what cannot possibly be of any use to you, situated as you are; for your Sanscrit, and, what do you call it?—Hindostanee—will not help to edify a country congregation at home, I should think, any more than Mr. Woodford's long rigmaroles about apostolic succession, and all that stuff and nonsense."

Eustace did not immediately reply; he dared not, for he was aware that Lucy's eyes were fixed upon him, and that she was listening to every word he said. But after a minute, he added, in a lowered voice, "Numbers of young men destined for holy orders study these languages now—so many go out as missionaries."

Mr. Lushington made no comment: and Lucy, who had withdrawn her eyes from Eustace, seemed engrossed by her own thoughts.

All this time Mrs. Lushington had

taken especial pains to show she did not attend to anything Eustace said, by continually breaking in with some silly trifling remark to Lucy, relative to their past and future engagements; but finding her daughter to be at that moment rather an absent listener, she (evidently much discomposed) suddenly started up from the dinner-table, and making an excuse, that she had not yet dressed for their evening engagement, hurried out of the room, Lucy of course following her. Before closing the door, Lucy turned and looked towards Eustace; his eyes had been riveted upon her ever since she had, in consequence of Mrs. Lushington's movements, risen from her seat, so that their eyes then met. She gave him one of her bewitching, innocent smiles of confiding affection, recalling former days, and it thrilled to his very inmost soul. A deep sigh escaped from him, and for a minute or two after the door had closed, he was silent and preoccupied. But Mr. Lush-

ington was habitually so silent himself, he did not notice Eustace's abstraction, and after they had thus remained for a short time, each engrossed with his own thoughts, Mr. Lushington proposed they should return to his study, and Eustace resume the business he had not yet completed.

And there Eustace laboured, unravelling confused calculations and accounts, till near eleven o'clock, when Mr. Lushington chancing to look at his watch, suddenly started from his seat, and, holding out his hand to Eustace, said, "Well, I will not let you remain any longer; many thanks for all you have done for me: you have been of very great use —conferred a great favour upon me."

"And will you not let me come again, sir?" said Eustace. "Is there nothing else I can do? No letters to write? No more calculations to make? Can't I relieve you in some way; at least, while Watson is absent?"

"Oh, no! that would be too unreasonable. I cannot; and I am sure you have plenty of occupation of your own."

"Indeed, my dear uncle," said Eustace, in a voice which plainly showed how much from the heart he spoke, "you cannot do me a greater favour than by employing me. I am quite an idle man at this moment, and idleness is not wholesome."

"You are a very *wise* man for saying that," replied Mr. Lushington; and taking Eustace at his word, he began looking over the papers on his table to see which were those of most pressing consequence. "Well," he resumed, after a minute or two, "I believe I should be very glad of a little help here. Can you come to me to-morrow afternoon, at the same time you did to-day? and of course stay to dinner,' he added.

Whether Conscience whispered to Eustace not to accept of this repeated invitation, or whether she at that moment left

him to his fate, we know not, but he agreed to the arrangement.

"Well, then, to-morrow at five. Good night." And thus the uncle and nephew parted.

When Eustace reached the entrance-hall, he saw the house-door was open; there was a carriage waiting outside, and at that minute Mrs. Lushington and Lucy were on the stairs, setting off for their evening's dissipation. He could not but stop, and even ventured to offer Mrs. Lushington his arm to help her into the carriage; but she not very graciously declined his services, saying, "The footman understood the business better;" so he drew back, not daring to advance towards Lucy. But she immediately came up to him, and holding out her hand, the old "playfellow" good night passed between them, recalling so much to the mind of Eustace; and then, suddenly returning towards him, "Where are you going, Eustace?"

"Home," he replied, "to Westminster."

"To Westminster? Is not that very far off?" And hurrying up to Mrs. Lushington, who was by this time seated in the carriage—"Mamma, could we not take Eustace home? He has such a long walk, and it is raining."

"Take Eustace home! What can you be thinking of? Certainly not. Come, get in, for we are much too late already, without losing more time about Eustace," she added, in a lower and angry tone to herself.

Lucy could but obey her, and she and Mrs. Lushington disappeared in the darkness of the street.

Eustace, according to his agreement with Mr. Lushington, returned to Stanhope-street the next afternoon, and the next, and the next. Sometimes, when his prescribed task detained him late, staying to dinner, but oftener not, although always invited by his uncle, who appeared to find some relaxation to his

mind in the hours of *tête-à-tête* conversation which he had with his nephew, when Mrs. Lushington and Lucy left the dining-room. As for Mrs. Lushington, she never in any way relaxed in her systematic, cold, repulsive treatment of Eustace; and she kept such strict watch over Lucy, that any intercourse between the cousins was impossible, beyond what could not be avoided, meeting now so repeatedly. Their renewed intercourse, however, had one good effect upon Eustace—it accustomed him, in some degree, to the intoxication of her presence, and gave him more command over himself. But the poison of love was day by day gaining ground upon his heart's constitution, and of this he could not but be aware, notwithstanding his conviction that the life which Lucy now led widened still further the gulf between them; and often and often during his nocturnal walks home from Stanhope-street, after parting with Lucy radiant with youth, spirits, and brilliant decora-

tions, as she set out for her evening's amusement, did those words of Neville, "Is she a child of God?" painfully haunt him.

There was so much "*going on*" now in the London world of amusement, that Mrs. Lushington never attempted any more of her "*nice little quiet dinner-parties* at home," making the most of every invitation from her new fashionable friends. And invitations they had now in plenty; their drawing-room chimney-piece being entirely covered with "At Homes" for Mrs. and Miss Lushington: for the report of Lucy's splendid worldly prospects had spread far and wide, and many were vying with each other for her favours. And (for the truth must be told) Lucy enjoyed all this very much. She liked the amusements of the world—she liked admiration—she liked all the flattering attention shown her—she liked many of those now paying their court to her *very much* — thought them very

agreeable. She liked her old Roman acquaintance, Sir Alexander Melville, for he amused her *very much*, and she was always glad when he was her partner at a ball-supper. Sometimes she thought he perhaps went too far in his ridicule of serious matters, and she was conscious that many of his jokes would not have been approved of by Eustace; and at such times a cloud came over Lucy's spirits and countenance. Her thoughts wandered back to former days; and if her eyes chanced to fall on the ring on the third finger of her left hand, a pang, which she could hardly explain and account for to herself, shot through her heart, and it required all the wit of her neighbour to rouse her out of her reverie. Lord Parnell had, through his sister, Lady Emily, made his proposals in form to Lucy, but he and his "four balls" were, without a moment's demur, dismissed, to Mrs. Lushington's great disappointment and indeed displeasure; but she did not

at first quite give up all hope of prevailing upon her daughter, by the means of her favourite resource of teasing, until Lady Emily herself assured her it was so hopeless a case, it would be better to look elsewhere for the sort of connection to which she aspired, and hinted at her own cousin the "fashionable roué," of whom Ned Watson had spoken to Eustace, the eldest son of the ruined Lord Peterborough.

"He has at this moment, I fear," continued Lady Emily to Mrs. Lushington, "got himself into a foolish sort of scrape with that pretty Mrs. Vernon, his friend, Captain Vernon's wife; but as that affair has been going on for some time, I don't think it need interfere with our plans for Lucy. She is too sensible a girl, I am sure, to make any nonsensical fuss about such little peccadilloes, and I really believe nothing is truer than the saying, that 'the reformed rake makes the best husband.'"

"Oh nothing!" said Mrs. Lushington, with quite a sanctified look, and in her gravest tone and manner; "and as for finding a man who has never done wrong, Lucy will remain an old maid to the end of her days, if she waits for that! Indeed, I am convinced it is much better to marry somebody who has what is called 'sown his wild oats' beforehand."

"Much better," re-echoed Lady Emily; "so now then it is agreed, we give up my phlegmatic brother, who I plainly see will not stir his little finger in the business, although it is for his own advantage, and I will encourage Clifford's suit. Hitherto I have kept him rather in the background, for the sake of poor Parnell, as I know he could in no way compete with my agreeable cousin. I am sure, if *he* will but take the trouble, Miss Lushington will never be able to resist *him*, were a thousand Eustace Greys at her feet, he is so agreeable and so handsome.

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

CHAPTER III.

Yes, as we have said, Lucy liked the world, and she liked admiration, for she was amused by the one, and flattered by the other; but her heart remained perfectly untouched, and it was an honest, simple, affectionate heart. She often contrasted all those, her pleasant worldly acquaintances, with the friend and companion of her first youth, and that friend could not but gain in the comparison. These her *new* friends were much more what might be called *agreeable* —much more *entertaining*—but no one was like cousin Eustace; there was no one she so admired, so much trusted, so much even *loved!* But she was not *in*

love with him—never had been! She admired those very qualities in him which she felt so raised him above herself, as even in a manner to separate them. His steady devotion to duty inspired her with actual reverence. She had spoken the truth from her heart that night at the Colosseum, when she had exclaimed—"Oh Eustace, how good you are—I fear far, far too good for me!" This reverence might have, perhaps, occasioned a painful degree of awe, had it not been that the beginning of their acquaintance dated so far back, and had begun in such childish familiarity, that if when dwelling on his present grave character and strict principles she felt some alarm, one smile on his face, recalling her "playfellow" of former days, banished all fear from her mind. In short, there was no one Lucy *loved—really loved*—half so well as Eustace Grey; but she loved him as a favourite brother. And when he had placed that small, fretted gold ring on her hand,

scarcely seventeen years having then passed over her head, she was so little acquainted with the world, and (it may be added) with herself, she had no idea that the engagement into which she had then entered, would have entailed upon her any sacrifice whatever. To pass her life with "dear Eustace" seemed to her then the most delightful of prospects. And even when above two years after, on their again meeting at Rome, he had released her from her engagement, showing her the folly and sin of which he had been guilty in drawing her into it, she spoke only the truth in saying he had extorted no promise from her which she had not been willing to make, and was still willing to renew—for she could not at that moment have uttered a word or thought a thought, or have even listened to a feeling that could have pained one she so loved, and whom she saw so depressed and changed in spirits and health. But somehow now matters were altered!—She

loved Eustace as well as ever; but at times when Elsmere Parsonage rose up before her "mind's eye," and the "dear old grey church" beside it, with its solemn-sounding bell, an impression of melancholy and dulness, in spite of herself, came over her. Perhaps it was that she now associated in her mind with that once so-loved place, the many dismal circumstances connected with the church and churchyard. She thought that its deep-sounding bell would ever bring back to her mind her two brothers' funerals, and the miserable lonely feelings which she had experienced that melancholy day, when Frederick was laid in his grave. It would, of course, be all different if Eustace was with her! But still—still the life of a country clergyman must, she feared, be *very dull—very monotonous.* And then, Eustace had now apparently contracted such strict notions upon all subjects! In short, she could not help sometimes almost wishing he was not so *very good.* And when on his being

detained by her father to so late an hour, that they chanced to meet in the hall when he was preparing for his nocturnal walk home, and she setting out with her mother for their usual late-protracted gaieties, how much she wished that he did not (as instinct told her he did) condemn all such amusements, and that he would sometimes accompany her to her balls and operas !

Habit seemed, in the meantime, to make Eustace more and more necessary to his uncle, so that his afternoon visits in Stanhope-street became a regular thing of course.

"I do not think I have much work for you to-day," said Mr. Lushington, one afternoon when, after giving the usual knock at the study door, Eustace had entered it; "but come in, sit down, for I want to speak to you."

Who has such steady nerves as not to be startled, when addressed by those words—"I want to speak to you?"

Poor Eustace certainly had not. In an instant a thousand thoughts and fears passed through his mind, and his heart began to beat so violently, he could not utter a word, but in silence took the seat beside his uncle, to which he pointed, and Mr. Lushington at once began—"I have had a letter from Mr. Woodford, and he tells me, that the preferment, to which he has long been looking, is at last offered him, and that he will shortly leave Elsmere. I do not know, not being very conversant with clerical matters, whether you will be able to take possession of the living at once, or whether you must previously take full orders; but at all events I think you told me that last form, or ceremony, or whatever it is, would shortly take place. When did you say? for I have forgotten." And Mr. Lushington looked round to his nephew for an answer. But not a word could that nephew utter! his face was utterly colourless; he tried to speak, but his efforts were

vain, and suddenly rising from his seat, he hurried to the further end of the room, and while staring vacantly out of the window, he appeared to be holding communion with himself. Mr. Lushington once or twice looked round towards him in evident astonishment, but said nothing.

At length, having, as he hoped, obtained some degree of mastery over himself, Eustace returned to his uncle's side, and grasping his hand, he, in a voice scarcely audible from agitation, said—"Do not think me insensible to your kindness—do not think me ungrateful—but—but I cannot accept your offer—I must refuse the living of Elsmere."

"Refuse the living of Elsmere! why what in the world do you mean? I thought that had been the object of your wishes long ago! indeed that it was the prospect of that living which had induced you to enter the Church?"

"It was."

"Have you then changed your mind?

and do you wish to change your profession? I am very sorry for that, I do not like such unsteadiness; and I must say I did not expect it of you."

"Oh — no, no!" exclaimed Eustace, with fervour, the blood again returning to his blanched cheek, "for nothing would I leave the Church!"

"Then what in the world do you mean? —for I really cannot comprehend you. Have you any better prospects? any other more influential friend?"

Mr. Lushington's anger was evidently rising.

"I have not a friend in the world but you, my dear uncle," said Eustace, again clasping Mr. Lushington's hand.

But the hand was coldly withdrawn.

"Then pray explain yourself," said he, in his dry repulsive manner, "for really I do not understand you; your conduct is to me perfectly inexplicable."

There was the pause of a minute or two —neither the uncle or nephew spoke, but

at length Eustace, averting his face, while the quick heaving of his bosom betrayed the agitation of his feelings, resumed—"You may remember the letter I wrote to you on leaving Rome, about two years ago—the confession I then made to you—or possibly you may have forgotten its contents, as even at the time you seemed to make very light of it. But,"—(Eustace continued with increasing excitement of manner,)—"But it *was* and *is* no light matter to me! and I cannot, must not, fix my home so near to one whom I never can cease to love, and whom I am now quite aware, is separated from me for ever! There is my reason for refusing your kind offer. Principle, as well as *cowardice* forces me to come to this resolution, and I thank God for having given me strength to act up to it. I cannot, I must not take advantage of your kindness."

"Then what are your intentions?" inquired Mr. Lushington, somewhat re-

laxing from his cold, angry tone and manner. "What are your prospects?"

"I have none whatever—I must seek employment of some sort somewhere. I am, as I told you, studying Oriental languages; preparing myself, in short, for a missionary life. I shall continue to do so until my ordination, and then I have no doubt I shall find some employment, abroad, if not at home."

Mr. Lushington made no comment on these words of Eustace, but sat with his hand over his eyes; at length, in a slow and uncertain voice, he said, "And are your feelings, then, with regard to Lucy, the same as they were these two years ago?"

"I fear they are! perhaps even—. In short, I never should have seen her again!" he continued hurriedly. "I never should have re-entered your door! But your kindness in once more welcoming me to it, my wish to prove to you the deep sense I had of all my obligations to you,

by endeavouring to be of some little use to you; or rather perhaps," continued Eustace in a wild excited tone and manner, "it was my own ungovernable passion which made me thus blindfold rush into danger, careless of consequences. But all this is now over. I am now fully aware of my madness, and this must be the last time I enter your house!—Farewell, my dear, dear sir," exclaimed Eustace, hastily rising from his seat, and grasping his uncle's hand; "whatever becomes of me, wherever my lot may be cast, I shall never cease to pray—never forget—"

Eustace's voice had become totally inaudible; he gasped for breath—Mr. Lushington was actually moved.

"Sit down for a minute," said he, "for you are not, I am sure, in a fit state at this moment to leave the house, and I wish to have one more word with you, before we part;" and so saying, he laid his hand on the arm of Eustace, and obliged him to resume his seat; and then, quietly

leaving the room for a minute, he returned with a glass of water, and placing it on the table beside his nephew, "I will come back again to you presently," said he. "Now, mind you don't go away."

Eustace, by a motion of his head, acquiesced, and by the time his uncle returned, he had again regained his composure. They sat together for several minutes in silence, Mr. Lushington apparently pondering over in his own mind what he was going to say. At length he began with, "I think in that letter which you wrote to me on leaving Rome, you spoke of a sort of engagement you had (you confessed most improperly) entered into with my daughter; did you mean that she was aware of your feelings with regard to her?"

Eustace did not speak, but by a motion of his head, assented to his uncle's question.

"And does she now know of your unaltered attachment? Does she return it?"

Eustace coloured, "I know not; since

we parted at Rome, I have never, either directly or indirectly, had any communication whatever with Lucy—I have never ventured to say a word to her—I have never even seen her, but in your presence; so you may judge whether I can be acquainted with her feelings. The footing we are now upon—everything is totally changed. In former days I was her constant—indeed I may say her *only*—friend and companion! but now I see nothing of her, and when I do, I dare not speak to her; but even if I had had any opportunities of renewing our former intimacy, I would not have taken advantage of it. We are now total strangers! Live in totally different worlds."

"Ay," said Mr. Lushington, after a moment's pause, "and hers is a world which I suspect, will do her no good. I wish with all my heart she had never got into it; that was my fault; I never should have agreed, and now I fear the mischief is done, and I suspect Lucy is little fitted

now to be the wife of a country clergyman, whatever she might once have been, or fancied herself to be."

Mr. Lushington stopped, and Eustace feeling himself totally unfit for even listening to his uncle, again held out his hand to take leave of him.

"One word more," said Mr. Lushington; "*if* Lucy really likes you well enough to be willing to give up all her fine friends, and all this nonsense and folly of the fine world, I would not (for reasons I need not enter into) *now* oppose your wishes, my mind being changed since I last spoke on the subject."

Eustace suddenly started to his feet. "Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "Do I hear aright? Am I not dreaming? Oh my God—my God, it is too much,—too much!" And burying his face in his hands, he burst into tears.

Even the cold, stern Mr. Lushington was moved; for a few minutes neither of them spoke; he then resumed, "My good

friend, I advise you to keep down these transports, for I suspect you are anticipating that of which there is very little chance. The world, the horrid world of fashion, has got hold of Lucy and her mother; and Mrs. Lushington, I plainly see, is bent upon her marrying some *titled* —FOOL!" (he added, with much asperity of tone and manner.) "I see quite plainly what they are about, but they will some day, to their cost perhaps, find out that they are all making a wrong calculation, and if it were not for Lucy's sake, I should be glad of it—faith, I should."

While uttering these words, Mr. Lushington's eyes glared with a fearful expression, and he suddenly stopped; but soon recovering himself, he, in a totally different voice and manner, resumed, "You have my leave, in short, Eustace, to renew your suit to your cousin; and, therefore," he, after a minute, added, with a smile, strangely contrasting with the almost sardonic expression which had

lately crossed his features, "I conclude you will not *now* refuse the living of Elsmere! That is, you know, worth 600*l.* a-year: I will *give* Lucy 300*l.* a-year more; that will, I think, be plenty for you, at least for the present; but I will make no future promises—no settlements."

Eustace could not speak; all this had come upon him so suddenly, he was actually stunned.

"Well, I see," said his uncle, in an almost jesting tone, "you are not just now in as clear-headed a state for calculation as (luckily for me) you have been lately; so I will not say anything more on the subject at present."

"Do you, then, mean, sir?" asked Eustace, his voice still trembling with emotion, "that I may come to your house? that I may see Lucy? may speak to her?"

"Yes, you have *my* full leave, but that is all I can promise you; for I fear Mrs. Lushington's consent will not be so easily

obtained. But I will tell her what has now passed between us, I will do that much for you;" and Mr. Lushington held out his hand to his nephew. "You have lately, for some reason, always refused staying here to dinner," he added; "but I presume you will not do so *to-day?*"

"Yes, my dear kind uncle," exclaimed Eustace, pressing the hand which he now held out to him; "I must; I am not equal, at this moment, to encounter Lucy. I am bewildered—and to-day is Saturday. A friend has asked me to preach for him to-morrow; I must try and recover my senses." And, above all (Eustace might have added, but he knew well his uncle would not have understood him), I must go and commune with my own heart; I must go and thank my God!

CHAPTER IV.

When Lucy that evening entered the dining-room, she looked anxiously to see whether there was not a fourth place prepared; for she, like Mr. Lushington, thought it was long since Eustace had dined with them; and his society, besides being always a pleasure to herself, relieved the dulness of their family repast; for he generally succeeded in rousing her father from his now habitual abstraction. But Lucy was disappointed; there were but the usual three chairs, the usual three covers, and Mr. Lushington seemed even more absent and absorbed than usual. It was (as Eustace had in part pleaded in excuse for so abruptly leaving Stanhope-

street) Saturday evening, and consequently Opera night, and it had been settled, that Lucy was to accompany Lady Rainsforth thither, (she having an established box at that theatre). Before long the usual visitors, Sir Alexander Melville and Mr. Clifford, joined them. Lucy was in particular good looks and spirits, and both gentlemen made the agreeable to her, a l'envie l'un de l'autre; for Mr. Clifford appeared now to be pretty decided in his attentions, and Sir Alexander, aware that he had, in consequence, a much more formidable opponent to contend with than Lord Parnell, redoubled his assiduities. It may seem odd that Sir Alexander did not make more open and ostensible efforts towards securing the prize he coveted; but he was a wary Scotchman—he had but a small paternal estate, deeply in debt—he had no rank or title, by the means of which he could propitiate Mrs. Lushington—and he, therefore, felt he must carry on his designs rather by stratagem than

open attack, not to run the risk of an entire discomfiture. *That* Cousin Eustace Grey was always in his way! always again starting up, just when he fancied he had made some progress in Lucy's good graces; and when he was present, Sir Alexander saw (or at least *fancied* he saw), she had ears and eyes for no one else. It was probably the sight of Lucy, thus surrounded by her admirers, that brought her Roman attendant, Eustace Grey, also to Lady Rainsforth's mind; for, on a sudden, turning to Lucy, she abruptly said, "Where is your cousin, Mr. Grey? It is so long since I have seen or heard anything of him! He seems to have again disappeared. Where does he go and hide himself? Has he any living or preferment of any kind?"

Sir Alexander immediately looked towards Lucy, with a scrutinizing glance: but there was no tell-tale blush on her cheek, and she replied in her usual simple tone and manner, "No, he has no living

yet; he is, at this moment, in London, and in Stanhope-street every day."

"In Stanhope-street every day!" repeated Sir Alexander, rather thrown off his guard by this alarming piece of information.

"Yes," continued Lucy, in the same unembarrassed manner, "he writes for papa; he is of the greatest use to him. No one, I think, understands him so thoroughly, and suits him so well; and he very often stays and dines with us; and I am so glad when he does, for he always seems to do papa good, talking to him about the sort of things which interest him."

"Does he never go out at all into the world—into society?" inquired Lady Rainsforth; "it is such a pity he don't, for he seems really to be so pleasant, and only wants a little rousing. Does he do duty anywhere in London? I should really like to hear him preach, he has such an agreeable musical voice."

Sir Alexander, after a moment's pause, during which he had, in his own mind, come to the conclusion that possibly Eustace's preaching might rather further his own views, by disgusting Lucy with the strictness of his religious opinions, said, "I happen to know that Mr. Grey sometimes assists a cousin of mine (who is something in his own way, one of the *over-good*) at Quebec-street Chapel; he may possibly preach there to-morrow."

"Oh, let us go!" exclaimed Lady Rainsforth, apparently delighted at having discovered something *amusing* to do on Sunday, some object for which to go to church; "Miss Lushington, would not you like to go?"

"I should like excessively to hear Eustace preach," said Lucy, quite naturally and simply, (although perhaps the idea of seeing her playfellow in so new a character did at the moment somewhat brighten the colour in her cheek), "and I should think mamma can have no objection if *you* will take me."

"Oh yes, I will take you, of course, you will be all in my way to Quebec-street, so I will call at your door, and take my chance. Sir Alexander, will you not escort us?"

"Oh, most certainly I will go, out of *curiosity*," he added, "for I will not pretend to any better motive, having, I must confess, no predilection in favour of your high-flown *evangelical* preachers, as they style themselves, which (begging your pardon, Miss Lushington) I suspect your friend, Pope Eustace, is. I hope, however, our intended party to Kensington Gardens in the afternoon will still hold good —unless Mr. Grey proves to us it is very wicked to go there, and that it is the high-road to the d—l."

When Lucy, on her return home, informed her mother of the proposed plan for next morning, the latter could not contain her astonishment. "Well, I had no idea that Lady Rainsforth was so very religious as to take so much unnecessary

trouble about going to church. And why, for goodness' sake, can she wish to hear Eustace Grey preach, of all people in the world? Some famous bishop—the Bishop of London, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or something of that kind—I could understand; but Eustace! who has not even, I believe, a living to boast of, and who will, I *dare* say, talk a parcel of nonsense about *faith* and *repentance* and all that sort of canting stuff. However, if Lady Rainsforth takes you and brings you back, of course I can't object; only mind, I will have no whispering and gossiping with Eustace in the vestry or at the church door."

"Dear mamma, how can you think that either Eustace or I should ever dream of such a thing?"

"Oh, I don't know; when he and you get together there is no saying what you may not do, you are both so childish. It is all his fault, I dare say; for, as I have often told you, he knows nothing of

the world or good manners, how should he?"

When Lady Rainsforth and her companions arrived the next morning at their destination at Quebec-street the service was already begun, and the church being very full, they could only get places in one of the back seats, from which, however, the pulpit was visible. Sir Alexander's cousin read the prayers in rather a feeble drawling tone. The psalm which follows was sung, and Lucy turned to the communion service in her Prayer-book. The chancel was not visible from the pew which she and her companions occupied. There was a short pause, and then a totally different voice from that to which she had previously been listening broke in upon the silence of the church. Lucy actually started! It was the voice of Eustace, a voice hitherto associated in her mind only with every-day life, and even with the merry sports of childhood. And when she now heard its deep impressive

tones proclaiming the Almighty's laws to his creatures, saying, "God spake these words," a strange unaccountable agitation came over her.

Sir Alexander noticed her emotion. "You are nervous this morning, Miss Lushington," said he, in a low but somewhat sarcastic tone; "the church is perhaps too hot for you."

Lucy took no notice of his remark, indeed scarcely heard it, for she was straining her ears to catch every word of that service to which she had hitherto so carelessly listened, but which came to her now with an authority—a power—it never had before.

The communion service was ended—the last psalm was sung—Eustace ascended the pulpit. The colour deepened in Lucy's face when he appeared, and her eyes were riveted upon him. The full black gown particularly suited the tall slight figure and pale countenance of Eustace Grey, for deadly pale he was!

and he appeared at first to be labouring under strong emotion of some sort, but he soon recovered himself after giving out his text, which was taken from 2nd Epistle of St. John, and was as follows :—

"Love not the world nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world."

"So!" whispered Sir Alexander to Lucy —"now for it; we are going to *get it* well I suspect;" but Lucy again made him no answer.

Eustace had written his sermon that preceding Saturday-morning, before going to Stanhope-street—before his conversation with his uncle—before the unlooked for, overpowering change in his whole existence had burst upon him. It had been written at a moment, too, of peculiar depression of spirits; for there are times when, although

all the outward circumstances of our lives may be the same, yet our trials seem to weigh heavier upon us than at others—and so it was just then with Eustace. The world at that moment had no attractions for him; it offered him little or nothing of enjoyment; the thought therefore that it was *not* to *be* enjoyed—that all love for it was incompatible with the love of God, was to Eustace a most welcome truth, as it seemed to raise his dejection of spirits into a positive virtue—a religious principle. To renounce the "lusts of the flesh," and the "pride of life," was no effort to one who, when he looked round on this world, and his future prospects in it, beheld nothing to care for, nothing to aim at, nothing on which he could possibly pride himself, nothing to love—nothing at least which it was permitted him to love! It was under the influence of such feelings that Eustace had written his sermon, and that he had that Saturday afternoon entered Mr. Lushington's study. Scarcely two

hours had elapsed, and he left it a totally altered being!—totally altered at least with regard to his existence in this world! She, whom he had entirely renounced; she, who from principle he even drove from his thoughts, and who had in consequence become to him almost an *unreal being*;—she! Lucy! was now at once restored to him; actually given to him by her father! That bright dream with which he had been visited in the wild, thoughtless days of his youth, seemed to be realised! Happiness! such happiness as he had not for long allowed his mind even to look upon, was now on a sudden freely offered him! It was all too much for weak human nature to bear. When he left his uncle's door, he was so completely bewildered, that he was scarcely sensible of any of the objects around him. The crowds, the noises in the streets, all were unseen, unheard by Eustace. He saw everything as through a mist; he hurried on in a sort of dream; and how he found his way home he

scarcely knew himself. On reaching his lodgings he at once rushed upstairs to his bedroom, and, bolting the door, fell upon his knees.

A considerable time passed before he was sufficiently composed to be able to turn his mind to any occupation; but the evening was now fast passing away, and he must read over and finish his sermon for the next morning, having, as he had told his uncle, promised to assist Mr. Melville, at Quebec-street Chapel. That sermon, intended to rouse others from their worldly dreams, was, he now felt, especially addressed to *himself*. But a few hours had elapsed since he wrote it, in the full conviction of the truths which his text had dictated, and now his own heart was itself throbbing in direct opposition to those truths—throbbing with one of this world's most ungovernable passions! He actually shrank in humiliation from his own words. But he would not alter them; he felt he had spoken the truth—the truth of the

Bible! that it was God's Holy Spirit which had dictated those awful words of warning: —"Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Eustace laid a book on the open, unfinished page of his sermon, and turning away from the table, sat for long lost in thought, his head resting on his hands. "But is our heavenly Father a hard-hearted tyrant?" he ejaculated to himself; does He desire the misery, and not the happiness of his creatures? Hath He created this our beautiful world, so full of innocent enjoyment, and then does he say, "Taste not, touch not, handle not?" When the Almighty placed Adam in Paradise, did he not himself say, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make an help-meet for him?" Eustace, in his excitement, had spoken these words out aloud. He actually started as they sounded in his ears. Ne-

ville's form immediately appeared before him; every word of their conversation, that day in his room at Oriel College, rushed to his memory, again arousing his conscience as they did at that moment. —"Is she one fitted," said his friend, "to be a help-~~meet~~ mate indeed? fitted to help you in your work? Is she in *some degree* also moved by the Holy Spirit to undertake that work? Is she, in short, a child of God." Eustace groaned in spirit; for Lucy now stood before him, as he had of late so often seen her, brilliant in all her worldly trappings, passing night after night in worldly dissipation, and her days in frivolity, selfishness, and thoughtlessness!

Eustace was alone; unseen at least by all *human* eyes, and tears of bitter disappointment rolled unchecked down his face. Long did he commune with his own heart—long and severe was the inward struggle! but at length he again returned to his place at the writing-table, he re-read his sermon;

he did not alter a single word of it, and at length brought it to a conclusion.

A sleepless night, of course, followed on a day of so much agitation as that Saturday had been to Eustace. No wonder, therefore, that he was pale and nervous next morning, when he entered the pulpit in Quebec-street Chapel; no wonder his voice faltered, when in a manner pronouncing his own sentence, reading his own death-warrant, in those words of inspiration, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Eustace possibly dwelt with even greater force, and enlarged with greater strictness of principle, on the words of the text than he would have done at another time and under other circumstances; for it was partly to himself he was now speaking; it was himself who he felt needed the warning. Most arousing, therefore, was his address. The dangers, the tempt-

ations of the world and its unavoidable contamination, all were set forth in the strongest language, and the consequent necessity of coming out entirely from it, of "not touching the unclean thing." The impossibility, in short, of combining the "service of God with the service of Mammon."

Every eye was riveted on the preacher; there was not a sound to be heard. The colour had returned to the cheek of Eustace; his eyes were lit up with a fire —a spirit—which Lucy had never before seen in them. He appeared to her to be another being. But his words perhaps contained too strong medicine for a mind so little prepared as hers then was, for the high and exalted views which he had taken of a Christian's principle, of a Christian's life; and she could almost have said, like Festus of old, "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

The sermon was ended, and Eustace

clasped his hands together, as his head sank down on the cushion of the pulpit.

"Well, I never heard such a rhodomontade!" exclaimed Sir Alexander, as the party left their pew, and followed the crowd out of the church. "What good can your friend, Miss Lushington, possibly think he is doing by all that Methodistical rant? He had much better stick to plain matter-of-fact, and tell us not to tell lies, and not to pick each other's pockets, or cut each other's throats; in short, something tangible, and which one can understand, and not all this high-flown stuff and nonsense."

Lucy made no answer. Before reaching the church-door, she had once more turned towards the pulpit. Eustace had risen from his knees, and as he descended the steps, on his way to the vestry, she almost *fancied he had seen and recognised her!*

And she was not mistaken. Amid the crowd slowly leaving the church, his attention had been attracted by an up-

raised face turned towards him—a gleam of light from one of the windows at that moment bringing it out into peculiar relief; he looked again—again the same face was before him. He could not be again mistaken; it must be—it *was* Lucy! How his heart beat! with what gratitude did it beat! and how fervent a prayer did he raise to heaven that those inspired words which he had chosen for his text, might be blessed to her soul's benefit; indeed, he almost ventured to hope, that it was by an actual interposition of Providence that she had that morning been brought to that church, and had there heard those truths which he would scarcely have had courage to speak directly to herself.

CHAPTER V.

Hope again crept into the soul of Eustace. He was in some degree relieved from the dreadful weight which had pressed so heavily upon his mind; and, having now her father's permission to see and speak to Lucy, he determined on going the next day to Stanhope-street and endeavouring to read her heart. He would not tell her—at least, not yet—what had passed between himself and her father, but try to probe her inmost feelings. And oh! if he could but hear one word from her lips, calculated to inspire the most distant hope, the bare possibility of her being weaned from her worldly friends and worldly pursuits, and becoming a help-

meet for one pledged to the service of his God!

"Well," said Lady Rainsforth to Sir Alexander, when they got into the carriage to return home—"Well, how did you like it? He has a beautiful, most touching voice, certainly, and looks particularly well in the pulpit; but I can't say it is exactly the style of preaching I like; indeed I must confess I did not always quite understand him; and then it is so perfectly *impossible* to do what he says—'To come out of the world;' for how can one *help* being in it? And, being in it, one must do like other people. So, begging Mr. Grey's pardon, all that is nonsense! It is quite a pity he has got such high-flown notions, he is so very pleasing and gentleman-like! But I shall take him in hand, and try if I cannot make him rather less *sanctified* and Methodistical."

"Il en vaut peu la peine," said Sir Alexander, in a contemptuous whisper to Lady Rainsforth, for Lucy's abstraction

(which still continued) did not at all please him, any more than Lady Rainsforth's declared intention of taking Eustace *in hand*. "Il en vaut peu la peine," he repeated; "he is really not at all worth the trouble either of improving or corrupting."

"I don't know that," replied Lady Rainsforth (still in the same *sotto voce*). "I suspect Mr. Grey might be made to like that poor world he so abuses as well as any of us, if it made the agreeable to him; but it is just now a sort of fashion among young clergymen to talk in that *tête exalté* way; so I shall try what I can do, for he is certainly very good-looking and very eloquent! But in spite of all that," she added, yawning, "I do not think that I shall come all the way to Quebec-street Chapel again. It is very well for once, but it is too far off, and such a bore routing out so early in the morning; one don't know what to do with oneself all the rest of the day, now that

there is such a piece of work made by your *very good* people about making visits, and taking out one's carriage on a Sunday. I conclude, by-the-by, that our party to Kensington Gardens this afternoon still holds good," cried Lady Rainsforth to Lucy, as she deposited her at her door in Stanhope-street; "Lady Emily and Mr. Clifford promised to meet us there, you know, and the band of the Coldstream Guards is to play, and I understand it is excellent. So I will call for you at five o'clock. *Au revoir*," she added, kissing her hand to Lucy.

Early the following morning Eustace (according to his usual practice) went to Guy's Hospital in the Borough, with the view of obtaining some medical and surgical knowledge himself, and in return to give some spiritual comfort to the poor sufferers within its walls. On his return, and on his way to Stanhope-street, where he intended being at the usual hour, he stopped at his own lodgings for a paper of

his uncle's which he had been copying for him; and he was just about leaving his room again, when the servant of the house, throwing open the door, announced "a gentleman who wishes to speak to you, sir," and Neville appeared! The friends had not met for some time, and pleasure was plainly expressed in Neville's countenance. He shook Eustace by the hand with even more than his usual warmth, inquiring anxiously about his health and welfare.

"You have been very lazy in the writing way of late, Grey," said he. "But I have heard *of* you, and I need not say with what pleasure, for I know all you are doing, both for *yourself* and *others*, and I am sure God's blessing will follow on your laudable exertions. A little business brought me to town," continued Neville, "and I could not resist going yesterday to hear you preach. I would not tell you beforehand of my intention, for fear of making you nervous—for I know well one

can be made nervous by such things; but now it is over, I must say how much gratified I was in every way. And when I look back to the beginning of our acquaintance, how thankful I am that I was employed by a merciful Providence in arresting you before it was too late in that thoughtless course into which, through youth and ignorance, you were becoming entangled. I suppose you will now very soon take full orders? What are your intentions and expectations for the future? By something you said in the letter I had from you a few months ago, it seemed to me you had some idea of a missionary life. Of course you are right to prepare yourself for whatever work you may be appointed to; but I must own I should be sorry to lose sight of you in India. What is become of a living I think you once mentioned to me as in the gift of some relation of yours? Is there no chance of this or any other employment at home?"

Eustace's nerves were scarcely at that

minute in a fit state to stand this fresh attack upon them, and he made several attempts to answer his friend's queries before he was able to speak calmly. Neville looked at him in evident astonishment.

"I was intending," said Eustace, at length, "to write to you, to tell you that—that the living I once spoke to you about, and to which you refer—the living of Elsmere, which is in the gift of an uncle of mine, is now about to be vacated, and that he has offered it to me—"

"Indeed! why, what a fortunate fellow you are!" exclaimed Neville, pleasure plainly depicted on his countenance; "and of course you accept?"

"I don't know," replied Eustace, in an uncertain voice; "perhaps not. I have not yet quite made up my mind—"

"Not made up your mind! why? Are there any difficulties, any objections? Is the parish overrun with dissent? Or do you aim at something higher?" added

Neville, with even a playful smile upon his face. "Do you aim at stemming the torrent of evil in this corrupt city—this Babylon? Are the souls of villagers not high enough game for you? Though I must confess I do not think a country congregation would be quite equal fully to appreciate such a sermon as I heard you preach yesterday morning; it was really admirable, and must, I think, have made an impression upon even the most worldly and thoughtless of your congregation, and many of those fashionable ladies and gentlemen who heard you were, I fear, of that description. Now, *if* such should be your view, still I am sure you will let me, as an old friend, give you some advice. Do not, as yet, turn your thoughts that way. Go to the country parish now offered you; study human nature, for it is the same fallen human nature which we find in a cottage as in a palace, although developing itself in different forms and ways; apply yourself to those practical parochial duties which

you may perhaps at this moment be almost tempted to think are below your talents; they will strengthen your principles and your power of self-denial, and the quiet of the country will steady your nerves, which are, I fear, still of too excitable a nature. You understand me, Grey? and you see I do not ask whether you forgive me for still giving you my advice so freely as in former days."

Eustace was for a minute or two silent. At last, with averted eyes, he said, "It is not all *that* which is influencing me, and making me doubt. Believe me, I have no such worldly ambition and folly. The living at Elsmere would be Paradise itself to me. I would wish never to enter this hated world of fashion and turmoil again. It is not anything of all that—and you really do me wrong if you suppose I could be guilty of such unprincipled presumption and vanity. No; if my heart is not as entirely given to the Master I wish to serve as it should be, it is not

this world—I mean, it is not such pitiful worldly motives as those of ambition and vanity which influence me. I almost wish it were," Eustace added, with a sigh, "for they would be more easy to overcome."

"Then what is it?" again eagerly inquired Neville, his eyes fixed on the agitated countenance of his young friend, "and why do you not at once accept your uncle's offer? What is the living in question worth? for these things must, I know, be considered."

"Oh, only too much—too much!" exclaimed Eustace.

"Then," again rejoined Neville, "what drawbacks can there be to make you doubt about accepting it?"

"You remember," said Eustace, in a low, tremulous voice, "the confession I made to you at Oxford above three years ago? I—I love her—love her to madness still, and Elsmere is her home!"

Neville actually started! He said nothing, but going up to Eustace, he

grasped his hand, and then in silence returned to the seat he had been occupying, and for a few minutes seemed lost in thought. Neither spoke; but at length Neville, without even looking at his young friend, said, "Is *she* still also in the same mind? She is now several years older than when you first mentioned this subject to me. She was then, I believe, very young; she is now probably *much* changed in *every* way."

Eustace made no answer, but shook his head mournfully: then, having apparently come to some desperate resolution, he turned to Neville. "Mr. Neville," said he, speaking very hurriedly, 'if you will have patience to listen to a long story, I will tell you all, and you shall advise me, and I promise I will follow your advice, as far at least as I *can*—as I am *able*. I did so those three years ago, for I then confessed to my uncle having entered into a clandestine engagement with his daughter, and I then told *her*, when parting with

her at Rome, that I *should* do so; at the same time releasing her from her engagement with me. But she then would *not* be released—she would not return her pledge to me. My confession to her father was in writing; for I had not courage to make it to him in person, and I left my letter in his room, to be found by him after my departure." Eustace heaved a deep sigh as all the circumstances of that last morning at Rome, rushed to his memory. He continued, "It was some time before I received any answer whatever from my uncle, and when I did, he seemed to treat my avowal, in short, the whole thing, as a mere passing boyish folly—a circumstance not even worth taking notice of, with regard to his daughter, and I have every reason to think he never mentioned it to her at all. But nevertheless in that letter, he in very plain terms said I was not any more to consider Elsmere as my home, (for it had been that to me, even from my first

school-boy days; in short, I had no other.")

Poor Eustace paused for a moment, for his breath seemed to be failing him. Neville made no comment, and he soon again resumed—

"Since that last conversation which I had with her at Rome, I have had no communication whatever with Lucy, and, as I have said, I do not think her father has ever in any way alluded to my attachment to her. He is a person whose mind is entirely engrossed by business; he associates very little even with his own family; they have no habits of intimacy with him, and he is so cold and reserved in manner, he has never encouraged anything like confidence in his children, on the contrary. Well, thus passed three years. I studied *hard* at Oxford, as you know, in the hope of driving all this out of my head. I then went to Ashford; I *worked* hard there, in order to forget her; I prayed hard, but all to no purpose! Don't despise me, Mr.

Neville, for such weakness, pity me, rather. All this time I had no intercourse whatever with my uncle, or any of the family. I appeared to be entirely forgotten by them all, until about a month or two before I left Ashford, when I received a letter from an old friend of my uncle's (and who had ever been most kind to me), saying that *he* (my uncle) expressed a wish to see me, for he believed I had taken up *too strongly* something he had once written to me! (of course referring to his letter to me from Rome.) Whether I should, or should not then have availed myself of this opening towards a renewal of intercourse I know not, but I went, and I saw her again, and I returned to Ashford, more unsettled—more miserable than ever. She to all appearance had entirely forgotten all that I had told her when parting from her at Rome, with regard to my confession to her father. Her manner to me was just the same it ever was, expressive of the same open, confiding affec-

tion. Yes, *affection*, I need not blush to say; I *cannot* doubt her *affection*—I should be most ungrateful if I *did!* We passed that one evening together, and then, with society around us, I *could ask* her nothing —*say* nothing to her; but I am convinced that her father had never uttered a single word to her relative to myself, and I almost also think that our last conversation together that evening at Rome, had left little or no impression upon her mind. She was the same as ever to me—no awkwardness, all open affectionate kindness—but I cannot give you any idea of the bewitching artlessness, the almost child-like, innocent simplicity and sincerity of her character! But I am sure I must be wearying you. My story, however, will now soon be ended. You know that on leaving Ashford, I came here to London. My principal object in so doing was to study oriental languages, with the view of quitting England altogether, and endeavouring to forget, in another world, all

this first part of my existence. I was nearly a month in town, before I even ventured to let my uncle know of my present residence. But at last I thought it my duty to go and inquire after him, and I accordingly went to his house. He received me very kindly. I found him sadly broken; he has been visited by severe family afflictions, lost both his sons, and one in a dreadful manner! It was in consequence of the death of one of these sons, that the future prospect of the Elsmere living was first held out to me, and that I in consequence went to Oxford; before that, I was in my uncle's banking-house, and acted as his private secretary. Circumstances have enabled me just now to be of use to him in the same way again, by writing for him; I have of late gone to him every day, for that purpose; sometimes seeing Lucy, oftener not, although I *might* have done so constantly, for he nearly every day wished me to remain to dinner, but I felt the temptation to do so

to be too strong. My uncle appeared, indeed, now in *act* to have revoked his prohibition, with regard to my frequenting his house, and looking upon it as my home. But he had never done so in *word*, and I felt I could not take advantage of his most extraordinary carelessness, (as it appeared to me to be.) My aunt, however, I must say, kept such vigilant watch over both myself and her daughter, she fully made up for her husband's want of caution; she never liked me, and her dislike appears to me to increase more and more. Well, last Saturday (only two days ago), I went to him as usual. He at once, without any preparation whatever, informed me that Mr. Woodford (the present incumbent of Elsmere), was about quitting the living, and that it was now mine! I really cannot attempt to describe what I felt at that moment. It was some minutes before I recovered my senses sufficiently to make him any answer whatever, I had so entirely given

up all thoughts of Elsmere. I was so convinced that all the bright visions, in which I had once indulged, were at an end for ever, that the possibility of such a change in my worldly prospects had never once occurred to me. But I am thankful to say, hard as was the struggle, I was enabled to resist the temptation; I at once refused his kind—his generous offer. He appeared much surprised—even displeased. I would not, for my own sake (indeed for his), let him think me ungrateful. I again confessed the truth to him that I *could* not—*should* not—that, in short, I had not courage to fix myself so close to Lucy's home. That *principle*—*prudence*—everything in short—forbade my doing so. I was therefore prepared to bid him farewell, for I felt I must not continue to expose myself to the trial of her presence. I meant, in short, never to have seen her again.

"But before concluding my story, I must tell you, I must explain that—" Again,

the voice of Eustace became scarcely audible: he rose from his seat and walked hurriedly up and down the apartment; but at length, commanding himself to the utmost, he resumed: "At Rome, she fell into most pernicious worldly society. I was but too well aware of this, when I was there. That horrid fashionable society of the world, which her mother courted for her; these her former Roman acquaintances have introduced her into the same sort of set here in London; she lives, in short, the regular life of the world, exposed to all its dangers, all its seductions, all its heartless vanities and flatteries. *Especially*, indeed, to the *last*,—for both her brothers being gone, and she now the only child of an opulent banker, she is courted by all—considered, in short, a prize to be won! Such is the perilous situation of my dear unconscious unsuspecting Lucy! For amid all the evil by which she is surrounded, she is still the same artless, simple-minded warm-hearted being she ever was. But I

know well that her good qualities are not the effects of principle or of religion, but merely owing to the beautiful nature bestowed upon her by her Creator, and I am fully aware that her heart is now in this world: in short, that she is "*not a child of God.*"

The voice of Eustace again nearly failed him. Neville appeared about to speak, but he checked him. "Let me end this painful story at once," said he, "and then I will listen to you—I told you, I was about to take leave of my uncle, intending never to enter his doors again! never to see her again! when he stopped me—stopped me with words which still sound to me as *unreal* as if I had had a feverish dream—been in actual delirium! They were these, for I shall never forget them; they have been ringing in my brain ever since I heard them:—'If Lucy really likes you well enough to be willing to give up all her *fine* friends, and all this nonsense and folly of the *fine* world, I would not now (for reasons

I need not enter into) oppose your wishes any longer, circumstances having induced me to change my mind on that subject. But I suspect she is little fitted *now* for being the wife of a country clergyman, whatever she might once have been, or fancied herself to be; in short, in plain English, that she will not like it." Yes, even Lucy's father —one who, alas! is, I fear, little influenced by religious feelings or principles—even he, amid all his almost incomprehensible generous kindness to me —even *he* shows me my duty, even he pronounces my doom."

Eustace stopped, burying his face in his hands, and for a minute Neville also was silent. At length, and as if speaking to himself, he exclaimed, "It is indeed all most strange! your uncle's conduct quite impossible to account for; especially he being, as you describe him, one so devoted to this world's interests. It is quite inexplicable! You said he was much changed —much affected by his severe family afflic-

tions—that he was much broken; do you think his mind is at all affected?"

"No, not in the least; it is as clear on all matters of business and calculation as ever."

"Well, my dear young friend," said Neville, "the only consolation is, that there is but one straight path of duty before you, and that you know that 'strait and narrow way.' No one who spoke the words I heard you speak yesterday can plead ignorance of their duty. I pray to heaven you may have strength to act up to it. But what do you mean at present to do? Have you seen her since the conversation you had with her father?"

"No, I have not, since we parted at Rome, ever seen her even, except occasionally fourth at dinner with her father and mother. What her feelings, her sentiments, with regard to myself or her own future prospects, either in this world or the next, may be, I know not. But I now am at liberty to see her—to speak to her. I

have at least her *father's* permission. I shall endeavour to read her heart—that heart once so simple, so open to me. Perhaps it is not yet too late, that I may yet reclaim her from her present life of thoughtless frivolity and worldliness; if not, God help me!" exclaimed Eustace, clasping his hands to gether, "for I know not what will become of me."

"'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards,'" said Neville, with much solemnity of tone and manner. "None who have not borne the cross can obtain the crown." And then, pressing the hand of Eustace, "Farewell, for the present, for I can be of no use to you now, I fear. I will see you again in a few days, for I am staying just now with my friend Johnson at Brompton, within reach at any time you may want me. You cannot doubt my willingness to serve you in any way in my power; you cannot either doubt my earnest prayers in your behalf, nor do *I* doubt *your* principles or your inten-

tions, though perhaps I may sometimes doubt your strength to act up to them; in short (though I fear you will think me cruel for saying so), I almost hope, for *your* sake, that your cousin's affections are too decidedly fixed upon this world and its pleasures for her to consent on at once giving up all for you."

CHAPTER VI.

An hour or two after the friends had parted, and at the usual time, Eustace again knocked at his uncle's study door, and was, as usual, immediately admitted. "I *counted* upon you *to-day*," said he, with a kind smile; "there is but *one* letter I particularly wish you to write for me, and then I will release you; for of course you are impatient to see Lucy. But, first, I must tell you that I have opened the matter about which we spoke yesterday to Mrs. Lushington, and I fear I have no good news for you in that quarter. I believe I informed her of my plans rather too abruptly, and I suspect it will be no easy matter to obtain her consent; but if you have Lucy's, that is the chief point,

and with that you will readily, I dare say, make up your mind to a little displeasure —indeed, not to mince the matter, possibly to actual *incivility*—from Lucy's mother. But faint heart, you know, never won fair lady. So now sit down and write that letter for me; there it is already prepared for you, and after that you shall go."

The letter was written, looked over, approved of, sealed, and directed. "Well, now you may go up-stairs to your '*fair lady*,' Lucy, for I know her mother is out, so the coast is clear."

"You have not spoken to *her*, sir?" said Eustace, in evident alarm. "You have not told her?"

"No, no, I have said nothing to her; don't be alarmed; I leave it to you to tell your own story. And as for Mrs. Lushington, there is no fear but that *she* will be silent enough on the subject. Indeed, I should not be surprised," added Mr. Lushington, actually laughing, "if she took out a statute of lunacy against me

for I plainly see she thinks I have lost my senses. But my senses, thank heaven, are quite safe in my own keeping; I wish with all my heart hers were as much so, and that *her* calculations were as wise as mine, that she was as well aware as I am that—— But no matter. Well, are you not going up to the drawing-room? I really believe you are *afraid* of Lucy. Come, I will chaperon you." And so saying, Mr. Lushington at once left his study, and taking hold of his nephew's arm, he proceeded up-stairs. "Here is Eustace," said he, as he opened the drawing-room door, "come to pay you a visit, Lucy, and he was so afraid of finding all your *fine* friends with you he would not venture up alone."

"What, Eustace!" exclaimed Lucy, as she hastened up to him with her usual beaming smile of welcome; "a visit from you is really quite a wonderful event now."

"I have released him earlier than usual

to-day," said Mr. Lushington; "and I have been scolding him for making himself so scarce. Of course you dine with us to-day, Eustace?" And with these words, without even waiting for an answer, Mr. Lushington left the room.

"I don't know how it is," said Lucy, as her eyes followed her father to the door, "but somehow you always seem to do papa so much good. I don't know when I have seen him look so *little miserable* as just now. What have you been saying to him, or doing for him?"

"I have only been writing one of his many business letters," Eustace replied, evading her question.

"Well, I wonder how a business letter can put any one in spirits; and really poor papa looked just now *quite happy*, and it is so seldom now he does look happy," she added, with a sigh; and then turning towards Eustace—"But let me see how *you* look, for I am sure you were not well yesterday; for *I* saw *you* yesterday, Eustace,

though you did not see me," she added, with a bright smile; "and I am sure something had discomposed you and made you nervous. You may wonder how I know this, but I was at your church, and I heard you preach!" Some thought to which she did not give utterance seemed at that moment to have suddenly crossed the mind of Lucy, bringing a deeper colour into her cheek; but she continued, "I went with Lady Rainsforth, who was quite bent on hearing you; she says you have such a musical voice, and that you are so eloquent, and I don't know what all. And I suppose she is right, for I certainly never thought that communion service so beautiful and impressive before, as when I heard *you* read it yesterday. But come, sit down here, and let us have a little quiet talk, as in old Elsmere days; for we never have now; I never see you; and I want to ask you some questions about your sermon."

On Mr. Lushington leaving the room

Lucy had returned to the seat which she had before occupied by a table covered with circulating library novels, and all those undescribable useless odds and ends now indispensable on a fashionable drawing-room table. Immediately before her lay what appeared to be a Testament, and which, small as it was, immediately caught the eye of Eustace. She observed this. "Oh, I see," said she, "what you are looking at. Yes, it is a Testament (something in your way), and I have been hunting in it for your yesterday's text. I wrote it down directly on the leaf of my Prayer-book to be sure not to forget it, and where it was taken from, for I wanted to try and detect you."

"Detect me!" said Eustace, smiling; "what do you mean?"

"I wanted to see whether you quoted *fairly*, and I can't but confess you did as to your *text*; but there was something else you said about 'coming out,' and 'keeping separate,' which I wanted

to find too (for I must own I can't help thinking there must have been a little cheating there), but where these words are I am sure I have not an idea." And she turned hurriedly over the leaves of the Testament, backwards and forwards, from Matthew to Revelation, plainly showing she had not (as she said) the smallest notion where the text she was looking for could possibly be.

"Give me the book," said Eustace, holding out his hand for it, "and I will prove to you I was quite *honest*, quite *correct*, in my quotation."

It was a *very* small New Testament, and had evidently been *very* rarely opened, for its bright gilt-edged leaves stuck together.

"There," said Eustace, replacing the book before Lucy, and keeping his hand on the open page as he pointed to the verse. "These are the words which I suppose you allude to."

His hand was like those slim pale *aris-*

tocratic hands Vandyke used to paint, and upon it was a ring, which Lucy immediately recognised, for it had once been her own. It was that ring which he had taken from her hand when he had given her the small fretted gold one in exchange.

A cloud seemed instantly to gather over Lucy's countenance, and, lost in thought, she continued with her eyes fixed upon the ring, taking no notice whatever of what Eustace had said, or to what his hand was pointing. Surprised at her silence, he at length looked up in her face; tears were in her eyes, even on her cheeks; not having observed what had attracted her notice, he had no idea what could possibly have occasioned her sudden emotion, but a vague feeling which he could scarcely himself account for or define, checked his inquiring into its cause. They sat thus for a minute or two in silence, until Eustace, thinking that Lucy had recovered her composure, said, "*There* is the verse to which you allude, I believe."

Thus addressed, Lucy turned her eyes vacantly on the page, but it was evident she had entirely forgotten what it was of which she wanted an explanation, and in an absent tone, she said, "Well, what was it you were saying?"

"It was *you*, I think, who wanted to ask a question of me," replied Eustace.

"Oh, yes, now I remember!" and Lucy again stooped over the book. "Yes, I see you were right in your quotation; but I want to have an explanation of those words."

And Lucy, having apparently now at last recalled her thoughts to the subject, read the verse,—"'Come out from among them, and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing.' Now what is it that you say one is to come out *from?*" asked Lucy, "and what is this *unclean* thing one is not to *touch?*"

"Shall I tell you, Lucy?" inquired Eustace; "shall I tell you quite truly, quite honestly?"

She gave him a consenting smile.

"And you will not be angry with me?"

"I *hope* not;" said she, "at any rate, I am sure I *should* not, for I am certain you never mean to say anything to make me angry—anything unkind."

"Unkind!" exclaimed Eustace, suddenly grasping her hand, which still lay upon the open page of the Testament. "Oh, Lucy, if you could but read my heart! see the devoted, doating affection which—" He stopped abruptly, but in a minute overcoming his emotion, "Well, but I must answer your question. I mean by that thing you are to come out from, the *world* in short, from which the word of God bids us separate ourselves; that *world of the world*, Lucy, in which *you* now live, that life of thoughtless dissipation, frivolity, uselessness, and selfishness into which you have been drawn by those with whom you now associate. Whoso leads such a life, runs the fearful risk of being contaminated by touching 'the unclean

thing;' and such a life is 'enmity with God,' because it is in direct opposition to his revealed will."

Eustace stopped, gazing with painful anxiety on Lucy's countenance. She did not immediately reply, but at length, with averted eyes, said, "Indeed, Eustace, I must say your *explanation* is if anything still more difficult to understand than the verse itself, for I really comprehend even less than I did before what I am to *do* or *not* to do; I *do* only what others do, and go where others go, and no one seems to think all that wrong except yourself."

"No! no one else?" asked Eustace; "*whose* words are these which I have just read? *Who* is it tells us to come out from this world—from its temptations, its corruptions, and its evil example? Is it not God himself? We cannot surely have higher authority than His; and He bids us do so, because the love of such things is incompatible with the love—the devotion of heart and life—which we owe to Him."

"Well, I must say," said Lucy, with a sigh, "I cannot but still think most people do not see all this in the awful gloomy light you do! But I know well how it is. It is that Oxford friend who has put all these methodistical notions into your head. I was quite certain how it would be from the very first of your acquaintance with him; he has been a cruel friend to—to us *both*, for he has quite separated us, and I plainly see that owing to him, and his unfortunate influence over you, you now condemn everything I do or say."

On uttering these words, Lucy clasped her hands before her face, her head fell on the table before her and she burst into tears.

"Lucy, Lucy dearest, don't say such things!" cried Eustace, rushing to her side; "you will break my heart. Oh no! that friend you talk of will never, believe me, have any influence over me but for good—for *your* good; it is not *he* that will sepa-

rate us, on the contrary, he will be the means I trust of uniting us for ever—even in eternity. Forgive me, Lucy, if I have spoken too strongly—too plainly. But you know you told me to speak the truth—the whole truth. And indeed, indeed, there is nothing to frighten you in this truth! Nothing. It is only that you do not yet quite understand it all; but you will, I know you will, and then you will see it all as I do, I am sure you will. Lift up your head, Lucy; look at me; tell me you are not angry with me, for I really cannot bear that!"

Lucy, although with her face still concealed, held out her hand to him; he eagerly again and again pressed it to his lips. "We must not quarrel, Lucy; it is so many years that we have been friends. Oh! let me have one kind smile from my dear, dear playfellow of former days; look at me, Lucy!" She did not immediately reply, but by degrees she overcame her agitation, and wiping away the tears from

her face, "I believe," said she, with one of her sweetest smiles, "this is the very first quarrel we have ever had, Eustace."

"God grant it may be the last!" he fervently exclaimed, as again he clasped her hand in his.

"I dare say I was in the wrong," added Lucy, "for you, Eustace, are too good ever to be in the wrong; but really it is so difficult—so impossible, I may say—for me in any way to lead a different life from what I do; besides (I must confess) not very well understanding in what you would have me change, or what it is I can do that would be better. I must, you know, *do* what mamma wishes me to do, and go where she wishes me to go, and all are so kind to me—so anxious to amuse me, I cannot refuse what is proposed to me!"

Eustace said nothing, but sighed deeply.

"Give me my little Testament," said she, as she held out her hand for it, "for I want to mark the verses you quoted, and I do not wish to leave the book on

the table, for mamma would be quite frightened if she saw it, terrified lest I too should be growing too good! You have no fear of that, Eustace, I believe;" and once more one of her innocent smiles stole over her features. "So odd," she added, "how differently people think about right and wrong!"

"There is but one *true* rule for that," said Eustace; "you will find it *there* in that little book in your hand:" and again poor Eustace sighed deeply, well aware of all the dangers and difficulties of his dear Lucy's situation.

They remained some time both silent—he, although quite unconscious of what he was doing, absently taking up one after another the different books which lay on the table before him, and again laying them down ignorant even of their titles.

"Will you," he at last said, "let *me* send you a book, Lucy? and will you read it?"

"Oh yes, certainly," said she, "when I

have time, but I dare say it will not be one to run through in half-an-hour like these novels, and somehow I have so little time; there is always so much to do, or somewhere to go to, and such endless notes to write for mamma, and so many visits and visitors! And next week we (that is mamma and I) are going with Lady Emily to Lord Peterborough's, near Windsor, for Ascot races."

Poor Eustace actually started. Lord Peterborough was father to the Mr. Clifford, whom Ned Watson had named among Lucy's admirers! "Next week to Ascot!" he repeated in a melancholy desponding tone.

"Oh, I suppose by your look," said Lucy, "that this, too, is another of the '*unclean*' wrong things of this wicked world, one is not to *touch*! though I must own I cannot see how one can possibly be doing an '*unclean* thing'" (and Lucy could not help laughing, as she laid a stress on the word), "when sitting,

in a fine day, in an open carriage, smelling the delightful perfume of the freshly-bruised turf, and looking at the beautiful race-horses galloping about; though I must own it goes to my heart, seeing the poor animals so cruelly used; and I do not quite like it when it comes to the last horrid whipping and spurring, for I then cannot help thinking of our old ponies at Elsmere, and how I should hate to see them so barbarously flogged."

"Oh, it is not the horses alone one may feel for at those races," said Eustace; "it is the human beings—the immortal souls there collected. There is, I believe, more wickedness congregated in the small space of a race-ground than in a whole county! Lying, cheating, swearing, gambling, drinking, fighting! Oh, it is fearful to think of it! In short, a race-ground is, I am sure, the devil's own play-ground," added Eustace, in an excited, angry tone, very unusual to him, "and, therefore, no safe place for Christians."

"But if everything is so very wrong, what, in the world, is one to do with oneself and one's time?" inquired Lucy; "and where would be the good of sitting all day, and every day stupid, by oneself at home, doing nothing? and, here in London, there is really nothing whatever to be done but to amuse oneself."

"I allow," said Eustace, "it is more difficult in London; but still some persons do contrive it. Even with my very little acquaintance with this town, I know of many situated much as you are, Lucy. Young happy people, who yet manage to lead useful Christian-like lives, even in London — interesting themselves about various charities and schools, seeking out and visiting the poor and the sick, and even attending at the hospitals!"

"But where are these poor sick people you talk of?" inquired Lucy; "I am sure I never see or hear of any, except the common beggars in the streets, and they are all, I am told, wicked impos-

tors, to whom one should never give a farthing."

"Oh! *real* objects of charity are easy to be found," continued Eustace; "but too easily! but do you ever seek for them? Do you ever try to find them? I will, however, allow it is much more difficult to do all this in London than in the country."

"But surely," said Lucy, with a sigh, "all these occupations may be very right and proper; but such a life, as you seem to wish me to lead, without any variety or amusement whatever, nothing but goodness, goodness, goodness, morning, noon, and night, would be *very* dull and tiresome."

"Were you dull formerly at Elsmere, Lucy," he inquired; "you had no balls or plays or operas there?"

"Oh, I was then but a mere *child!* I *could* not now, I fear, pass hour after hour, labouring in my garden as we used to do then, or be quite happy galloping the old ponies round the field! I suspect

that, even you, Eustace, would not *now* be content with only that sort of thing."

The heart of Eustace sunk within him. The mention of the garden and ponies at Elsmere had awakened such a host of recollections in his mind, ending in the old grey church and churchyard! that he felt totally unable to say another word; and for some time both were silent. At length, Eustace, rousing himself from his abstraction, said, "Your father (you heard) asked me to stay to dinner here to-day; will you like me to do so, or had you rather I did not?"

"I rather you did *not* dine here!" repeated Lucy; "what can you mean? what can have put that into your head? So much the contrary from not liking you to be here, I am always so thankful when you are! for you somehow rouse papa, so that he is quite a different person from what he is at other times; but he has certainly been altogether better these last few days; don't you think so? and he likes

you, Eustace. I am sure he does; he likes having you with him. Indeed, I really think he is much more fond of you than any one else; certainly much more so than of *me;* but I am quite willing it should be so—I am not jealous; and I am sure I do not wonder at it;" and Lucy looked at him with an expression that made his heart beat. "There is something the matter with mamma to-day," Lucy continued; "I cannot imagine what it is! She looks as if she had been crying, and is so absent and out of sorts. I do not think she spoke two words at breakfast this morning; so I am sure you will be a blessing to us all. But, pray, don't say anything about the *wickedness* of *Ascot* races. You would not be understood, (indeed I must say, I don't understand you myself); and you would only make mamma angry."

At this moment the door opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Lushington came in together. Eustace immediately went for-

ward to meet his aunt, preparing to shake hands with her; but he soon perceived that such familiarity was out of the question, for making him merely a *dignified* inclination of the head, she hurried past him to a door at the other end of the room, bidding Lucy follow her. The uncle and nephew were thus left together.

"That is certainly not *encouraging*," said Mr. Lushington, with an angry frown on his brow; "but never mind, I am determined to have my own way, for once. I know quite well what I am about, though Mrs. Lushington does not. By-the-by, Eustace, must you be in full priest's orders before you can take possession of your living—before you can be *inducted*, according to the technical phrase, I believe? for I know nothing about all your forms and ceremonies. I believe Mr. Woodford will vacate Elsmere almost immediately, and as there may be some necessary regulation to attend to, we must not lose time. What are these preliminary forms?"

"I don't know," was all Eustace said in reply, in an absent tone and manner.

"Well, inquire," rejoined Mr. Lushington, somewhat hastily, "for you must have a home before you have a wife."

Mr. Lushington seemed at that moment to be in an unusually excited state of spirits, one altogether not in unison with those of Eustace, and the words of *home* and *wife* had grated painfully on his ear.

"My dear uncle," said he at length, in a slow tremulous voice, "I don't know what to say to you for all your kindness to me."

"Nothing — nothing!" replied Mr. Lushington, hurriedly, and in rather a fretful tone. Eustace knew his uncle too well to venture further; indeed his own mind was at that moment in too perturbed a state even to know what his feelings *were*, still less to be able to express them; but after a minute he added, "You kindly asked me to dine with you to-day, but

perhaps I had better not—I see my aunt is—" and Eustace stopped short.

"I *insist* upon your dining here, Eustace," said Mr. Lushington, his face reddening with anger; "surely I am master in my own house, and may invite whom I please to it;" and then, in a calmer tone, he after a minute added, "I saw Watson when I was out, and told him he must come, so that will all do very well."

Notwithstanding Mr. Watson's help it was, however, still a most wretched *family* party. Mrs. Lushington never uttered a word; and Eustace, who sat by her, had not courage to brave her evident displeasure by venturing to address her. Lucy, too, was silent; so that what little conversation did take place was merely between Mr. Lushington and his old friend. Luckily, politics and the news of the day always furnish topics for men to talk about; and one subject leading to another, Mr. Lushington inquired into

the state of crime in the city, "Have you had much work in that way lately," said he, "or do morals amend? You expected much from the late bill respecting the sale of spirits— do you think it answers?"

"Yes, I really hope it does," said Mr. Watson; "there are at least fewer unfortunate wives who have their brains knocked out by their husbands."

"Well, that is one point gained," replied Mr. Lushington; "but wives should try and make their homes more agreeable to their husbands, and then, perhaps, they would not go so much to the alehouse. Yours must be a horrid disagreeable life I think!" continued Mr. Lushington after a pause; "nothing but crime and cruelty constantly before you."

"True—yes—but one gets hardened to it—too much so perhaps; for the constant familiarity with such tremendous crimes as are almost daily brought before me makes me, I fear, think too lightly of those not actually affecting human life—

perjury, theft, and even forgery—all bad enough God knows!—I believe there is some idea of commuting the punishment now inflicted for this last offence to transportation instead of death; and, atrocious as it is, I am for this alteration of our law. We know that 'Whoso sheds man's blood, by *man* may his blood be shed,' (for we have the highest authority for that,) but I think the forfeit of *life* should be paid only when *life* is destroyed: in no other case does the revealed will of God sanction our assuming his Divine prerogative; although, of course, in this our mercantile country it is peculiarly necessary that the law should be very stringent on this point for the security of property and society at large; for certainly it must be confessed, after all, that forgery is neither more nor less than wholesale thieving."

Mr. Lushington made no comment on this observation: he had apparently fallen into one of his usual fits of abstraction, so

that there was for some time a total silence. It was at length broken by Mr. Watson, who suddenly addressed Mr. Lushington with, "Oh, by-the-by, my good friend, I must congratulate you on at last getting rid of Mr. Woodford, for I hear he has obtained some better preferment, and is about to vacate your church at Elsmere; that is excellent news *for us all*," and Mr. Watson looked exultingly towards Eustace.

But the eyes of Eustace were averted, and although the deepened colour in his cheek showed plainly that he had heard Mr. Watson's words, he took no notice of them. His uncle said something in reply, but *what* Eustace knew not, for he had caught a glimpse of Lucy's face. It was as pale as death!

When, dinner being over, his uncle and Mr. Watson prepared to go up to the drawing-room for coffee, Eustace, suddenly pleading some vague engagement, in an odd, hurried manner wished them both

good night, and immediately left the house.

"Grey," said Mr. Watson, calling after him as he hurried into the hall, "stop, stop, if you will wait half-an-hour I will take you home." But Eustace was gone!

Never perhaps had his mind been in so distracted a state, never had he felt so dissatisfied with himself; never, in short, so miserable, as during his walk home that evening. He was aware that his feelings, in other words, his *passions*, were scarcely under his control. He could not but be sensible how little hope there was for him for the future, and yet he had not courage to put an end to these torturing doubts and inward struggles by at once renouncing all those delightful dreams of earthly happiness which had for a moment again visited his soul, but which he now saw were again fast fading away; and if these struggles had been hard to endure when he was absent from Lucy at Oxford and at Ashford, how much more so now,

when so constantly exposed to the seductions of her society, when daily beholding her beaming smile, when hearing her beloved voice—a voice which ever went straight to his inmost soul, a smile which made his heart dance with joy! and now, in addition to all this, tantalized by her father's full sanction to his attachment!

It was rather later than usual the next afternoon when Eustace reached Stanhope-street; for he had been detained at the Missionary Society's office, and he had also, in his way, stopped at Hatchard's to purchase the book that he had told Lucy he was going to give her. The book was "Wilberforce's Practical Christianity." On opening his uncle's study door, Eustace was startled on seeing Lucy in *his* usual place at the writing-table.

"You are rather late this morning," said his uncle, who was lying back in an arm-chair, looking particularly ill and ~~distressed~~ depressed. "I have such a desperate bad headache, I found I could not write a

word, so I have pressed Lucy into my service, for I began to give you up. What have you been doing?" Eustace made some sort of vague excuse for his absence. "Oh, but Lucy, you need not go away," added Mr. Lushington, on seeing she was about to leave the room; "perhaps I may have a job for you too; and considering how seldom you do anything that is *useful*, you have acquitted yourself very tolerably well."

Lucy's eyes filled with tears; she looked ill as well as her father, and had evidently been crying. "Shall I finish the letter I was copying for you yesterday, sir?" inquired Eustace.

"Ay, do," replied his uncle, "and that will give me time to think what else I have for you to do, for my head is not very clear to-day." And Mr. Lushington passed his hand over his forehead in evident suffering. Before long a note was brought to him by one of the banking-house clerks, by whom he was to send

back some papers. He went out of the room for some minutes to speak to the man, and Lucy and Eustace were in consequence left together. He immediately drew from out of the breast of his coat the volume he had brought for her, and writing in it her name, and below, "From her old playfellow," he put the book into her hand. "That is what I spoke to you about yesterday," said he; "perhaps when you have leisure you will read it; but it is not, as you said, a book to run 'through like a novel;' you must give your mind to it."

Lucy took the book, and holding out her hand to Eustace, while one of her irresistible smiles lit up her face, "I am sure I shall like to read this," said she, "and I shall fancy it is *you* who are giving me all the good advice which I dare say it contains, and which I have no doubt I require. And I will fancy I hear *you* reading it to me, as you read the communion service, and then I am sure

my thoughts will not wander away to trifles, as I must own they are but too apt to do." Then, after a minute, suddenly looking up in his face, "How very early you disappeared yesterday evening! I was not aware you were going away, at least not so soon; and I was so sorry, for I think papa needed you to cheer him even more than ever."

"I could not stay," was all Eustace said in reply.

"I hope you will dine here to-day. Papa seems so unwell, you may be of use to him." Eustace made no answer, and Mr. Lushington at that moment re-entering the room, nothing more passed between them.

Eustace did *not* appear at dinner-time, nor the next day, nor for several days following. On the Sunday he again preached at Quebec-street Chapel, but Lady Rainsforth, though still raving of the beauty of his voice, and still determined on "*unsanctifying* him," could not exert herself

again to go so far at so early an hour; and in vain Eustace cast his eyes down on the crowd as it poured out of the church at the conclusion of the service—there was no upraised face on which the sun from the painted window gleamed. Lucy was not there.

CHAPTER VII.

The next week, according to the pre-arrangement, Mrs. Lushington and Lucy accompanied Lady Emily Maxwell to her uncle's, near Windsor, and they did not come back to town until the following Saturday, when Mrs. Lushington returned with so severe a feverish cold, she was obliged to call in medical advice, and was ordered immediately to her bed.

This long-planned visit to Lord Peterborough's proved a complete failure; so far, at least, as regarded its primary object, namely the furtherance of Mrs. Lushington's and Lady Emily's schemes respecting Lucy and her cousin, Mr. Clifford.

That pretty Mrs. Vernon, whom Lady Emily named as the only possible obstacle

in the way of their matrimonial schemes, happened at that moment to be at Windsor (Captain Vernon's regiment being then quartered there), and it was very evident that the attraction of her beauty was far greater than even that of Lucy's supposed wealth (albeit both father and son were peculiarly in want of cash at that moment). In short, Mrs. Lushington returned home mortified and disappointed in all her hopes and plans, and consequently in no very good humour. As for Lucy, she had excessively enjoyed the novelty of the scene, the races, and the gay company, thinking very little about Mr. Clifford, and it is to be feared, very little also about what Eustace had said on the subject of race-courses; having, in short, been much amused and interested by the exciting scene, and in the beautiful horse on which she had betted.

On the Monday after their return, Mr. Lushington again pressed Eustace to stay dinner; Mrs. Lushington being still con-

fined to her room, he could not resist the strong temptation, and the trio accordingly sat down together.

Mr. Lushington was in one of his very best humours; Lucy looked bright and at her ease (carefully, however, avoiding all allusion to the races or the society she had been in), and even Eustace could not, for the moment, resist the contagion of her happy spirits and gay innocent laugh, and he was almost the Eustace of former days. She had not left the dining-room many minutes before Mr. Lushington rose from his seat, saying, "I really don't see any use in you and I, Eustace, sitting here in form before these bottles of wine, of which we neither of us partake, so let us go upstairs to Lucy and coffee."

Poor Eustace but too readily agreed to prolong the hour of intoxicating happiness which he then enjoyed, and banishing for the moment the future from his mind. Mr. Lushington did not remain long in the drawing-room—he never did—and

Lucy and Eustace were accordingly left together.

"How well and cheerful dear papa seems this evening!" said she; "and it is such a pleasure to see him in good spirits. It is all your doing, Eustace. You really should try and dine here oftener. Why don't you? You have no idea how dull we are without you. Where do you go to? not to Ned Watson's dear Adelphi, I suppose. So what do you do with yourself of an evening?"

"I have to read and improve my mind, you know," said he; "and I spend so much of the mornings now here with your father, I have to make up for lost time of an evening."

"Surely your mind must be pretty nearly *perfect* by this time," said Lucy, laughing; "and what is it you are always reading about? I wish I liked reading better than I am sorry to say I do," she continued, "for I am quite aware how dreadfully ignorant I am about almost every-

thing; and I wish, for papa's sake, that was not the case, that I might be a pleasant companion to him as you are; for he seems to like so much talking with you about *sensible* things—he says no one is so well informed as you are. But it is so impossible to me to fix my mind and thoughts when I try to read, for they fly off I don't know where, even before I am aware. I suppose your thoughts never do such naughty things, Eustace?"

"Oh, I suspect," said he, fixing his eyes upon her face, "that my confessions on that head might be fully as disgraceful as yours, if not more so."

"Of course!" continued Lucy. "I have not yet had time to read your good book, Eustace; but now that mamma is confined to her room, and that there will be no going here and there, I shall have more leisure, and I shall set seriously to work at it. I should have liked so much to have heard you preach again yesterday, but Lady Rainsforth sent to say she

could not go, and Lady Emily always attends at the Chapel Royal for the sake of the singing, which she says is beautiful; but she goes to some particular seat only for peers' wives and daughters; so of course I could not accompany her, and in consequence I went nowhere. I just looked into your book, and saw what *sort* of *thing* it is; but I own I am almost afraid Mr. Wilberforce seems as difficult to understand as yourself. Oh, by-the-by," continued Lucy, suddenly springing from her seat, and opening her work-basket, "I have got a note for you from Lady Rainsforth. Here," said she, "it is in all *due* form, you see—'To the *Reverend* Eustace Grey.'"

Eustace opened the envelope, and out fell an opera ticket! Inside the envelope was written, "With Lady Rainsforth's best compliments, hoping Mr. Grey will give her an answer *in person* in her box at the opera to-morrow evening."

Eustace could scarcely help smiling as

he looked upon the impotent, hopeless means by which Lady Rainsforth intended to undermine and corrupt his principles, (upon which achievement Lucy had told him she was bent.) Lucy saw the smile. A bright flush of pleasure lit up her countenance. "Oh, and you will come, won't you?" and in her anxious anticipation of his consent, she laid her hand upon that of Eustace, which still held the opera ticket.

The touch of that hand even thrilled throughout his frame; every pulse beat: he could almost hear the throbbing of his own heart; but its vibrations sounded in his ears as an alarum, warning him of his danger, and rousing him to resistance. He took hold of her hand, which still grasped his, and, with a melancholy smile putting it from him, he looked up in her face with an earnestness of expression, as if he was gazing upon it for the last time. "No, Lucy, no," he said, in a decided tone, as he replaced the ticket in

its envelope; "Lady Rainsforth is very good, thinking of me, but I cannot avail myself of her kindness. Give it back to her, with many thanks."

"Now, why, dear Eustace, why is this?" said Lucy, in a most beseeching tone of voice. "Of course you will, I know, say, because you think it *wrong* to go to the opera; but only tell me what *possible* wrong you can find in that? and, at all events, tell me what *possible* excuse I can make to Lady Rainsforth—what *possible reason* I *can* give her for your refusal. For I must, you know, say *something* to account for it. She was going to propose Saturday evening to you, because it is the Sonnambula that night, and Rubini sings in it; but I thought you MIGHT *perhaps* not like to be out late on Saturday evening, if you had to preach next morning; but on *Tuesday*, I must own I cannot see what shadow of harm there *can* be in your going!"

"There would be, as far as I am

concerned," replied Eustace, "the same harm on Tuesday as on Saturday."

"Why? have you made a vow that you will never go to the opera at all? Has your *friend*"—and Lucy laid a great stress on the word *friend*—"has your *serious friend* required that promise of you?"

"No, *he* has not," replied Eustace. "But my Saviour has."

Lucy actually started, and looked anxiously in his face, as if she apprehended positive insanity. "What *can* you mean?" she exclaimed.

"I mean," replied Eustace, in a peculiarly slow, quiet, but determined tone and manner—"I mean that my duty to God and my neighbour forbids me accepting Lady Rainsforth's offer of this ticket."

"Well, I must own," said Lucy, scarcely able to suppress her laughter, "I cannot see what your duty to God or your neighbour has to do with an opera

ticket, and I must say it is really carrying *goodness* rather *ridiculously* far."

"It has *this* to do with it," continued Eustace, "that by going to the opera I am sanctioning and encouraging an entertainment which *I* think to be *wrong*, because it brings destruction to the souls of those who perform in it. Surely, Lucy, even you, innocent as you are, and ignorant of so much of the evil of this world (being mercifully placed out of reach of it), even you must know in what a light those poor devoted, degraded opera singers and dancers are considered; in short, as positive outcasts even from all decent society; exposed to trials and temptations, to resist which no one principle of religion or morality is ever inculcated into them. The whole system of the theatre leads to this their moral degradation. These poor creatures are trained to error from their very childhood. They live in sin, and die in hopeless misery. In France, (where the theatres

are much more popular, more attended than even with us,) the wretched performers at them are considered in so degraded, indeed even in so hopeless a light, with regard to salvation, that they are regularly excommunicated by the Church!—denied Christian burial!—and to all this these unhappy beings are condemned, for the *amusement* of their heartless, selfish fellow-creatures. Now, if all this is the case with regard to the profession and lives of the singers, dancers, and greatest part of those connected with the stage (and I fear there is no doubt but it is), surely all who possess any love for their neighbour, to whom we are told to do as we would be done by, cannot think it compatible with that duty, or in conformity to the will of God, to encourage merely, for the entertainment of an idle hour, that which brings destruction of soul and body on those whom we are to love as ourselves. We therefore sin against our neighbour by so grievously injuring him for our *mere*

amusement, and we sin against God by breaking His commandments, which bids us love our neighbour as ourselves."

"Oh, but you put it all in so *very* serious and extreme a light," said Lucy; "and, besides, what difference would it make with regard to these singers and dancers whether you and I went to the theatre or not? They would sing and dance on just the same, whether we went or stayed (*good*) at home, so that *we* certainly are not answerable for *their* sins; that is their affair. By going to the opera *I* don't *force* them to engage in this profession, which you describe as so very dreadful."

"That is no argument at all," rejoined Eustace, "as connected with *our own* duty—our *own* conduct—our *own* conscience. Now, answer me one thing, Lucy: do you think that if our Saviour were now on earth that he would frequent our theatres as an *amusement*, although he might to rescue from destruction the poor

victims perishing within their polluted walls?"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Lucy, evidently shocked at the bare idea of such a possibility; "but that is so strange a light to put it in!"

"It is the *true* one, Lucy. He came on earth to live as our *example*, as well as die for our salvation, and *that* (*his* example) is the only undoubted rule by which to be guided in all our actions. Whatever place of amusement, whatever entertainment, we are sure our Saviour would *not* have sanctioned by his presence, there it cannot be right or safe for his professed followers to go."

"I only ask it for this *once*, as a favour to *me*," said Lucy, having apparently totally unheeded these last words of Eustace. "It would give me *such pleasure* to see you pleased, and I know you would be pleased even in spite of yourself. Do you remember how happy I was when, on that first morning after your arrival at Rome, I took you up to the Trinità di Monté,

and you were so delighted, so worthy of that my favourite view? Now, I am sure you would be equally delighted with my favourite opera, and that delightful Rubini, you who are so fond of music, and then I should once more see you look happy; and I do *so long* to see you look as you did formerly."

"No one has it in their power to make me happy so much as you have, Lucy; but you don't go the right way to work."

"And then," continued Lucy, again taking no notice whatever of what he had said, "what am I to say to Lady Rainsforth? She will think your refusal so extraordinary; for I cannot give her any reason whatever for it but what will look like condemnation of herself; and we are not to condemn and judge others, you know."

"I can't help that, Lucy. I can only act according to what my conscience tells me is right."

Lucy still held Lady Rainsforth's note, with its enclosure, in her hand.

"You remind me," said Eustace, as, with a melancholy, thoughtful expression, he gazed in her face—"You remind me of Eve tempting Adam!"

"Ah, but *you* are not like Adam," said Lucy, reproachfully, "he listened to Eve, and *you* don't listen to me!"

"And what was the consequence of his listening to her?" said Eustace; "he listened and he fell, and brought a curse upon both her and himself. It is all in vain, dear Lucy; I cannot avail myself of Lady Rainsforth's offer; I *cannot*—no, not even to please *you* (who are dearer to me than my very existence)—do that which I know to be contrary to the will of my God and Saviour. That I *cannot*—that I *will not* do."

There was rather an awkward pause for some minutes, while Eustace sat seemingly lost in thought, his countenance becoming more and more overclouded. At last Lucy said, "Don't you think it is a bad plan making religion such a forbidding, uninviting, gloomy thing—in short, mak-

ing out that everything which is pleasant is *wrong?*"

"It is only gloomy and uninviting to those who do not know what true religion is," replied Eustace. "We are told in the word of God, that 'her ways are ways of *pleasantness*, and all her paths are *peace*.' You once thought," he continued, almost breathless from agitation—"you once thought that a quiet, peaceful, country life was no punishment; in short, you once thought you could be happy living at Elsmere parsonage; perhaps you think so no longer?"

Lucy did not reply; but Eustace saw, by the quick heaving of her bosom, how much his sudden question had startled her! And *now*, terrified at the possibility of the sentence, which by these words he might have hurried upon himself, and not feeling courage at that moment to meet his fate—wishing, in short, for a reprieve however brief—he hastily said, "Oh! don't reply—don't answer me, Lucy. It was a foolish question of mine—forget it

—another time we will talk about that —not yet, not yet." And hastily rising from his seat, he went to a table at the further end of the room in search of the book which he had the week before given her, and when he returned to the couch, he made a sign to Lucy to sit down by him. "You will try and read this book, Lucy?" he said, "will you not? to please me, though I will not go to the opera, to please you? You will return good for evil, will you not—set me a good example?" he added, with a melancholy smile: "and you will think of me when you read it—of Cousin Eustace!" And turning over the leaves, he marked several passages for her particular attention. "Here is what my friend Wilberforce says about the theatre, and he explains what I mean better than I can." Again there was a pause in their conversation, when Eustace suddenly said, "Do you think your father is coming up here again this evening?"

"No," replied Lucy, "I should not think he will; he rarely does."

"Then I believe—I suppose—I had better go down to him and see if there is anything more I can do for him to night, as I shall not be able to come to-morrow; nor for some days," he added, "for I am going out of town, I believe."

"Out of town—where?" inquired Lucy; but he did not appear to have heard her question.

Eustace rose from his seat, "I suppose—I believe—then I had better bid you good night, Lucy, now," said he, in a low uncertain voice; but instead of going, he again resumed his place at her side on the couch, and laying his elbow on the table before him, he rested his forehead on his hand, thus shading the light from his face, while his eyes were fixed upon hers. "I was so glad to find you writing for your father to-day," said he, after a minute's pause, "he seemed so pleased at your being what he calls '*useful;*'" and

a melancholy smile passed over the countenance of Eustace. "I hope you will often try and be of use to your father; you *should*, Lucy; he is not well I am sure, and he has been so sorely tried."

These words of Eustace, somehow raised a feeling of vague alarm in the mind of Lucy, and, looking up in his face, she said, anxiously,

"You talk as if you were going away. What do you mean, Eustace? You are not *really* going away?"

"Yes, you know I told you I was going out of town for a few days."

"And that is *all* you mean—is it not?" said she; "you are not going to leave London altogether?"

He made no answer, but continued gazing upon her with such an intense earnestness, as if he wished to imprint upon the retina of his memory—never to be effaced—every feature of her beloved countenance. "Well, I suppose I *really* must go *now*," he again repeated, with a deep sigh.—But still there he sat beside

her, his eyes still riveted upon her face.—On a sudden he grasped her hand in both of his. Lucy actually started, for they were icy cold.

"What is it makes you so cold, Eustace? Are you not well?"

"Oh, I don't know," he replied; "I believe I am what you ladies call *nervous*, but it is nothing. Your hand will warm me," he added, with an odd, wild, excited expression on his countenance, and he still more closely clasped it in his own.

In a minute or two he again, on a sudden, once more started up from the couch: "Good night, Lucy—and good bye,"—he added, in a lower tone; "may God watch over and protect you!"

These last words did not reach the ears of Lucy, so breathless was the voice of him who uttered them. He rushed to the door immediately—closed it after him—and he was gone!

Lucy remained for some time lost in thought, after Eustace had left the room. There was a something in his manner and

look which struck her as so odd; there seemed to be some hidden meaning in everything he had said, so at least she now fancied. Once or twice she was even on the point of going down stairs to see if he was still with her father—if only to ask if he was not ill; but she was always in some degree in awe of her father, although of late she fancied he had been much kinder in his manner to her—that evening in particular, he had been so *pleasant* with her and Eustace. "He is so fond of Eustace!" she said to herself.—While thus pondering in her mind what she had better do, she thought she heard her father's bell ring; she ventured to the top of the stairs, and looked over the banisters. At that moment she saw Eustace hastily cross the hall below, and almost immediately heard the house door finally close after him. "Dear, dear Eustace," she ejaculated to herself; "if I could but see you look happy!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Eustace was next morning sitting at the table in his lodging, a sheet of paper and writing materials before him, when the door opened and Neville entered. He was actually startled by the look of intense suffering which he read on his young friend's countenance. "I fear you have no good news to give me," said Neville, kindly taking his hand.

"No—none—I have not a hope left—I must put an end to this state of torturing doubt; it is madness going on in this way; for I am sure I have nothing to look to. It must be done—my mind is made up. I am going to write to her, for I have not yet said a word to her—I could not, but I fear I know but too well what her

answer will be.—I shall, however, give her three days to consider, and I must go away for those three days; I must be quiet; I cannot endure this place of noise and turmoil. I think I shall go and visit my poor friends at Ashford, *take leave* of them"—he added, with a deep sigh.

"Shall I go with you, Grey?" asked Neville.

"No, my good, kind friend," replied Eustace; "no, I must be *alone—alone* with *God*. When I return—*perhaps then*—you may be of use to me, for I shall probably have many things (worldly matters) then to settle, and I do not feel very fit for that sort of work, I own. But will you be still in London?"

"Yes, certainly I will not go away, if I can be of the least use or comfort to you. At this moment, however, I am sure the kindest thing I can do, is to leave you alone—no not alone, thank God," he added. "Remember, Grey, you have ever with you One who 'sticketh closer' than even

a 'brother,' one who will not leave you 'comfortless.'"

With these words, Neville quitted the room.

Eustace took up his pen to write to Lucy. His letter was as follows :—

"I wished to have spoken to you last night, dearest Lucy, but was not able ; indeed, I believe it is much better for us both, that I should write what I have to say. You heard, I know, what Mr. Watson said that day at dinner about Mr. Woodford's departure from Elsmere ; for Lucy, I saw you turn pale. It is quite true, he has given up the living, and your father has given it to me.—And he has done more.—

"You know when we parted at Rome, I told you I meant to confess my culpable conduct to my uncle. I wrote to him that last evening, and told him all.—By his answer, it appeared clear I was to think of you and Elsmere no more. In short, he forbad my coming there.—That was the reason, Lucy, I was so long absent

from you—that was the reason, why, on the day of your poor brother Frederick's funeral, although in the house,—close to you—I never saw you! You accused me of having forgotten, neglected you.—Oh Lucy, Lucy!—But I must go regularly through my story.—While I was at Ashford, I received a message from my uncle, through that kind Mr. Watson, saying he wished to see me, for that he thought I had taken up *too strongly* what he had written to me from Rome, then nearly a year and half before.—I immediately went to town.—I was there that *one* day, you may remember. Your father, then, did *not* say a word to me either relative to yourself or the living, but was all kindness to me.—It was then you reproached me for having forgotten you!—Would to God I had!—Not long after this, business brought me to London, —and since then here I have remained and, as you know, been able, I trust, to save your father some little fatigue and worry

by again acting as his secretary, kindly constantly welcoming me to his house as a guest.—It was about a fortnight ago, that he told me of the Elsmere living being vacant, and at the same time offered it to me.—I refused it, Lucy! For I was so convinced that the bright dream of former days was completely at an end—I was so aware that the great change in your worldly prospects still further separated me from you—that feeling I could not live daily exposed to a trial, which, I was well aware, I had not the strength to withstand —I immediately gave up all thoughts of what I had once set my heart upon.

"My uncle then—Oh, Lucy! I hardly know how to proceed!

"My uncle then said to me—(I will repeat his own words, that will be the best way of telling my story)—he said, 'If you are still in the same mind, and if Lucy likes you well enough to give up for you that fine world in which she now lives, and her worldly friends, I will no longer object to

your wishes But' (he added), 'I doubt if she is now fitted to be the wife of a country clergyman, whatever she once was, or might have fancied herself to be.'—Lucy, it is full a fortnight since your father spake these words of rapture to me—since he *gave* you to me—since in fact you were *mine*—since all my wildest dreams of happiness appeared to be realized! and I have never yet had courage to tell you of this;—and I do so now only to bid you recollect that on that evening at the Colosseum I released you from your engagement—that I then offered to take back the ring by which I had thoughtlessly bound you to myself. —You then refused to do so—but I would not, you may remember, take you at your word.—Again I now renew the same offer; —you are free, Lucy; your happiness is the first object of my life—it is far more necessary to me than my own.—Had you been mine before you entered the world in which you now live, I really believe you might have been happy with me. Yes,

dear Lucy, for I know you care for me; and I feel grateful to you—Oh! how grateful!—that amid all your worldly friends and temptations, your old playfellow has never been driven from your heart. Yes, even now, I *know*—I am *aware*—I am *sure*—you have not a *friend* you love as well as Cousin Eustace;—but I also know *that* is a very different thing from consenting to unite your existence to mine—from giving up for me all those pleasures of the world which are now so attractive to you; I know, too, that my religious views—my religious principles—are too strict for you; that the life I *must* lead would be one of constant privation to you.—Now, Lucy, I must be quite plain—quite decided here; for I am pledged to One whom I *should* love better than I love you. I cannot yield in *one single* point what I consider to be my *duty!* Our argument last night about the opera, must show you how immoveable I am on that subject—I mean that of religious

principle and practice. So again I say—*you are free.* I do not ask you to make any *sacrifice* for me. *Your* happiness is my first object. I could not myself be happy, although seeing your dear face, hearing your dear voice, constantly enjoying your society, if you, Lucy, were not happy.—Do not, therefore, be hasty in answering me. I give you till Saturday, till then I shall be out of town. I will call in Stanhope-street, on Saturday afternoon, for your answer. Leave your letter with the porter, for I shall not go into the house;—my *ever* entering it again will depend upon what that letter contains.—May God bless and direct you, dearest!—Apply to HIM, Lucy, and *He* will guide you aright.—EUSTACE."

Eustace did not trust himself to read again what he had now written. He immediately sealed and directed his letter, and in his way to Piccadilly, where he knew he was sure of a conveyance to Ashford, he put it into the post-office. Thus he had, he

felt, in a measure sealed his own fate ; and he proceeded on his way with still more hurried steps, his eyes fixed on the pavement before him unconscious of everything around.

Eustace remained at Ashford, as he had proposed, until the following Saturday, when he was again deposited in Piccadilly, and from thence walked to Stanhope-street. He looked up at the drawing-room windows before going to the door. The blinds were all drawn down ; he rang : "Is there any letter here for me?" he inquired of the servant who opened the door.

"Yes, I believe there is, sir;" and he brought him one that was standing on the hall chimney-piece.

Eustace thrust it at once, without looking at it, within the breast of his coat, and hurried home. On reaching his room, he bolted the door, and sank into the first chair. At length, summoning courage, he withdrew the letter from his bosom, and broke the seal. At first, he fancied

the enclosure must have been forgotten to be put in (the cover appearing quite empty). With trembling hands he again examined it; something fell out—something that sounded on the floor as it fell. —It was the small fretted gold ring which he had put upon Lucy's hand the evening before they parted at Elsmere.

For some minutes the room swam round before the eyes of Eustace, and a cold sweat bedewed his forehead; he again took up the envelope to be sure he had not somehow overlooked an enclosure—there was nothing!—He looked at the address; it was not in Lucy's handwriting.—"Not even one parting word!" he exclaimed. "Oh, Lucy, Lucy! I have not deserved such cruel treatment from you. I did not expect it of you!"

Several hours passed; but Eustace scarcely took cognizance of them; he was as if stunned! At last, he felt obliged to rouse himself, for he had yet another task to perform. One more effort, then all

would be over!—It was to write to his uncle; for he felt that to return to Stanhope-street was now quite impossible, and that he had not sufficient courage to encounter Mr. Lushington, even at the banking-house, where (as he knew) he was to be found every Monday morning. He, therefore, wrote to him as follows.

"My dear Uncle,

"As Lucy may not like to inform you herself of what has passed between us, I now write to save her that distress, and to tell you that we have had an explanation, and she (as you seemed to expect would be the case) cannot apparently make up her mind to the many and great sacrifices she would have to encounter in uniting her existence with mine. All is, therefore, at an end between us. I am not at this minute enough myself to be able to express, as I would wish, all that I feel, my dear uncle, for your *extraordinary* kindness. Had it been permitted, what a happiness would it have been to me to

have proved my gratitude by every means in my power—to have devoted my life to your good and comfort, and thus helped, perhaps, to brighten the remainder of your days; but all that may not be! I can only pray for your welfare—for that of my dear, dear Lucy! which I shall ever do from the very bottom of my heart. She has been quite right in at once putting an end to what evidently would not have been for her happiness, and consequently could not have been for mine either. She was pleased by your employing her as your secretary. I hope you will do so sometimes, it will spare your eyes, and I myself *cannot—cannot* return to Stanhope-street any more!—Of course, my dear uncle, I must now again, and *finally*, refuse your kind offer of the living of Elsmere. I trust you will find a fit person to take charge of the parish, and one who will be a comfort to yourself.

"Your grateful and affectionate nephew,

"Eustace Grey."

That Tuesday (previous to his going to Ashford) on which Eustace had written his letter to Lucy, she was to have accompanied Lady Rainsforth, in the evening, to the opera (it was the night for which the latter had sent Eustace the ticket). Lucy was alone in her own room, for it was near dressing-time; she was turning over the leaves of the book Eustace had given her, and carelessly glancing her eye on the passages which he had marked for her particular attention, when there was a knock at her door, and a servant brought her a letter just come for her by the penny-post. "Oh, it is from Eustace!" she exclaimed to herself, on looking at the address: "it must be to say that he has thought better of it, and will after all go to the opera with us to night. Oh, how glad I am!" and a flush of pleasure spread itself over her countenance. But it soon faded, and she became pale as death. Over and over she tried to read the letter which she held in her hands: but each

time with increased confusion of her senses! her dizzy eyes being unable even to decipher the words which were before her.

Her maid came into the room, and warned her more than once that it was getting late—that it was time to dress; but Lucy heeded her not—heard her not.

At length, she went up close to her, saying, "Mrs. Lushington bids me tell you, ma'am, that she wishes you would make haste and dress, for that she wants me to go to her."

Lucy started, looked for a moment in the woman's face, as if bewildered, tried to speak, and then burst into a violent fit of hysterical sobbing. Salts, eau de Cologne, sal volatile, all were duly administered by Mrs. Reid. She laid Lucy on the sofa and chafed her temples, but all in vain; Lucy continued to weep almost convulsively. Becoming at length alarmed, Reid went to Mrs. Lushington, who was still confined to her room, Lady Emily

Maxwell at that moment being with her, (discussing the "*unlucky* business" of her cousin Clifford with Mrs. Vernon).

"I fear, ma'am," said Reid on entering, "that Miss Lushington must have heard some very bad news, for she has had a letter by this evening's post, and is crying as if her heart would break."

"Dear me, how odd!" exclaimed Mrs. Lushington, "who can *she* get letters from? and what can *she* have to cry about? Tell her to come here directly."

"Oh, ma'am, I assure you Miss Lushington is really not fit to come to you just now; she is as nervous as anything!"

"But she *must* come, nervous or not," retorted her mother; "for I must know what all this nonsense is about; and the doctor, you know, positively forbade my leaving my room. Will you, Lady Emily, be so good as just go and see what *is* the matter."

Lady Emily went directly; and on her return fully corroborated Reid's report.—

Lucy was evidently in the greatest possible distress, quite unable to speak or be spoken to; and she had a letter fast clenched in her hand.

"A letter!" said Mrs. Lushington; "bring it to me at once; I must see it."

"Oh, I cannot do that," said Lady Emily (who, though a complete woman of the world, had some sense of honour at least—some feeling for the feelings of another). "I cannot think of taking the letter from her in her present state; indeed I do not think I could, it seems so tightly grasped in her hand; we must wait till Miss Lushington is more composed, and able to explain it all. Have you no idea, Mrs. Lushington, who the letter can be from?"

"No, none; unless it is some nonsense from that tiresome Eustace Grey; he is really the plague of my life. Would you believe it, Lady Emily, Mr. Lushington is actually going to give him the living of Elsmere: and, moreover, he has told him

that if *he* likes *Lucy*, and *Lucy* likes *him*, that he has no objection to their marrying. But *I* shall soon put an end to *that*!"

"Miss Lushington marry that penniless parson!" exclaimed Lady Emily. "*She* who has all the world at her feet! I cannot believe it to be possible!"

"Oh, I was sure you would be shocked," said Mrs. Lushington. "For my part, I really believe Mr. Lushington has lost his senses; it is the only way I can account for his conduct. I would have told you of this before, but I was really too much *ashamed*, I may say. Indeed, Mr. Lushington forbad me saying anything about his intentions to Lucy or anyone; but that I should not have minded, had it not been that I have been so ill, and unable to speak without coughing. Yes, Mr. Lushington actually picks out *Eustace Grey* for his son-in-law! Lucy having, as you say, all the world at her feet; and so I told Mr. Lushington; but he says he *hates* all her *fine* lovers, that he knows quite well

that they are only making up to her for her money; and that they may save themselves the trouble, for that he don't mean to give Lucy *one farthing*; that his money is his own, and that he will dispose of it as he pleases; that if she likes to marry Eustace Grey, they will have the 600*l.* a-year that the Elsmere living is worth; and that he will allow her two or three hundred a-year in addition—but that is all. But all that, begging Mr. Lushington's pardon, is nonsense; for there is the Elsmere property, worth at least 3000*l.* a-year, that *must* come to Lucy, whether he chooses it or not—(and it is really but right *that* should be known). What Mr. Lushington's intentions with regard to the rest of his property may be, I have no idea, for he never condescends to tell *me anything*; but I declare I should not be at all surprised if he was to make that impertinent Eustace Grey his heir; for he seems to be perfectly bewitched about him. I thought Mr. Lushington had had

enough of parsons with Mr. Woodford, and I suspect Eustace will be ten times worse even than he was, as Mr. Lushington will find to his cost, when he gets him settled at Elsmere, whether he marries Lucy or not."

"Oh! I never can believe," exclaimed Lady Emily, "that Miss Lushington would do such a thing as throw herself away on a country parson;—in short, we *must not let* her do so."

"But, dearest Lady Emily," continued Mrs. Lushington, "you must remember this is all a *secret*—(a precious secret, truly!)—but now do just go and see after Lucy; and if all this childish crying is over, tell her to come here, and bring that letter with her; and here," added Mrs. Lushington, going to her dressing-table, "bid her bathe her eyes with this rose-water (for I suppose she has been making a fright of herself), and tell her to make haste and dress for the opera; for Lady Rainsforth said she meant to go early, for she wanted to hear the overture for once in a way."

Lady Emily soon returned from her errand, saying that dressing and the opera were quite out of the question for that evening, for that Lucy was still so nervous, and actually ill from violent agitation, she had advised her to go to bed at once; to which she had readily agreed—"and indeed it is the best thing she can do."

"And the letter?" said Mrs. Lushington.

"Oh, it is no longer in her hand; and I don't know what she has done with it. But really, dear Mrs. Lushington, we had better not say anything about the letter to her to-night; and I will come to you to-morrow morning, if I can be of any use to you in this very unpleasant business. Will twelve o'clock suit you?"

"Oh, yes, and a thousand thanks; but you are so kind!"

And thus the friends parted, Lady Emily leaving Stanhope-street in no very good spirits herself; for she foresaw that her schemes in favour of her cousin, Mr. Clifford, were about to fall to the ground

as entirely as those with regard to her brother, Lord Parnell. The "*affair*" with Mrs. Vernon daily becoming more and more serious, and being now talked of by everybody; besides, the account which Mrs. Lushington had been giving her respecting Mr. Lushington's future intentions with regard to his daughter was not encouraging in the way of speculation. But Lady Emily was by no means wanting in acuteness; at all events, she was sagacious enough to have discovered that Mrs. Lushington was an uncommonly silly woman, and, moreover, that her husband was as fully aware of this fact as she was herself, and she thought it very possible that he did not choose to let her into the secret of his real intentions with regard to his property, knowing well that they would immediately be proclaimed at Charing Cross. She therefore resolved on perfect silence herself, at least for the present; and with the promise of returning next morning, she left Stanhope-street.

Poor Lucy passed a most wretched, sleepless night. She had placed Eustace's letter under her pillow, and the moment daylight broke into her apartment, had taken it out of its cover, and read and re-read it till she knew every word of it by heart.

And to her *heart* indeed did those words go. She so dearly loved, so admired, so revered that dear, good Eustace. If she could but have more time to consider—to make up her mind. She was sure if it was but once made up she could not but be happy with him, with so amiable, so gentle, so kind a being! But then to pass her whole life at Elsmere, never to do anything but visit schools and poor people! If Eustace was at least not so *very* strict in his notions—if he would but mix a little more in the world, and do more like other people. But that she now saw was hopeless. And then she felt she was not herself good enough for him; and he would every day find that out more

and more. He would be dissatisfied with her. He would not be happy, even if she could bring herself to give up everything for him—Oh, Lucy, Lucy! why did you not read and re-read the last words in that letter from your best of earthly friends, wherein he bids you seek for heavenly guidance in your perplexity, all would then have been well.

Lady Emily came next morning at the appointed hour, and before proceeding to Mrs. Lushington's apartment, she knocked at Lucy's door. A faint, low voice bade her enter. Lucy, who was buried in an arm-chair (the same letter still in her hand) got up immediately, and hastily hiding it in her bag, she attempted to speak, but the effort again made her tears gush forth afresh.

"Compose yourself, my dear Miss Lushington," said Lady Emily. "I know something has happened to distress you, but I dare say it will all be cleared up and set right. Your mother is very

anxious to see you and talk it all over with you; so come now with me to her room, for I am sure the sooner your mind is set at ease the better." And so saying, Lady Emily drew Lucy's trembling arm within hers; and thus, pale with swollen eyes and tear-bedewed cheeks, poor Lucy was led as a victim to execution, for well she knew that no one feeling of her heart would her mother comprehend or sympathise with.

"Well, what a figure you have made of yourself," exclaimed Mrs. Lushington, the minute she saw her; "and pray what is all this bother about? You have had a letter, I understand. Let me see it."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy, shrinking back, "oh, pray, pray—"

"I suppose it is some fine high-flown love-letter from Eustace Grey—eh?"

"No, no, indeed!"

"Then what is it? I desire you will give it me at once, and that there may be

an end of all this nonsensical weeping and wailing."

With trembling hands, poor Lucy took the letter from her bag, and gave it to Mrs. Lushington, who, beckoning to Lady Emily, made her come to her side and look over her as she read it. Again Lucy cast a beseeching look on her mother, but it was unheeded. During the perusal Mrs. Lushington frequently turned to her friend with an expression of contempt, even derision, on her face; and when it was finished, she whispered to Lady Emily, though not so low but that Lucy heard her, "What a parcel of canting stuff." Then turning to her daughter, "Well, and where is the necessity, pray, of all this violent distress? I really cannot see anything in this letter to distress you at all. If any one is to be discomposed, it may be *myself*, I think," said Mrs. Lushington, angrily; "and I must say it is not much to the credit of *any* of the party that this pretty love-plot

should have been carried on (as it appears by what Eustace says) these three years, without my knowing anything about the matter. However, I am glad it has come to an end now, and indeed I must say Eustace seems to be a much more reasonable sort of person than I gave him credit for; one thing being quite plain, that he has no wish to have you for his wife. Therefore I really cannot see that you need be in any difficulty whatever about answering him. The only thing I do *not* understand in his letter is his giving you three days to consider what is so easily settled in three minutes."

"Oh, no, mamma, it is not that. You do not understand him."

"Not understand! I really am as able to *understand* as you are, indeed much more so; and his words are perfectly plain." And referring to the letter, Mrs. Lushington read, "'*I now release you.* I could *not* be happy *if you were not so.*' If that is not telling you in plain terms that

he does *not* wish for your company in his parsonage, I really don't know what the meaning of words is. Lady Emily, don't you agree with me?"

"Why, I must own," said Lady Emily, "I can but see it in the same light."

"I wish I could," sobbed out Lucy, the tears streaming down her face, "but I know—I fear—" She could get no further.

"Come, now, pray let us have no more of this nonsense," said Mrs. Lushington, angrily; and she took a sheet of paper out of the blotting-book, and placing it before Lucy, with a pen ready dipped in the ink, "There, now, just write and thank Eustace for his letter, and say you are satisfied he is quite in the right, and there is an end of it."

"Oh, no, no, mamma, I cannot write that to him. I *cannot*—I *will* not." And again Lucy was nearly choked with her sobs.

"It will not do at present," whispered

Lady Emily to Mrs. Lushington; "we must, I see, go more gently to work." Then turning to Lucy, "Come back to your own room, my dear girl; keep yourself quiet, for you have had a bad night, and are still quite nervous. You will see all this in a different light another day, and besides, you see, Mr. Grey is gone out of town, and don't expect an answer till Saturday; so there is no hurry."

"Well, I really never knew such a bother made about writing a refusal to a lover," said Mrs. Lushington, angrily. "If *I* had been so undecided and tender-hearted I don't know how I should have got on at all. By the time I was your age, Lucy, I had dismissed, I dare say, half-a-dozen admirers. The fuss you make about it shows, I fear, you have not had many offers. Well, I suppose, as Lady Emily says, you had better go to your own room now, and try and make up your mind."

Again poor Lucy passed a miserable

night of harassing doubt; and an aching head and throbbing pulse was the consequence next day. Still Mrs. Lushington wanted to urge her to write the letter, or to let her write it for her; but Lady Emily, more feeling, more compassionate than her own mother, begged for more time; in short, for *mercy*, for the poor suffering girl. Saturday morning came—the day on which Eustace was to call for his answer—and at even as early an hour as eleven o'clock, Mrs. Lushington, wrapped up in shawls, cloaks, and boas, emerged from her own apartment, and, leaning on Lady Emily's arm, entered her daughter's room. Poor Lucy shuddered when she saw her mother; for she was well aware the moment was come when her final answer must be given.

During the three solitary days and sleepless nights which she had now passed, Eustace's letter her sole companion, and his perfections the constant object of her thoughts, the scales had turned very much

in his favour. Ill, low, and nervous as she then felt, the noisy fatiguing pleasures of the world had (at that moment) lost much of their attractions; and Elsmere, that once so loved home, resumed its charms in her eyes. Even her garden, with its flowers and fresh shady repose, were welcome images to her now fevered mind and body.

"Well, Lucy," said Mrs. Lushington, assuming a *jocular* tone, "I am come, you see, in person to *return thanks* for your *obliging inquiries* during my illness, and to ask after *your* health in return, hoping you are getting all right again as well as myself." A faint, melancholy smile was Lucy's only reply. "I am come, too, to talk over with you that tiresome business of Eustace Grey's letter. Have you made up your mind what to say to him? I really should not think it required a moment's consideration: for certainly you would not at all like to pass your whole life at Elsmere parsonage, without variety

or amusement of any sort, as you evidently must do if you accept the *Reverend* Mr. Grey's *flattering* proposal. Very flattering truly, when all the advantages are on his side; and he does not even *pretend* to give up a single whim of his own to please you. Setting out in this way, I wonder what it will be when the honeymoon is over. Don't you agree with me, Lady Emily?"

"I must confess," said Lady Emily, "I don't think Mr. Grey holds out a very agreeable prospect to Lucy, for she evidently would have to give up, not only every amusement, but, I suppose, *all* society except his own. And though he is, I dare say, very *good* and all that sort of thing, I own I should think twice before I engaged to marry a man who makes bargains beforehand, and says so very plainly that he must and will have his own way. About the opera, for instance, there seems to have been some altercation already."

"Oh, indeed, Lady Emily," stammered out poor Lucy, "you quite mistake him. I assure you he is the kindest, the most amiable, the best!"

"He shows his amiability, as you call it, in a very odd way," rejoined Mrs. Lushington, angrily; "first by securing to himself every worldly advantage, and then plainly saying he will allow you to share all these advantages with him, provided you will give up everything you like for the honour of being his wife. Dear me! his object in all this (by way of *romantic love*) is quite clear. It is not *you* he cares for, but your money."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy, the colour rushing into her cheeks at such unmerited aspersions; "how little do you know Eustace!"

"I wish I may not know him a great deal better than you do, as you will discover to your cost if you persist in this obstinate folly. I really have no patience with you or with *his* impertinence."

"Well, dear mamma," said poor Lucy, her agitation every minute increasing, "only give me a little time, and I will write to him."

"Time!" interrupted Mrs. Lushington. "You have had three whole days already, and we are not a bit farther advanced than at first."

"If I could see him," stammered out Lucy, "just for a minute. If I could speak to him—once more speak to him!"

"Speak to him! most certainly not. I never heard so extraordinary a proposal. Lady Emily, don't you think this would be highly improper? Besides, I think I remember that *he himself* begs you will an swer him *only* by *letter*. If he wished for any *conversation* with you he had nothing to do but come. Where is this precious letter of his that has occasioned all this bother? I want to look at it again."

Lucy knew well she had no alternative but to comply. "Pray," inquired Mrs. Lushington, "what is this nonsensical,

sentimental business about a *ring* that he refers to? What ring is it? Have I ever seen it? He says you are to return it to him. Where is it?"

"*There*," said Lucy, in a scarcely audible voice, pointing to the small fretted gold ring on her left hand.

"Well, I cannot say it appears to be much worth thinking about," said Mrs. Lushington, with a contemptuous smile; "so the simplest thing will be to do just what he desires, and return him the ring without the trouble of writing anything at all, as you seem so mealy-mouthed about it. I suppose he wants the ring for some *future occasion* of the sort," added Mrs. Lushington, with a laugh; "and at any rate you could hardly keep his ring when dismissing himself; for it will look rather greedy, perhaps, and indeed be scarcely honest. You have plenty of other rings, I dare say, and if not, I will give you one. So come, give it me at once, and I will put it up and save you all further trouble."

"Oh no, mamma, mamma! give me only another moment! pray, pray, dear mamma!"

"Really, Lucy, you are too childish. You will neither do one thing or another. I cannot allow you to go on in this foolish way; you will positively make me ill."

Mrs. Lushington's temper was by nature none of the mildest, and now, excited by opposition, she abruptly seized her daughter's hand. Lucy turned deadly pale; she tried again to speak, but could not. A faint sickness came over her, and, falling back in her chair, she soon lost all consciousness.

Mrs. Lushington took advantage of the moment; the ring was hastily drawn from Lucy's now powerless hand, put into an envelope, and directed by Lady Emily. It must, however, be said in her vindication, not without tears stealing down her face, and one even falling on the letter as she addressed it.

And thus was the fate of Eustace Grey and Lucy Lushington irrevocably fixed.

CHAPTER IX.

It was fully a fortnight before Lucy was well enough to join her father and mother at dinner, being still weak and nervous; and when she, for the first time did so, and saw the place at the table opposite to her (that which Eustace used to occupy) vacant, she could not restrain her tears. Her father was, if possible still more stern and cold to her than ever, and scarcely spoke. As he was next morning, as usual, busy in his study, there was a gentle knock at his door, and on his giving leave to enter Lucy appeared. "Papa," said she, without even raising her eyes towards him, "Papa —Eustace." She could get no further.

"Well! what about Eustace?" inquired Mr. Lushington, eagerly, as he turned

quickly towards her, "What about Eustace?"

"He said," Lucy continued, in a scarcely audible voice,—"he said, you would perhaps let me help you—write sometimes for you now—now that—" and she burst into tears.

"Oh! if it had not been for you, and your folly and your *fine* friends, Eustace would have been in this room, and in that chair at this moment," said Mr. Lushington, angrily, "and I should not have been harassed and worn out, as I am;" and then turning away, he muttered to himself, "Folly, folly! I have no patience with such folly; and when it is too late, Lucy, you and your fine friends will be aware of your mistake."

"Can't I do anything for you?" again stammered out Lucy; "I should be so glad."

"No, not to-day—not to-day," said Mr. Lushington, very shortly, and he again bent down over the writing table. But still

Lucy remained fixed at the same spot behind him.

"Papa," at last she said, "do you know? Have you heard? Can you tell me anything of him—of Eustace?" The name was scarcely audible.

"I! How should I know anything of Eustace? It is full three weeks since I have seen or heard anything of him—thanks to you, Lucy. He may be gone to Jericho, for aught I know. It is all your own doing; and you must take the consequence," and then, waving his hand, "I am busy now—another time," and Mr. Lushington again stooped down, and returned to his writing.

Lucy left the room, and went up to her own to weep, she felt so thoroughly wretched, and her nerves were not just then in a state to stand her father's cold, harsh manner. Not many minutes after, Mrs. Lushington entered, and seeing the state in which Lucy was, she stood at the door for a minute. "Well, what is the

matter now?" said she, in an angry tone. "Really, Lucy, there must be an end of all this sentimental nonsense, it is too tiresome! I have ordered the carriage at three, and you will be ready to go out with me. You are quite well now, and I will not allow you to mope any more at home; you are really enough to give one the blue devils."

Lucy knew well that all remonstrance with Mrs. Lushington was vain, and that she had but to submit; so, bathing her burning eyes, and putting a thick veil over her face, she followed her mother into the carriage. Mrs. Lushington went to various shops and left her card at various doors, "Tell the footman to go to Lady Rainsforth's," said she, at length to Lucy; "I dare say, she would take you to the opera to-night, and I am sure it is the best thing you can do."

"Oh no, mamma, I really had rather not—much rather not."—The very word "opera," recalling so painfully to

Lucy's mind that last time when she had seen Eustace, the conversation which had then taken place between them, and which had led to their final separation. "I really had much rather not go;—pray, mamma."

"But I had rather you *did*," said Mrs. Lushington, in a positive tone; "you are really so full of whims and fancies now, there is no pleasing you, or making anything of you. I thought you were mad about music, and liked the opera of all things."

"Yes, I did—but—"

"*Did!* and *but!* what stuff and nonsense! What has the poor opera done to offend you?" The carriage stopped at Lady Rainsforth's door: "There, put down the window, and tell Edward to ask if Lady Rainsforth is at home."—Her ladyship was.—"Well, you had better now go to Stanhope-street, and send the carriage back for me, for I may be here some time." Thankful was poor Lucy for this arrange-

ment, and that she was thus spared more animadversions and discussions—spared, too, hearing Eustace's name; for she was sure Lady Rainsforth would inquire after him, perhaps even allude to the history of the rejected opera ticket, and to her own non-appearance on that Tuesday evening, for Lucy had never seen Lady Rainsforth since all that had occurred.

On leaving Grosvenor Place, where Lady Rainsforth lived, they had to cross Piccadilly, in order to get into Hyde Park. There was at that moment a particular crowd and confusion of waggons, stage-coaches, and cabs in the street, so that the carriage had to stop, and numbers of pedestrians were also detained on the foot pavement waiting to cross. As Lucy, engrossed by her own thoughts, looked vacantly out of the window, she saw, amid the crowd on the opposite side of the street, the figures of two gentlemen in black; an actual scream escaped from her. "Oh Eustace, Eustace!" she exclaimed,

and, unconscious of what she did, she hurriedly looked all round the carriage, for the check-string; there was none. The carriage again began to move on. "Oh stop, stop!" she cried, trying in vain to get the window down; but she was not heard, her voice being drowned in the noise of the crowd around. Suddenly the impediment to their progress seemed to be removed, the coachman dashed on. Lucy again looked out of the window; but Eustace was lost in the crowd, she could no longer distinguish him.

And what could she have said? What could she have done? if they had then met! She had for a minute fancied, that he had recognised the carriage, and was looking towards it; but even if he had, what would it have availed? all was finally fixed between them—all was over. But, oh! if she could but once more see him, and ask his forgiveness, she thought she would be happier—her mind would be more at rest.

Mrs. Lushington, careless of her

daughter's entreaties, had settled the matter about the opera with Lady Rainsforth, and she called for Lucy at the appointed time, who, of course, had no choice but to obey and go. There she was again where she had passed so many hours in thoughtless enjoyment, but all seemed now changed. Eustace's grave, melancholy countenance on that last evening they had spent together, in Stanhope-street, when he had argued with her on the evils of the theatre, was ever before her: his words haunted her, "Whatever entertainment we are sure our Saviour would not have sanctioned by his presence, *there* it cannot be *right* or *safe* for his professed followers to go." As the voices of the singers swelled in chorus, Lucy's whole frame trembled with nervous emotion, and she almost unconsciously averted her eyes from the gay dancing figures which fluttered on the stage before her. Sir Alexander came into the box as usual, but his jokes fell dead on the ears of Lucy, and finding at

last that it was impossible to attract her attention, he gave the matter up, and placing himself close to Lady Rainsforth, on the opposite side of the box, they carried on an (apparently) interesting whispering conversation, Lucy once or twice fancying she heard her own name and that of *Grey*, and then the words, "Extraordinary infatuation, impertinent fellow, a good thing it is put an end to."

CHAPTER X.

Indisposition having for some time confined Mr. Lushington at home, he had omitted his attendance at the banking-house on his usual days, so that his presence was unexpected when he at last, one morning, appeared. He went straight on to the private room, where Ned Watson was always to be found at his writing-desk, but he was not there. Upon it there lay a paper which, concluding it was one he had given Ned to copy, at his last interview with him, Mr. Lushington at once began looking it over. At that moment Ned entered.

"What is all this?" inquired Mr. Lushington, as his eye fell on the signature at the bottom of the page before

him. "Grey! Eustace Grey! What does all this mean?"

"Oh," answered Ned, his face reddening, "it is only a little money business which my father has been settling for Grey."

"Money business," repeated Mr. Lushington, "I did not think Eustace Grey could have many money transactions! 3000*l.*! bless me! what is it all about?"

"I believe," said Ned, hesitating between the fear of displeasing Mr. Lushington by not replying to his inquiry, and of divulging something he should not—"I believe it is some money Grey wants to settle on his mother,—on Mrs. Grey."

"Humph," said Mr. Lushington, again looking over the paper, "why I declare he is disposing of the whole of the money left him by Mr. Elsmere. Sinking it for the benefit of his mother! Why the boy must be mad, for it is all he has in the world that I know of. What does he mean to live upon?"

"I believe—I suppose," said Ned, hesi-

tatingly, "he will not need money now, for he is, you know, going as missionary to India, and I understand those who go out in that way are maintained by some society."

"What, is Eustace then seriously thinking of going out as a missionary to India! is he so mad as that? But I shall soon put a stop to such nonsense."

"He is gone!" replied Ned with a quivering lip.

"Gone!" repeated Mr. Lushington; "my God, is it possible!" and an expression of the most acute pain contracted his brow. "Gone! and never told me! never came to take leave of me!"

"Oh yes, sir, he did," said Ned, "I *know* he did. He came two or three times here inquiring for you, and again last Monday week when we expected you, and not finding you here he went to Stanhope-street. I know he did, for I was with him, and I know he left a letter for you, for he wrote it here, and gave it to the servant

who came to the door at your house, and who said you were not at home."

Mr. Lushington stood for a moment as if petrified. Again he inquired of Ned whether he was certain Eustace was gone.

"I saw him on board the vessel, sir," said poor Ned (scarcely able to speak). "I staid with him till we were all ordered to leave the ship, for she was getting under weigh. Poor fellow! he broke down at last, but he was resolved on going; indeed he said he had no choice."

Mr. Lushington did not speak for a few minutes, and then again returning to the paper lying on the desk: "What did you say this paper was about?"

"It is a power of attorney, sir," repeated Ned, "authorising my father to purchase a life annuity with that money for Mrs. Grey."

Mr. Lushington clasped his hands, tears starting into his eyes. "Noble fellow! noble fellow!" he exclaimed, "he deserved a better fate. But is it too late

—are you sure it is too late? would there be no possibility of stopping the vessel? It may have put in at some other port, are you quite sure the ship has sailed finally?"

"I watched her from the pier as long as she was in sight," said Ned; "I could not tear myself away, and I afterwards saw she had put into Falmouth, for provisions I believe, and finally left England fully ten days ago."

Mr. Lushington seemed quite overpowered by his feelings, then in a minute making an effort, and regaining his composure, he said, "I will come again to-morrow, I can't stay now. I have forgot what I came for—what I had to say to you—I will come to-morrow," and so saying, he hurried home.

On entering the hall he immediately inquired whether any letter had been left for him ten or twelve days before?

"No sir, none that I know of," said the servant; "but I will inquire, for I was

absent last week, and William answered the door."

William appeared, at first he, too, knew nothing of the letter, but on turning over the many dirty cards and begging letters piled on the hall chimney-piece, that of Eustace was at length found with two small cards—Rev. E. Grey, T.T.L. Mr. Lushington, with an oath at the servant's negligence, snatched the letter out of his hand and hurried into his own room, where, breaking the seal, he read as follows—

"My dear Uncle,

"I cannot leave England without endeavouring once more to see you, once more thanking you for all your many—many acts of kindness to me. I have gone repeatedly to the banking-house in the hope of finding you, but in vain; so I have made up my mind to brave the many painful recollections connected with Stanhope-street in the hope of seeing you once more, and I write this to leave at your house if I am not so fortunate. I sail

from Gravesend for my future destination (India) next Tuesday. Of course my mother knows of my intentions. I have been to take leave of her; I trust to your kindness to her; her old friend with whom she lives is, I fear, breaking fast.

"Farewell, my dearest uncle, I will venture to send through you my *best—best* love to dear Lucy. Take care of her, be kind to her, dear uncle; tell her that from my heart I forgive her all the pain she has occasioned me, if only she is happy herself. For that happiness (far dearer to me than my own) I shall ever pray. In a new world, with new duties, with nothing to recall the past, I trust I shall, with God's help, be enabled in time to submit myself to His will.

"Heaven bless and preserve you, my dear uncle. Farewell! I fear I may say for *ever*—at least in this world.

"Your ever grateful and affectionate nephew,

"Eustace Grey."

In the afternoon of that day, and at the very hour when Eustace used to apply for admission into his uncle's study, a gentle knock was heard at the door. Mr. Lushington started up from his chair! It was Lucy, again come to request of her father to employ her as his secretary.

"Is it you, Lucy?" said he, in even a more stern and angry tone than usual. "Come in, I want to speak to you—shut the door—there, sit down," he added, pointing to a chair. "You asked me, the other day, for news of Eustace. I can give it you now. He is gone as a missionary to India. He desires his love to you. There, you may read what he says;" and, without even looking at her, he held out to Lucy Eustace's farewell letter.

But the hand which Mr. Lushington expected to take it from his, had fallen powerless by her side. She faintly pronounced the name of *Eustace!* and sank insensible on the floor.

Had Mr. Lushington had more time to

recover himself, after hearing the startling news of his nephew's departure—had he even had time to control his passion on discovering the unpardonable neglect of which his servant had been guilty—he, no doubt, would have endeavoured, in some measure, to soften to his daughter the distressing intelligence he had to communicate; but both his temper and his feelings were, at that moment, roused and irritated beyond his control. He felt bitterly the loss of his nephew. In consequence of the fatal delay in the receipt of his letter, days having now passed, all possibility of recalling him was over and lost! and thus, every way irritated, Mr. Lushington was too entirely absorbed in his own feelings of distress, even to think of those of Lucy. But when he saw her pale as death, laying senseless at his feet—terror —natural affection—even mere fellow-feeling for one thus stunned by that same blow which had fallen so heavily on himself—all conspired to arouse, at the mo-

ment, the best feelings of his nature. He addressed his poor, stricken child in terms of affection and endearment, such as had never passed his lips before. He lifted her from the floor, laid her on a couch, and sprinkled water in her face. Never having at any time had any intimate intercourse with her, so as to be at all aware of her nervous, sensitive nature, he was actually frightened at the state in which he now saw her lay; but he dared not ring for assistance. He would have no one witness her distress—perhaps, rather, he might have said his own.

"Lucy, my poor Lucy!" said he, as he bent over her, and fondly kissed her pale face, "compose yourself—bear up—for my sake bear up."

That voice, low as were, then, its broken accents, reached Lucy's heart. She opened her eyes; for a moment she gazed vacantly in her father's face, as if scarcely conscious who it was that was speaking to her; and then, suddenly clasping her

arms round his neck, she burst into an agony of tears.

Even that cold, stern father could not resist the silent eloquence of that endearment—"Hush, Lucy, hush," he said, as tears slowly stole down his own face. "Hush, you will be heard;" and loosing himself from her grasp, Mr. Lushington went and bolted the door of the room; at the same time throwing up the sash and putting back the window-curtains that the air might more freely blow upon her face; and then, returning to her side, and taking her hand, "I should not have told you this so abruptly—forgive me, Lucy."

Her father asking her forgiveness! again poor Lucy's tears burst forth afresh.

"We have all been to blame," said Mr. Lushington; "but the past cannot now be recalled. If it had not been for that d——d rascal's cursed carelessness and neglect—perhaps still—he might have been—!"

"Oh papa! don't say that, I cannot bear that!" and, clasping her hands, she stared wildly before her, as if addressing some one present—"Eustace, dear dear Eustace!" she exclaimed, "forgive me, forgive me!"

"He does forgive you, Lucy, he does; here are his own words," said Mr. Lushington, as he took Eustace's letter up from the floor, where it had fallen from Lucy's hands. "Hear what he says:—'My best love to dear Lucy; be kind to her, tell her that, from my *heart* I *forgive* her all the pain she has occasioned me, if only she is happy herself! For that happiness, far dearer to me than my own, I shall ever pray.' And with regard to himself, he adds," continued Mr. Lushington, in a still more trembling voice, "'in a new world, with new duties, with nothing to recall the past, I trust I shall, with God's help, be enabled in time to submit myself to his will. Heaven bless and pre-

serve you, my dear uncle. Farewell! I fear I may say for ever—at least in this world.'"

"For *ever!*—In a *new* world!" repeated Lucy, with streaming eyes; "and shall I never see him again! never again hear his voice—that kind, kind voice? Oh papa! papa! it is too much—too much!" and again she sank back, gasping for breath.

Mr. Lushington knew not what to do, he was quite overpowered, unmanned. At that moment, one of those thundering knocks with which fashionable London footmen delight in stunning themselves and others, rang through the hall, and, dreading lest it should be Mrs. Lushington returning home, he unbolted the study door, and looked anxiously towards the street. It was not Mrs. Lushington, and he recognised Lady Emily Maxwell's servant. Gently, therefore, closing the door of his own room behind him, and begging to speak to Lady Emily for a minute, Mr.

Lushington took her into the dining-room adjoining; and there, in a hurried incoherent manner, informed her of what had happened. Lady Emily changed colour at his recital. The remembrance of the part which she had herself acted in the business, and by which this sad catastrophy had been brought about, actually appalled her. "How distressing! how very shocking!" she exclaimed. "But who would ever have thought that Mr. Grey would have taken Lucy's refusal, in the *very serious* manner he has done? who would ever have imagined that he would have recourse to so desperate a step?"

"I should," said Mr. Lushington; "I might, indeed, have remembered his own words, when, some time ago, apparently despairing of the fulfilment of his wishes, he (although vaguely) hinted at his intention of leaving England, and seeking occupation elsewhere. All this I *might* have remembered, besides numberless other cir-

cumstances, which now, when too late, rush upon my mind, and which should have warned me; but I heeded them not, and *now* it is too late! Meaning, wishing, intending his good, and that of my poor girl, I have blasted the happiness of both!" Mr. Lushington's voice became choaked with emotion, and he covered his face with his hands; but, in a minute, suddenly starting up, anger flashing from his eyes, "No, it was *not* me—it was *not* me! It was her mother! it was all her worldly friends! Yes, Lady Emily, it was *you* who have ruined her happiness for ever. Go to her now, and look at your victim—the victim of unprincipled worldly vanity and selfishness! Go, and look at the poor unsuspecting girl whom you have *so* misled, *so* blinded with your pernicious, heartless deceits and flatteries, that she has cast from her—and for ever—her best, her only *real* friend! Go and see the result of all your schemes and plottings! Yes, *your* schemes, Lady

Emily; for I saw it all.—I know it all; and," he added, with a strange sarcastic expression on his face—"and verily I enjoyed the prospect of your disappointment, for I thought I was sure of it—I thought I had secured Lucy safe from all your machinations. I gave her to Eustace—to that noble-minded creature! I left it to him to plead his own cause! I did not believe it possible that she could be insensible to such merit; nor would she, had it not been for *you*, Lady Emily, —for it was *you* and her *mother* who did it all—I know it all now—and your's will be a fearful reckoning." Mr. Lushington, actually gasping for breath, sunk down into a chair.

"Mr. Lushington," said Lady Emily, calmly, "you are not at this moment in a state to be even aware of what you are saying. I pity a father's feelings too much to attend to, or give any meaning to the words you are uttering; at another time we will talk of all this. I had bet-

ter now go and try and be of some use to Lucy. Where is she?"

These words of Lady Emily brought Mr. Lushington in some degree to his senses—he had spent his passion. "Pardon me, Lady Emily," he said, in a subdued, tremulous voice. "Pardon me; I am perhaps to blame for speaking as I have now done; but in truth I scarcely know what I am saying. Yes, go to Lucy; if possible give her some comfort—*I* cannot, I need it too much myself.—If it had not been," continued Mr. Lushington, as if speaking to himself, as in apparent agony of mind he clenched his fist, his anger again rising—"if it had not been for that rascal's d—d neglect, all might still have been set right; but now it is too late—too late."

Lady Emily and Mr. Lushington proceeded to the study. On hearing the door open Lucy started up from the couch, but when she perceived Lady Emily (one so connected in her mind with what had

taken place on that dreadful Saturday when she and her mother had so hurried her answer to Eustace), Lucy uttered a faint cry, and burying her face in the cushion of the couch, she motioned with her hand to Lady Emily to leave her. Lady Emily felt keenly the silent reproach of that action. She was a thorough woman of the world, but she was not without some woman's feelings. Her worldliness made her take especial pleasure in all sorts of plans and plottings, from the settling of a dinner-party to matrimonial, and even political intrigues; and being without a particle of romance or enthusiasm herself, she could not enter into any exalted feelings, whether of love or friendship, in others. The character of Eustace Grey was one quite beyond her comprehension. His ardent, devoted, but high-principled love, seemed to her a species of madness, if not mere cant and hypocrisy. Nor could she even quite understand the nature of Lucy's strong feelings of affection for

him; for she was not, Lady Emily was sure, what is called *in love* with him.

But if unequal to comprehending the character of Eustace and Lucy, Lady Emily was quite able to read Mrs. Lushington's. She at once plainly saw what were *her* views and calculations, namely, to raise her daughter by a splendid marriage into that position in the world to which naturally she could hardly have aspired; and nothing, Lady Emily thought, could be more *praiseworthy* even than such speculations. And while out of pure *benevolence* she assisted Mrs. Lushington in these her views for Lucy, she could see no harm in endeavouring at the same time to benefit her own relations, now that Lucy, by the death of her last surviving brother, had become so enormous a "*catch*." Lady Emily had in her own marriage neither sought or cared for any union of heart and soul, and she even went so far as to fancy that it was only foolish, romantic, novel-reading, boarding-school misses that ever did. It

therefore never entered her mind that she was in any way injuring Lucy when doing her utmost to draw her into an alliance, first with her own dull, phlegmatic brother, Lord Parnell, and then with her dissolute cousin Clifford. By marrying either of these Lucy would have secured to herself that rank and station in society which her mother ambitioned for her, and which Lady Emily had no doubt Lucy would very much like herself. And it must further be said in Lady Emily's defence, that, except during the visit of Eustace to Rome (now above three years ago), and that one evening which he had spent in Stanhope-street while he was residing at Ashford, Lady Emily had never seen him and Lucy together. She was not, in fact, at all acquainted with Eustace, and judging by her own and the common feelings and principles of the world, she interpreted his evident devotion to his cousin into devotion to those advantages of wealth and worldly consi-

deration which he would obtain by an union with Mr. Lushington's daughter; and she had indeed even more than once expressed her disgust at what she conceived to be his "canting *hypocrisy*," when endeavouring to conceal (as she thought he did) his own mere worldly, selfish views under an outward appearance of piety and zeal for her soul's welfare. With regard to Lucy herself Lady Emily had judged more wisely, when settling she was not *in love* with her cousin. How indeed could she be, she thought, when evidently entering into and enjoying so heartily those amusements of the world of which he never partook—which he even decidedly condemned, and receiving with such apparent complacency the attention of all around her. When, therefore, Lady Emily joined heart and soul in Mrs. Lushington's endeavours to put an end to all connexion between her daughter and one whom she considered in the light of a speculating, hypocritical, penniless parson, she really thought she

was doing Lucy, as well as her mother, a positive service; and in her ignorance of the truth, she even went so far as to fancy that if she could at that moment have brought forward her handsome, fascinating cousin Clifford, she would still more have added to her good offices, that Lucy would soon have been cured of her high-flown sentimental feelings for her cousin Eustace, and been too happy to have secured to herself a coronet instead of a parsonage. But all Lady Emily's plans, well-laid as she thought them, failed as entirely with regard to her cousin as they had in the case of her brother; for matters had come to a crisis between Mr. Clifford and his friend's pretty wife, Mrs. Vernon, and instead of his being ready at this moment to be brought forward in the character of a suitor to Lucy (when by the final dismissal of Eustace the coast seemed clear), he had eloped with the object of his lawless passion, and a trial for crim. con. was inevitable.

Such had been Lady Emily's thoughts and calculations with regard to poor Lucy (judging by herself and the common ways of the world in which she lived), but when she now beheld the victim (as Mr. Lushington called his suffering daughter) of the heartless schemings of her heartless worldly friends, Lady Emily was really shocked; and not being devoid of feeling, notwithstanding her habitual worldliness, she bitterly repented the part she had acted, and felt sincerely for the misery she had helped to inflict. It was a case, too, in which reparation was impossible! There was nothing to be done! There was not a hope, a chance of any possible circumstance which could bring any change or relief to poor Lucy in her distress. Eustace Grey was gone!—gone to another world, beyond all possibility of recall; hopelessly, irrevocably gone! His destination even unknown; for twenty-five years ago intercourse with India—with those parts of it, at least, to which Eustace, in his character

of missionary, would be sent—was not what it is now. That country was to Europeans then almost a living tomb. What, therefore, would be his destination—where his life would be passed—no one could tell; he knew not himself, and he cared not! He was, in short, as much cut off from all human ties as by death itself. And in consequence his farewell to his uncle was, as he himself had said, final!

Notwithstanding Lucy had evidently shrunk from Lady Emily when she saw her enter her father's study, the latter did not desist from her kind exertions in behalf of the poor suffering girl. She spoke to her in words of kindness and sympathy; said everything best calculated to sooth her; and the warm-hearted Lucy was not one to reject such well-meant words. She became more composed; and, perceiving this, Lady Emily in a gentle voice whispered to her, "Do you think you could come up with me to your own room, Lucy? Perhaps we might as well leave

your father now; he may like to be alone. Besides, Mrs. Lushington will soon be coming home, and she had better not find us here; it might alarm her;" and Lady Emily stooped down and kissed Lucy's tear-bedewed cheek.

"Yes—very well—thank you," was all poor Lucy could utter, as she prepared to comply with this advice. On reaching the door she turned and looked at her father, and then suddenly disengaging herself from Lady Emily, she rushed up to him, and throwing her arms round his neck, "Dear papa," she whispered to him, "thank you; thank you for all your kindness, and I promise I will bear all this better. I will try—indeed I will."

Mr. Lushington did not speak, but kindly imprinting a kiss on his daughter's forehead, he motioned her with his hand to leave him.

And in truth this cold, hard, stern father, was at this moment perhaps a greater object of commiseration than even

Lucy herself! The painful feelings from which he now suffered were new to him, and he was totally overpowered. From his very boyhood Eustace had strangely entwined himself (almost unconsciously on the part of Mr. Lushington) in his uncle's affections; aud totally different as their natures were, that uncle had sufficient superiority of character to appreciate the noble, generous qualities which so eminently distinguished Eustace, even though they were sometimes almost above his comprehension. Of late, too, they had been so much thrown together in familiar daily intercourse, and Eustace had made himself so useful to his uncle, that the charm, the fascination, indeed, of his natural, affectionate manners, had won strongly upon Mr. Lushington's heart and feelings.

When Eustace had, three years before, on leaving Rome, made his "*confession*" to his uncle, the latter had for many reasons considered it best to put an end (for the moment, at least) to what he really

thought, (as he had said,) was probably but a mere passing school-boy's fancy; and one, therefore, which it was as well not to encourage by frequent intercourse between the cousins, such intimate intercourse at least as had hitherto subsisted. He had not, however, intended that caution to extend so far as to prohibit entirely *all* future meetings. But Eustace's strong feelings, and *chivalresque* sense of honour, made him then, as it did sometimes in other matters, go even beyond the mark, thereby giving to his conduct an appearance of pride and temper far from his nature. Perhaps if the uncle and nephew had met, after the return of the former from Italy, the "*misunderstanding*," as Mr. Lushington called it, might have been cleared up. But then came the dreadful, tragical event of Frederick's death, which placed Eustace (although unknown to himself) in a totally different position, *vis-à-vis* his uncle; and although Eustace was ignorant of this circumstance, Mr. Lushington knew it, and

that knowledge was especially calculated to create a feeling of suspicion, and therefore of estrangement on his part towards his nephew. Accumulated pecuniary embarrassments connected with the banking-house at that time also pressed upon Mr. Lushington; and his mind, which had hitherto been so powerful, was shaken, his nerves affected and enfeebled, and, while now constantly dwelling on the failure of his own worldly schemes and speculations, his thoughts reverted again and again to Mr. Elsmere's will, and each time with a stronger conviction that, failing his two sons (both now in their premature graves), it was on Eustace Grey, and not on his daughter that the Elsmere property would devolve; and he at length so far familiarized his mind to the fact, that he resolved the day should not be far distant when he would make his nephew aware of his brightened prospects. But mammon still kept such firm hold on Mr. Lushington's affections, that, notwithstanding

his great partiality for Eustace, he had not resolution to hasten the moment when he would, as he fancied, loosen his own hold on that property by revealing the truth to him; although, of course, well convinced that, by no concealment or management on his part, could he secure its possession to Lucy, any more than retain it himself when he should be summoned to another world. These were the feelings which had in so extraordinary a manner agitated Mr. Lushington, on unexpectedly beholding his nephew, on the day of his son Frederick's funeral. He was not even aware that Eustace had been summoned; and the instant he saw him, conscience suggested the idea that he was come to assert his future claims to a possession which seemed to be thus loosening from his own grasp. But now all was changed; and, independently of his altered feelings towards his nephew, Mr. Lushington even from selfish motives rejoiced in the flattering prospects opening before him; hoping

thereby to secure a future provision for his daughter, whatever might be the result of his own widely-extended speculations, and the dangers attending on so fluctuating a capital.

While, therefore, Mrs. Lushington and her fashionable friends were planning their various matrimonial schemes for poor unconscious Lucy, her father made up his mind to yield to his nephew's wishes. Why he let so much time pass, before he made this known to Eustace, it is hard to say, and can only be accounted for by the strange dislike he had to witnessing in others that happiness of which he had lost all enjoyment himself, and his peculiarly cold, reserved nature. But that nature itself had, in some degree, yielded to his affection for Eustace Grey, and he had actually enjoyed the sight of his overpowering happiness, when informed by him that he no longer objected to his union with Lucy. That day Mr. Lushington's heart had actually throbbed with

natural affection and disinterested joy, so that even Lucy, ignorant of the cause, had noticed it, inquiring of Eustace what he could have been doing for, or saying to her father, to put him in such spirits. "For really," as she observed, "poor papa looks at this minute quite happy; and it is so seldom now he does look happy."

But all these better feelings were absorbed in sullen anger when he heard of the answer that Lucy was persuaded—or rather *forced* by her mother and her worldly friend Lady Emily—to give in reply to his nephew's letter. And those proud, angry feelings induced him sullenly to keep silence when, had he sought his harassed daughter, had he assisted her in resisting her mother's pernicious interference, all would have been well; so willingly would poor Lucy have listened to one who pleaded in favour of Eustace! A word then from her father, and the die would have been cast—her happiness secured.

That very last evening when Eustace

was in Stanhope-street that evening when —unsuspected by poor Lucy, he had taken a final leave of her, when she had started at the icy cold of his nervous hand, as he for the last time clapsed hers within it— that very evening Mr. Lushington had made up his mind at once to inform his nephew, of what he was convinced was the truth with regard to Mr. Elsmere's will! But Eustace, not having courage to tear himself away from Lucy, had remained till so late an hour in the drawing-room with her, that her father postponed his communication till the next day—and that next day never came!—

It must be said to the honour of Lady Emily, that she now did all she could to repair the mischief in which she had been an accomplice, and assist poor Lucy in bearing the heavy weight of self-reproach which now nearly crushed her; and also in some degree to rescue her from the never-ceasing torture of her mother's animadversions. When Mrs. Lushing-

ton tormented her poor suffering daughter with constant invitations to balls and assemblies, or arranged with Lady Rainsforth for her accompanying her to the opera, or some such worldly evening amusement, Lady Emily, pretending Lucy's previous engagements with herself, took her long drives into the country, and generally detained her until so late an hour that by the time she returned to Stanhope-street, Mrs. Lushington had set out for some of her usual card parties, and her weary daughter, in consequence, found peace in her bed. And many a summer evening that year was a boat seen to glide noiselessly up and down the river Thames, at Richmond, containing always the same two figures, and it often lingered on, even until the moon glittered on its rippled waters; and these two (apparently) silent, abstracted companions were Lady Emily Maxwell and her dejected young friend Lucy Lushington. In short, Lady Emily applied herself most indefatigably to the task of

soothing poor Lucy's wounded spirit, as far as her acquaintance with such sorrows, and their remedies, enabled her to do so; but she was lacking in the "one thing, needful," the only remedy for such mental sickness, as that under which Lucy then languished. There was but *one* being—she had but *one* friend who could have administered the soul-healing medicine which she then needed, and it was that very friend whose absence now caused her desolation—Cousin Eustace!

Kindness, however, could not but be grateful to so loving, so gentle, a heart as Lucy's; and she clung to Lady Emily, as to the only being to whom she could speak of her affliction—her remorse. From her mother, she actually shrank with nervous terror; and her father, although meaning all that was kind, and although still mourning over his altered Lucy and his banished nephew, had, after that first moment of excited feelings on his account were over, relapsed into his habitual cold,

abstracted reserve; evidently avoiding all subjects which could possibly recall the past, agitate his daughter, and throw himself off his guard.

Seeing how little improvement in looks, health, or spirits, a few weeks had effected with respect to Lucy, and with what horror she shrank from those amusements, which Mrs. Lushington was ever pressing upon her, Lady Emily proposed taking her with her to Tunbridge, for a short time. For the London season was now drawing to a close, and the gay world of fashion dispersing fast. Mrs. Lushington was so heartily tired of Lucy's pale face, and depressed spirits, she readily gave her consent to the proposed plan, wondering what possessed the girl to make such a to-do about a cousin being gone to India. "Bless me," said she, "people's cousins go to the East and West Indies, and even to the North Pole, every day, and their relations at home do not all find it necessary to go to Tunbridge in consequence! However, if

Lady Emily is so kind as to be willing to be troubled with you, I am sure *I* can have no objection;" and Mrs. Lushington ended with devoutly hoping Lucy might pick up some new lover at Tunbridge, and so be brought to her senses.

Mr. Lushington warmly thanked Lady Emily for her kindness to his poor altered Lucy, and the more warmly, when recollecting the manner in which he had once spoken to her. But that was a moment neither wished to recall, and to which neither ever alluded.

It is impossible to say with what thankfulness Lucy prepared for her departure from Stanhope-street, where every room, every chair, every object recalled him whom she had driven from it—the friend who would never be there again!

"Well, Lucy," said Mr. Lushington, as he put his daughter into Lady Emily's carriage, "make haste and get stout and well, and then when you return you will be able to be of *use* to me, you know—to *write* for me."

Tears started into Lucy's eyes, for at once the image of Eustace seated at her father's writing-table, his slim pale hand, her ring still upon it, all rushed upon her memory, and she and her companion had driven several miles on their road to Tunbridge, before Lucy recollected even that she had a companion!

Lady Emily was a decidedly agreeable woman, and she found several agreeable acquaintances at Tunbridge, who all took great interest in her young charge. The life they there led was quite different from any Lucy had ever led before, and that, together with the pretty scenery around, helped to compose her spirits and strengthen her nerves, and at times to divert her mind from the one painful image which was always before her—Eustace alone! wandering over trackless seas, banished for ever to almost another world!

Sir Alexander Melville was a frequent visitor at Tunbridge. He had too much *tact* not to suit himself and his conversa-

tion to the present state of Lucy's mind and spirits. Eustace Grey now out of the way beyond seas, he need no longer turn into ridicule all that was good and sacred, and he appeared in consequence in a much more favourable light. He was now the master of the field. Lord Parnell, Mr. Clifford, all his competitors had disappeared, and being therefore, as he thought, secure of the prize which he coveted, one which every day, from the desperate state of his worldly affairs, became more and more necessary, namely Lucy's fortune, he brought to the attack every power of pleasing which he possessed, and they were not a few. He also seldomer than formerly betrayed those ebullitions of temper when crossed in his purposes, which had not escaped Lucy's notice; so that, altogether, she was really and evidently glad when he joined their party at Tunbridge, and accompanied them in their drives and expeditions to the various neighbouring scenes of attraction.

Summer was now gone, and autumn far advanced, and before winter Lady Emily and Mr. Maxwell were again to return to Italy. Lady Emily had become so much interested in her young friend, that she proposed applying to Mr. Lushington for permission that she might accompany them abroad. But to this, though most grateful to Lady Emily for her great kindness, Lucy decidedly objected. "They are now at Elsmere," said she; "mamma wants me, and I wish to go there."

"But surely," said Lady Emily, looking kindly into Lucy's face, "surely it will be very dismal, very lonely for you at Elsmere?"

"Yes, I know it will," she replied, struggling with her tears, "but I wish to go there, I wish to get used to it all. It *must* all be got over you know; Elsmere will be my home, indeed I hope it will, at least I hope we shall not continue to live in Stanhope-street."

Lucy seemed so fixed in her purpose, Lady Emily did not insist, and with mutual regret the friends parted—Lady Emily setting out for Rome, and Lucy for the once happy home of her childhood.

"Shall I give your love to your dear Pincio?" said Lady Emily, on taking leave of her young charge.

"Oh yes," sighed Lucy, "and to the beautiful Colosseum!"

But this last word was inaudible.

CHAPTER XI.

Lucy, on her arrival at Elsmere, found that some of the neighbours were then staying in the house, and she rejoiced that so it was, anything being better than a *tête-à-tête* with her mother.

"Well, I am glad you are come back at last to make tea," said Mrs. Lushington, next morning at breakfast, "for it is a terrible deal of trouble, indeed a fatigue that I am no way equal to now;" and she held to her nose a very magnificent enamelled embossed vinaigrette. "But no one thinks of me," she continued, in a peevish, victim-like tone; "people who take things patiently are never considered. It is only those who complain that are pitied," and Mrs. Lushington glanced across the table to Lucy.

"Very true indeed," said one of the visitors, "and I am sure, dear Mrs. Lushington, you should take more care of yourself, and not do too much; and now that Miss Lushington is come home, I hope you will spare yourself more."

"Oh! Lucy will never do anything, so I had better not look to her!" and then whispering to the guest next to her (but not so low but that Lucy heard her), "the fact is she was made such a fuss with in London, she is quite spoilt, and don't know her own mind now two minutes together, and thinks about nothing."

"Ah, that is the way now with all young girls," said Mrs. Lushington's compassionate friend; "it is the fault of the present system of education, it makes them all so delicate, and so nervous, and so I don't know what all, and they must go here and they must go there 'for a little change.' I am sure I never heard of *little changes* in my younger days!"

When Mr. Lushington that morning

left the breakfast-room, Lucy followed him. "Papa," said she, hurrying after him into the hall, "will you tell me at what time you will like me to come to you to—to write for you: at the usual hour?" she added, in a lower tone.

Mr. Lushington stopped, and turning towards her laid his hands on her shoulders, and looking stedfastly in her face for a minute, "You are a good girl, Lucy, a good girl, you deserve a better—" he stopped short, but still his eyes continued fixed upon hers till they filled with tears; and then imprinting a kind kiss on her forehead, he added, in a dejected tone, "Not to-day, not to-day—you must rest from your journey."

But it was not a day of rest to Lucy, either of body or mind; she felt a sort of feverish hurry and anxiety to visit every object connected with former days and old association—to "*get over it all*," as she had said to Lady Emily; and the moment she could make her escape from

her mother and her visitors, she hurried out of the house, and went over the same ground which she and Eustace had together trod the last evening of his residence at Elsmere. First to her garden, it was now a tangled mass of weeds and overgrown shrubs! In the little tool-shed at the back of the rustic seat (all the handiworks of Eustace of former days) were the saws, spades, and various tools he had used. Beyond the garden was the field where the ponies were kept, the one Eustace used to ride was dead! Its (now solitary) companion, on perceiving Lucy, immediately hurried to the gate, stretching its neck over the bars for the accustomed piece of bread, its long torn shaggy mane and rough coat showing how much it had been neglected since the days when Lucy used to dress it up with gay bows of ribbon. From the garden the walk led to the door into the churchyard, but she had not courage to go that way, and turning to the right she wandered on into the

village. As she passed the school-house the church clock struck twelve, and the next minute the door was thrown open, and out rushed the village children, tearing, hallooing, and scrambling one over another in the joy of their young hearts. Lucy stood for a while watching them as they disappeared into their several homes, and their gay, blithesome voices gradually died away. She was about to return home, when a lady and gentleman came out of the school-house, followed by two little girls. He was evidently, by his dress, a clergyman, and of course Mr. Woodford's successor in the living. A pang shot through Lucy's heart. "Oh, Eustace, Eustace," she ejaculated to herself, "had it not been for me you would now have been—! Oh, forgive me, forgive me!" Lucy hurried away, and without plan or object, but to be *alone*, she wandered about for long, lost in painful recollections and self-upbraidings.

The next day was Sunday—a sad,

wearisome day in a country house with stranger visitors! The barouche was ordered to take Mrs. Lushington and her friends to church—for *church* is a decidedly good thing *to do* on Sunday, as it disposes of the morning till luncheon, which, without crochet, and cross stitch, and knitting needles, and little books with knitting patterns, sometimes hangs so heavy on hand! and besides, Mrs. Lushington made a *point* of going to church *once a day* when in the *country*, for the sake of *example*.

"Come, Lucy, let us two walk to church together," said her father, as he drew her arm within his.

Never before, strange to say, had Lucy's arm hung on her father's; and at that moment her nerves were almost too weak to stand the smallest agitation, even the smallest kindness. When they reached the door leading into the churchyard, the bell was still ringing, the congregation still flocking in. "We are in plenty of

time," said Mr. Lushington; "let us take a turn in the churchyard before we go in. I wish to show you something I have had done;" and Mr. Lushington immediately turned down into a path which led to the opposite side of the burying-ground, and which Lucy knew would take them to that very spot where she and Eustace had exchanged their rings, where he had told her of his *delightful dream.*

"Oh, no, not that way, papa!" said she, drawing back.

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Lushington, his own object alone in view. "This is the right way—the way to your poor brothers' grave," he added, in a lower tone. "I have had a monument erected to their memory, and I wish to show it to you."

Lucy could say no more, and went on in silence. The pathway was narrow, as the grave-stones on either side came so close to it. On passing the one that poor Lucy so dreaded seeing, her dress

caught on the broken edge of the stone slab, on the very spot where Eustace had that evening sat! She shuddered, and involuntarily drew nearer to her father, hurrying her pace. Mr. Lushington felt the trembling of her hand on his arm, but he took no notice. "There," said he, as they came to a newly-erected stone monument, "there is what I have had done. I hope you like it."

So many painful recollections crowded into Lucy's mind, all connected with Eustace, that her tears fell fast. Her father, of course, attributed them to a most natural cause, and was no way surprised. But Lucy might have said, in the words of Shakspeare:—

"Oh, were that all! I think not on my brothers,
And these great tears grace their remembrance more
Than those I shed for them. What were they like?
I have forgot them!"

The father and daughter stood for some time together in silence beside the sculptured monument. The bell stopped.

"Poor Charles!" sighed Mr. Lushington, as he turned away from the grave—"Poor Charles!"

The service was very well performed, but the voice was totally unlike the voice of Eustace. The sermon was an excellent, plain, practical sermon, but it was quite different from the sermon Lucy had heard in Quebec-street Chapel. As she looked towards the communion-table, and up at the pulpit, the form of Eustace in imagination rose before her. "From thence," thought she, "would that voice—that much-loved voice—have been heard this very day, perhaps, had not I—"

Lucy had been quite right in her surmises respecting the person whom she had seen the day before at the school; it was the new incumbent, Mr. Russell. He was between forty and fifty; in every way an unexceptionable parish priest, steering most judiciously between the high and low church party extremes; indefatigable in the discharge of his

parochial duties, and with quite sufficient talents and eloquence for the congregation he had to address; and Mrs. Russell was every way fitted to be his helpmate, being interested and active in the schools and charities, a constant visitor of the sick and afflicted, and withal of a cultivated mind and lady-like manners.

Mr. Lushington next morning, almost immediately after breakfast, summoned Lucy into his study, and kept her on with him till the afternoon was so far advanced, that the barouche, with Mrs. Lushington and her visitors, had driven from the door for their usual morning excursion, and Lucy was thus, to her relief, left to herself; and she, on the whole, felt happier that morning than she had done for long; for she had been fulfilling the last injunction Eustace had given her. She had been "*of use to her father.*" She put on her cloak and bonnet, and almost unconsciously again took the way to the village. How she wished to speak to the

poor people as she met them! How she wished to go into their cottages! But she knew nothing about any of them, and she felt shy and afraid. As she passed the school-house on her way home, the door of it was half open, and she heard the voices of the children within singing their evening hymn. She went nearer, and stood and listened. She longed to go in, she felt so solitary—so unconnected with any human being—so alone. Mr. Russell had apparently observed her, for he came out of the school, and raising his hat, "Miss Lushington, I believe?" said he, with a kind, welcoming smile. "Will you not come in and hear our little choir? Pray come in." Lucy willingly accepted his invitation. "Here is Miss Lushington, Maria," said he, going up to his wife, (who appeared to be teaching the children their hymn); "she will like to hear our young performers, so make them sing it again;" and Lucy was given a seat by the side of Mrs. Russell. The hymn

ended, Mr. Russell made a short prayer, and dismissed the children with the usual blessing; when they again dispersed with the same shouts of joyous gaiety.

"How happy they seem!" said Lucy, in a low, dejected tone.

"Yes," replied Mr. Russell, "they know nothing of this life. As yet, their greatest, severest trial is the necessity of keeping quiet in school. How merciful is that order of Providence," he continued, "which shuts out the future from our view!"

"It would be happy for us," said Lucy, in a low, tremulous voice, "if we could shut out the past also."

Mr. Russell turned quickly towards her. "*Your past*, Miss Lushington," said he, looking earnestly at her, "cannot be a long retrospect, and scarcely, I should think, a sorrowful one." Lucy coloured, and did not reply. She regretted she had thoughtlessly made the remark. "Perhaps," continued Mr. Russell, "the reason that our first sorrows make so great an impression upon us is, that all is

so *very bright*, so *sunny* around and within us that these mere passing shadows appear the darker, and we in consequence mistake them for actual thunder-clouds."

Lucy made no comment, and Mr. Russell, observing that she seemed to wish to drop the subject, said no more; but after a moment he in a cheerful tone added, "Our schoolmistress is just now disabled by illness; so my wife and little girls are doing duty for her; we should be much gratified, Miss Lushington, if you would occasionally, as you pass by, look into the school, and I dare say you could help us much, especially with the singing; and some new person, taking interest in what they are doing, encourages the children, as well as their teachers." Lucy, her colour heightening in her cheeks, expressed her willingness but total inability to be of use in any way, "but I shall thankfully come to be taught myself, if you will allow me," she added.

Mrs. Lushington having next morning, after breakfast, detained Lucy in the draw-

ing-room, writing notes of invitation to some of the neighbours, she, while sealing them, and without looking up, summoning courage, suddenly said, "Mamma, have you ever called upon Mrs. Russell?"

"Upon who?" said Mrs. Lushington.

"Mrs. Russell," Lucy repeated in a lower tone.

"And who in the world is Mrs. Russell, pray?"

"She is the clergyman's wife, mamma."

"The clergyman's wife! No, to be sure, I have not called upon *her*. Why should I?"

"Oh, I thought, perhaps," said Lucy, in a still more uncertain voice,—"I thought, as the wife of the clergyman of the parish, that, perhaps, it was customary."

"What!" said Mrs. Lushington, with an expression of almost derision on her face; "what! have you got hold of another parson, Lucy? Well, I must say, your predilection for parsons is really quite beyond my comprehension! And I am sure it is

quite providential that, in this case, he is, by what you say, a married man; otherwise you would probably be falling in love with him too! And you expect I shall visit all their wives! but that I certainly shall not do. I will not encourage any such very improper familiarity with persons of quite a different calibre of society from myself—probably a tradesperson's or farmer's daughter, or some such low person; so I beg you will keep your friends to yourself, Lucy, since you prefer that sort of company; for my part I like something better."

Lucy had so dreaded a prohibition with regard to forming any acquaintance even herself with Mr. and Mrs. Russell, that she was most thankful for the sort of tacit permission which she thought her mother's words gave her (taunting as they were) to cultivate the society of those, who, in her present peculiar mental solitude, she would have been so loth to give up. She, therefore, said no more on the subject of

Mrs. Russell, and contented herself with repairing to the school, whenever she could make her escape from home, at those hours when she knew that Mr. and Mrs. Russell would probably be there. For she liked to hear him examine the children in the Bible, although each time she did so, she was the more humbled in her own eyes, from her sense of entire ignorance of that word of God given to man to make him wise unto salvation. The children used to read a chapter, and then closing their books, Mr. Russell questioned them not only on what they had just read, but on the references, prophecies, and promises connected with the subject, thus showing how the Old Testament, by its types, prophecies, and religious ceremonies, taught the great doctrines of the Christian religion centuries before the Saviour came upon earth, and how one Divine overruling Spirit dictated the whole of the Bible.—And all this these poor village children knew! and of

all this Lucy Lushington was perfectly ignorant!

After each of these school-teachings, Lucy, on her return home, eagerly flew to her Bible, and looked out and marked all the references and quotations until she became deeply interested in the study, so that she truly "*searched*" the Scriptures, feeling the truth of those words of her Saviour, "They are they which testify of me."

What a new mental existence now opened to poor Lucy! How deeply did she deplore all the time she had hitherto lost! The *instructor* she had lost! Fortunately Mrs. Lushington scarcely ever came up to Lucy's room; for had she done so, she would probably have been more and more convinced, that she had, indeed, fallen in love with another parson; when seeing her table covered, not with circulating library novels, as in former days, but with the various books of reference and religious instruction lent her by Mr. Russell.

CHAPTER XII.

On one of those afternoons, when Lucy had made her escape from the visitors at home, she found the school children reading the 11th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, in which chapter St. Paul dwells upon all the perils, difficulties, and hardships he underwent in preaching the gospel to the heathen. Mr. Russell had, on the previous Sunday, given notice that there would be a collection in church on the next, for "the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts;" and he had chosen that chapter of Corinthians for this afternoon's instruction to the children, in order to explain to them, in simple terms, the nature, purport, and object of the Society—illustrating the subject by various anecdotes in

the lives of missionaries now. The usual hymn was sung, the usual prayer offered up, the usual blessing implored, and the children rushed as usual out of the school —the sound of their joyous young voices gradually dying away in the distance; but Lucy did not move from her seat, which was a little behind that which Mr. Russell occupied. The book, in which she had been reading the chapter, from which Mr. Russell had spoken, still lay open before her, her head bent down over it so that her face was concealed.

On dismissing the children, Mr. Russell had returned to his seat, and his mind had apparently returned to the subject on which he had been speaking to them; for he almost immediately resumed;—"How strikingly applicable are those words of St. Paul to the hardships, labours, and, indeed, the perils of our missionaries now. Really, when I compare my existence, with all its *home* blessings and comforts, with those of so many of my devoted brethren,

I feel humbled to the dust. Here am I in a perfect paradise of a home, surrounded by all the enjoyments and endearments of life, at ease both in body and mind; while so many of my countrymen are, like St. Paul, in daily, hourly jeopardy—'In perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in weariness, in painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in fastings and cold!' And all this for the sake of Christ and perishing souls! We admire the courage—the self-devotion of the soldier, ready to lay down his life for his country: but that is nothing to the heroism of the soldier of Christ. He leaves his home, his country, his friends, all he loves—never probably to return—to perish unknown, unmarked among heathens! Oh, his is a glorious career! and great will be his reward!"

During all this time Mr. Russell had been so entirely engrossed by the subject on which he was speaking, and his attention so fixed on the page before him, wherein the labours and sufferings of the

apostle are described, that he had not noticed, or indeed thought of Lucy, whose head had fallen lower and lower over the Testament that lay open before her.

"I chanced," Mr. Russell continued, to be in London, four or five months ago, when there was an ordination at St. Paul's of seven young men, all then about to leave England as missionaries. It was a most impressive, affecting sight. I looked with admiration, I may say *veneration*, on those self-devoted Christian heroes, in the prime of life, renouncing every dear tie of affection, for hardships and sufferings which we at home have no idea of; indeed, which not many, I fear, long survive! There was one of these seven young men who particularly attracted my attention. I never saw a countenance expressive of such deep feeling, such high resolve, I may say such self-annihilation! By-the-by," added Mr. Russell, after a moment's apparent thought, "I now recollect that I was told the person I allude to had had the offer of this very

living of Elsmere! Perhaps, Miss Lushington, you may have heard of him; his name, I think, was Grey?" and Mr. Russell turned toward Lucy.

The most heart-breaking sobs was all the answer he received. He was greatly shocked. "Dear Miss Lushington!" said he, starting up and seizing her trembling hand, "what have I said? Perhaps he was a friend—a relation of yours? Oh, pardon me! pardon me!"

Poor Lucy's sobs only became the more distressing. Mrs. Russell hastened to her. Everything which kindness could suggest was said and done to soothe her. By degrees she became more composed. Her tears stole slowly, quietly down her face, as her head lay on Mrs. Russell's bosom.

"I shall never forgive myself," said Mr. Russell, his voice faltering, "for having touched, too rudely, perhaps, some sore place in your heart; for having so abruptly named a dear friend from whom you have

parted: but think of his glorious destination! think of his high reward! of such we may be *sure* are the kingdom of heaven. For are we not told that 'there is no man that hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now, and in the world to come eternal life.' We may never see them again here below, but we may look with certainty to meeting them in that future world, where 'there will be no more parting, no more sorrow, and where all tears will be wiped away from all faces.'" Mr. Russell fell upon his knees, and put up a most fervent prayer to the throne of Grace in behalf of that self-devoted, absent friend—an exile in a distant world—for a blessing on his labours, and for consolation to his sorrowing friends at home. Lucy held out her hand to Mr. Russell as expressive of her thanks; she could not speak.

Mr. Russell never reverted with Lucy

to this evidently painful subject: but a sacred tie seemed now to be established between them; she felt him to be the only person who knew the secret of her *inward, altered self;* and although Eustace was never named, and in no way even alluded to, yet she now had one to whom she could open her heart; before whom she need not stifle her tears; for he could now read and understand many a but half-spoken sorrowful word, which had frequently before almost unconsciously fallen from her lips, but which, from having no clue to their source, he did not even understand, and to which, therefore, he knew not how to administer.

"I think I had better now go home," said Lucy to Mrs. Russell, as she took her hand in hers, attempting, but in vain, to express her gratitude for all her kindness.

"Shall I walk home with you?" asked Mrs. Russell, "or had you rather be alone?"

"Alone," said Lucy; "I had better be

alone;" and then turning to Mr. Russell, "Thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart," said she, in a scarcely audible voice; "you have done me good;" and so saying Lucy left the school, and turning down into a path seldom frequented, across some fields, she disappeared.

"How much that poor girl interests me!" said Mr. Russell to his wife as they walked home: "it was most unfortunate my allusion to her friend; and yet, on the whole I am not sorry all this has occurred, for I may be of use to her, and I suspect she is *alone* in her own family. Poor thing! may the Almighty direct and comfort her. I fear she has a sore heart!"

Lucy wandered about in the lanes and fields which surrounded the village of Elsmere, until she had recovered her usual composure. On reaching home, she went straight up to her own room, and immediately taking up her little Testament (the bright gilt leaves of which no longer now, as formerly, stuck together), she marked

in it 11th 2nd Corinthians. There was a page in that same small Testament, at which the book seemed always to open of itself; it was at that page which Eustace had marked—on which his hand had laid —from which his text had been taken that Sunday when Lucy had heard him preach: —"Love not the world."

On the following Sunday morning, the day on which there was to be the collection for the propagation of the Gospel abroad, Lucy stood for some time gazing vacantly out of the drawing-room window towards the church (whose tall grey spire was visible above the surrounding trees, and from which the deep tolling bell was then calling all to morning-service), doubting whether or no she had courage to obey the summons. Her father observed her. "Well, Lucy," said he, "are you not going to get ready? We shall be too late; and I hate to attract attention when I go into church; but if you will be quick, I will wait for you."

Lucy had not courage, nor indeed had she then time, to explain her reasons for wishing to stay at home that morning, and she therefore immediately prepared to attend her father. As they walked on, side by side, she longed to remind him of Mr. Russell's intended sermon that day, but each time her courage failed her, until, on reaching the door which led into the churchyard from the shrubbery, while Mr. Lushington was busying himself unlocking it, she, in a breathless voice, said, "Do you remember, papa, the notice which Mr. Russell gave last Sunday, about the sermon to-day?"

"Notice? no; what was it about?"

"About the Society for the preaching of the Gospel abroad."

"Well, and what have I to do with that? I don't belong to that Society. I know nothing about the matter."

"The missionaries you know, papa—Eustace!——"

"What—who!" eagerly inquired Mr.

Lushington, turning quickly round towards his daughter, for the name of Eustace always startled him. "Is *he* any way connected with the sermon?"

"Mr. Russell will, I dare say, explain," said Lucy, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Well, I will listen, and try and attend."

And Mr. Lushington did attend; his eyes were never off the preacher, and the subject had apparently peculiarly interested and excited Mr. Russell's feelings, so that his appeal was most impressive. The father and daughter again walked home together, but neither of them spoke, and in silence they parted at the house door.

That evening a letter from the Manor House was delivered to Mr Russell; it contained a draft for £100, with Mr. Lushington's compliments. As for poor Lucy, she had emptied her purse into the plate, and never before had such a sum been raised at that village church as was

collected that day for the furtherance of the Christian religion among the benighted heathens.

"I really thought Mr. Russell would never have done," said Mrs. Lushington, as she drove home with her guests. "Such a long, tiresome story as he told us. I shall really beg of Mr. Lushington to give him a hint not to preach such desperate long sermons; it is so wearisome, and ill-judged, too, for it only puts one to sleep; and what it was all about I am sure I have not the smallest idea; in short, he has really prosed on till I feel quite faint and ill." And Mrs. Lushington had again recourse to her embossed, enamelled vinaigrette.

CHAPTER XIII.

November, the period fixed upon by Mr. Lushington for the return of the family to town, was now fast approaching, for it was more convenient to him to reside there in winter on account of his necessary attendance at the banking-house. But poor Lucy's heart sank within her at the prospect of the blank solitude of Stanhope-street, and all its many painful recollections and associations.

She had now so many occupations and interests at Elsmere, that they, by filling up the hours as they passed, almost made up to her for the want of actual enjoyment. Mr. and Mrs. Russell had helped her to make acquaintance with the poor of the village; she no longer now felt shy and

afraid of them, and had thus found among them constant occupation, not only in administering to their bodily necessities, but by soothing their sorrows, and raising their hopes to another and better world. "And this was the life to which I had looked with so much dread, so much repugnance, and to avoid which I cast from me my best, my dearest friend. Oh, Eustace! you are well avenged!"

Such were Lucy's thoughts one afternoon when, towards dusk, she returned home. On entering the hall she was immediately accosted by one of the servants informing her that Mrs. Lushington wanted her in the drawing-room, and that a gentleman was with her.

Oh, to what wild impossibilities does a stricken heart sometimes almost unconsciously catch! Nothing could be *less possible* than Eustace having arrived at Elsmere! nothing *more improbable* than (had ever such a miracle been wrought in her behalf) that her mother would have

sent for her to welcome him! But at that startling announcement none of these *improbabilities* or *impossibilities* struck her. Her heart beat to suffocation, every pulse throbbed, and she had scarcely strength to proceed. The servant threw open the drawing-room door. It was by this time nearly dark! she saw the figure of a man in black—the figure moved towards her—it addressed her—but it was not the voice of Eustace!—A cold, faint sensation came over poor Lucy; she could not speak, and was forced to catch hold of the nearest chair to save herself from falling.

"Why, Lucy," said Mrs. Lushington, coming up to her, "what in the world is the matter with you? you seem quite bewildered! why will you stay out so late? and what have you been doing to put yourself so out of breath? Here is Sir Alexander Melville, our old Roman acquaintance, and he has news of Lady Emily for you."

Sir Alexander came up to Lucy, and

held out his hand: scarcely conscious what she did, she mechanically put hers into it, but what he said to her, or what she answered, she had no idea; and she was too completely overpowered even to be distressed at the strange agitation into which she had been betrayed, and at the possible interpretation to be given to it by others.

Mrs. Lushington was all pressing civility to Sir Alexander—insisted on his dismissing his carriage, and having his luggage immediately taken out and brought into the house, ordered his large retriever dog to be put into the charge of the coachman, with express injunctions respecting care and a good dinner; she was so thankful he had come straight home instead of going round by St. Alban's as he had once intended doing, for she might have missed him, and she would have been so disappointed, so vexed, &c. &c.

This fervour of kindness towards Sir

Alexander was quite new on the part of Mrs. Lushington, and had not been at all anticipated by himself, for she had hitherto always endeavoured as far as she could to keep him in the background (having as yet aimed at higher game): but poor Mrs. Lushington's soaring visions about earls, viscounts, and honourables had one by one all vanished, so that she now (*faute de mieux*) thankfully welcomed an *old Scotch baronet* in her most gracious manner; there was, however, at that moment another reason, a sort of under plot to account for her present pressing civilities to Sir Alexander. Several of her neighbours were that very day to dine at the Manor House, and there was such a preponderance of petticoats, so many mothers and daughters, old maiden aunts, nieces, and even cousins, who must all be included, (those eternal, tiresome aunts and cousins, why can't they either marry or stay at home?) that poor Mrs. Lushington was at her wits end; and when Sir Alex-

ander was announced, she really looked upon his arrival as a positive interposition of Providence in her behalf; and exulted in the idea of being taken down to dinner by the tall, good-looking, fashionable Sir Alexander Melville from far north in the Highlands (and for aught she knew a lineal descendant of one, or all, the kings of Scotland), instead of by little, short, fat Mr. Smith of Mount Pleasant, Herts. These same petticoat neighbours were to stay at the Manor House two or three days. Sir Alexander was pressed to do the same; at *first* it was *impossible*, but after some *doubts* and *difficulties* respecting pre-engagements (all got up at the moment) he at last consented to *try* and put off all his other (imaginary) friends, and then he was established an inmate of Elsmere!

"Have you any message to Lady Emily, Miss Lushington," said he one morning after breakfast, "for I am going to write to her?"

"Oh, yes, my most grateful remembrances," said Lucy; "she has been so *very* —*very* kind to me."

Sir Alexander seated himself at the library table, and the following letter was written and dispatched, directed to Lady Emily Maxwell, Serni's Hotel, Piazza d' Ispagna, Rome :—

"Well, here I am, dear Lady Emily, according to your advice, at Elsmere Manor, having (as you also advised) taken the place by storm as well as stratagem. Nothing ever answered better than my manœuvres, at least with regard to the *magnificent* Mrs. Lushington. She is all civility and kindness, quite different, in short, from what she has heretofore been to me, the reason of this change being, I suspect, that just now there are (at least apparently) no other aspirants—in short, a complete dearth of *suitors*; the *shooters* not having yet returned from the moors! and I must own I was rather loth to tear myself away, I had such capital sport

in the North. But I felt it my *duty* to *myself* to come and see what game I might find in the South while the coast was clear.—I really wish you could see mine hostess playing off the airs of the careless, easy, fine London lady on her country neighbours; she is really *impayable*, and I could almost fall in love with her myself for her *delicious* folly.

"As for old Cerberus (Papa Lushington) he is more crabbed than ever, fit for nothing but to be chained up in his own stable-yard (and a capital watch-dog he would make). But now to the string of the story—the pretty Lucy, although I hardly know what to say about her. She is grown thin, and is much paler than when in London; hot rooms and late hours having apparently agreed with her better than Elsmere ruralities do. But notwithstanding this loss of bloom, there is an *air de sentiment* over her whole *personne* and *maintien*, which greatly adds to her beauty, and which really, in spite of myself, attracts me strongly towards

her, although it is plain she is, if possible, more impregnable than ever; in short, it is evident that the tiresome, troublesome cousin (although, thank Heaven! now quite out of reach) is still in her mind. She has also, I suspect, *donne dans la dévotion*. No great harm that, if she will keep her piety to herself, for young ladies must have a plaything of some sort, and if it is not religion it may be something worse. I thought I saw some incipient symptoms of that disease towards the end of the last London season; it began with the sermon at Quebec-street Chapel, that Sunday when Lady Rainsforth would go and hear the *interesting* cousin with the '*beautiful*' voice preach!

"There seems, at present, to be no competitors for her fair hand (in other words *purse*), at least none worth thinking about, and one may trust to Mrs. Lushington for keeping off all inferior sort of suitors; but still I can't help fearing the time is not yet come for me to bring matters to a crisis by

a regular declaration *dans toutes les formes*, and I dare not risk the chance (indeed I fear I may at *this* moment say the *probability*) of a final No, by hurrying things too much. But then my finances unfortunately will admit of no delay.

"This is really a very gentlemanlike sort of residence, with a good house and pretty country, and one might make a very comfortable home of it. But the place itself is rather neglected, as old Cerberus evidently takes no interest whatever in it. As far as her ladyship of Lushington is concerned, I believe I might stay on here as long as they do themselves, being both useful and ornamental at her side at dinner (for they talk of going to town before long for the winter); but to own the truth, I am rather in awe of old Cerberus, and afraid of his showing his teeth and growling me away if I stay too long; and besides, I am sorry to add, I do not think I am getting on at all with the daughter. She don't *dislike* me, I almost wish she

did (for I could soon get the better of *that*), but she evidently *nothings* me, and that is the most hopeless case of all! I had, at the moment of my arrival, flattered myself it was quite the contrary, for I never saw such a state of nervous agitation as she was in. I can't account for it, except that, having on a black coat, she, in the dark, took me at first for the reverend cousin. I suppose I should be flattered, for certainly the fellow is very good looking—plague on him!—She is always interested when I talk to her of our old Roman days, and I sometimes contrive to make her laugh (or perhaps, more correctly speaking, *smile*), but it is like a sudden gleam of sun in a stormy sky; the clouds seem only to gather the thicker and darker after it, and there appears to be, in general, a total indifference about everybody and everything. She passes a good deal of her time in the village and at the schools and charities, at least so my servant tells me, from the report of the other servants; so I try to

raise myself to her level by talking about *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* by the hour! but still I never can get beyond a certain point. I had a mind to try an experiment one day, and boldly asked after Pope Eustace, pretending entire ignorance *à son sujet*; but I shall never try that again, for I was really frightened at the effect produced by my (I must own ill-judged) inquiry. It was at dinner, too, unfortunately. I thought the poor little thing would have dropped from her chair, her very lips were blanched; she, however, recovered by degrees, and my pity was so marvellously excited I was good-natured, and as well as I could prevented attention being attracted towards her. I believe Mrs. Lushington (who I saw had observed her daughter's agitation) thought it was a proposal on my part, for after dinner she bustled up to me with an inquiring, mysterious expression of face. So I talked to her of *la pluie et le beau temps*, and in a few minutes, crest fallen, she walked away.

"Well, we shall see how it will all be when the little Lucy comes to town, and we get her again into the vortex of balls and operas, and no reverend cousin to hold up his finger and cry *naughty!* perhaps all this pretty rural country sentiment and religion will then pass away. But the worst is there is no time to lose as far as I am concerned; she must be brought-to soon, or I must cut and run. No rents — bad crops—clamorous creditors—in short, the devil!

"Your affectionate but ruined friend,

"ALEXANDER MELVILLE."

"P.S. Could you not get up some masses for me at Rome? not for my soul, but my purse, though it is hard to say which of the two is in the worst case, I believe!"

The last week, the last day, of Lucy's stay at Elsmere had arrived, and with a sorrowful heart she went to bid Mr. and Mrs. Russell farewell; she had never been within the parsonage, their

meetings having always taken place either in the school or at the cottages; for after what Mrs. Lushington had said on the subject of visiting Mrs. Russell, Lucy did not like to run the risk of displeasing her mother, and of being perhaps forbidden all future intercourse with her kind friends, by seeking them at their own home, and Mr. Russell had too much tact and good feeling ever to propose what might draw her into difficulties. But before leaving Elsmere, Lucy wished to see what would have been the home of Eustace, what *might* have been her own! She was shown into Mr. Russell's study. Sincere was the sorrow of her friends on hearing of the purport of her present visit.

"I cannot say how sorry I am to go," said poor Lucy, tears starting into her eyes; "I have been so peaceful here, and thanks to you I have found so much occupation, so much interest, which I had so little expected—so little hoped for! and I don't know what I shall do in London,

for I have no friend there—." Lucy could not proceed.

"Dear Miss Lushington," said Mr. Russell, taking her hand, "remember our *best* friend is with us, wherever we are; if we don't desert him, he will never forsake us. Look to him, trust in him."

"But you have no idea how lonely I shall be!" again sobbed Lucy; "and that horrid London!"

"You will be of use to your father," replied Mr. Russell, "a comfort to him, and we are always happy when in the discharge of our duty; and you will have leisure to read, which you always say you need, and see here," continued Mr. Russell, in a cheerful tone, "what a library I have prepared for you,"—and he led her to a table on which were collected the books he had promised to lend her—"and we will write to you and tell you how our school children are getting on, and how all your poor old sick friends bear your absence."

"Will you really?" said Lucy, her countenance brightening up; "you don't know how kind that will be of you—how much pleasure you will give me." While thus speaking, Lucy's eyes had been wandering round the room.

"And *here* Eustace would have lived!" she said to herself, "and *here* he would have sat and wrote—*there* would have been *his* books!—and now—where is he? amid perils, amid privations, amid sufferings, in solitude, perhaps in sickness! and all my fault!" Poor Lucy could not endure the thoughts which crowded into her mind, and hastily rising from her seat she bid her kind friends farewell.

Mr. Russell could read all that was passing in her mind, and did not attempt to detain her. They accompanied her to the gate of the garden, and then, praying for God's blessing on their interesting young friend, they bade her farewell. Lucy did not return to the house by the road, but passing through the little wicket-

gate, went into the churchyard. She felt she must once more revisit it, not her brothers' grave, but *that* spot ever sacred in her memory!

The next day she bid farewell to the home of her youth, and with a heavy heart returned to Stanhope-street.

No one who has not lived in London, in the month of November, can have any idea of its sombre melancholy. The feeble wintry sun scarcely lighting up the dark gloom of its nearly empty streets, before it is gone, unable to contend with the fog and smoke. Its depressing solitude, so different from the solitude of the country, because seemingly unnatural when entirely surrounded by human habitations.

And solitary, indeed, was now poor Lucy's existence! She had lost the only occupation which still interested her, and took her out of herself; and she was haunted by so many painful remembrances! Her only *pleasure* was the hope of being of use to her father. Her happiest hours were

those she passed in his study (in the very chair in which Eustace used to sit); for she was then fulfilling *his* last injunction. The London world had not yet reassembled. Lady Rainsforth was going a round of Christmas parties at her fashionable friends' houses in the country. Lady Emily was still in Italy; and with her former city friends, Mrs. Lushington had long since quarrelled, thinking they would be very troublesome acquaintances, now that she had got into the "West End" bettermost society; she was, therefore, obliged to put up with second-rate card parties, at old superannuated dowagers, who sought her company in order to make up their rubbers at whist.

Sir Alexander Melville frequently made his appearance in Stanhope-street, when passing through London in his way to and from the country-houses of his numerous friends, and Mrs. Lushington always welcomed him, with her most gracious smiles (nothing better having yet cast

up) ; but Mr. Lushington evidently shrank from him, as belonging to that world of fashion by which all his plans for the well-doing of his daughter and nephew had been overthrown. Lucy seemed always *content* to see him, but nothing more; she still, in short, evidently "*nothinged*" him, and notwithstanding the many cogent reasons which Sir Alexander had for keeping his ground with the "*magnificent*" Mrs. Lushington, his temper could not brook the repulsive manners of her husband.

Although Lucy did her utmost to be of use to her father as his secretary, she could not fill the place of Eustace as a companion ; and in order to spare his eyes during the present dark wintry days, Mr. Lushington had lately of an evening repaired more frequently to the Athenæum Club, to which he belonged ; and at this Lucy rejoiced, as he there met with his friends, and heard the news of the day, and was, in short, roused and refreshed in mind and body.

"Here is a note from Mrs. Selwyn," said Mrs. Lushington to Lucy, one morning after breakfast, "proposing that we should join in a box at Drury-lane this evening to see the new play; and I think we can do no better, for really we lead a terrible dull life now here. The only thing is, we must dine early, and that your father always ~~objects~~ objects to as he wants, he says, to get all the daylight he can for his writing; but perhaps he will ask Mr. Watson to come and keep him company, unless he will go to his club. So go down, and see what he will do."

Lucy went, and returned with the message that her father particularly wished to see Mr. Watson, and that he would send directly to Westminster, and try to catch him before he went to his daily duties at the Police Court, and secure his company for dinner.

"Very well, then, that will all do nicely, and you and I will dine early—not later than five o'clock; and mind and be ready."

Lucy hated the very sound of the word "*theatre*"—it always brought to her mind so many painful recollections; but of course she could only comply with her mother's arrangements. She had not quite finished writing for her father when she was summoned to join Mrs. Lushington in the dining-room, for their *tête-à-tête* repast; so, hurrying back to the study the minute she could make her escape, she finished her task. Mr. Lushington bent down over her shoulder, just as it was completed: "Very well, indeed, Lucy, done in a very purpose like manner; you are improving wonderfully; you will soon really be almost as useful to me as—as poor Eustace," he added, with a deep sigh.

Lucy took hold of her father's hand, and kissed it. "Thank you, dear papa," she said, after a minute wiping off a tear which had fallen upon it; "thank you."

"It is *I* who should rather thank *you*," said Mr. Lushington, with a smile, "and

I *do* thank you," and he then added, in a tone of unusual kindness, " you are a dear good girl, Lucy. May God bless you!"

At that moment the servant came to say, that Mrs. Lushington was in the carriage waiting for her. Lucy threw her arms round her father's neck. " Dear, dear papa," she cried, " I again thank you." And with flushed cheeks and tears trembling in her eyes, Lucy hurried away to join her mother, and they proceeded to the theatre.

It was a new play, with the many delays incident on a first performance, and there were, in addition, the endless entertainments so liberally bestowed upon the public for the benefit of holiday schoolboys at Christmas times. It was besides a rainy night, and in consequence there was great confusion among the carriages (for those matters were not so well arranged five-and-twenty years ago, as they are now), so that altogether it was not till very late that Mrs. Lushington and

Lucy got back to Stanhope-street. The bed-room candles were placed for them ready lit at the bottom of the staircase, the lamps being all burnt out.

"Is your master gone to bed?" inquired Mrs. Lushington, of Lambert, the head servant. (Mr. Lushington's bed-room being on the ground-floor.)

"No, ma'am, he is not yet come home."

"Not come home! Where is he gone to?"

"To the club—to Pall Mall," said the butler. "Mr. Watson, after all, did not come here at all; he sent an excuse just about seven o'clock, to say he was detained by business; so my master went to the club, as soon as he had had his dinner."

"Mamma, had we not better stop the carriage, and send it to Pall Mall for him?" said Lucy, evidently uneasy at her father's unusually late absence. "It is raining so hard, perhaps he can't get a conveyance home."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lushington, carelessly, "it will do no harm."

The footman was sent to recall the carriage, which was on its way to the stables, and it was ordered to the club-house in Pall Mall.

"I dare say he will soon be home," said Mrs. Lushington, yawning; "and I am so tired with our desperate long evening's entertainment, and the hard, upright benches, I shall go to bed. Good-night." And so saying Mrs. Lushington went up stairs to her own room.

"I never knew papa so late," thought Lucy to herself, as she looked up at the clock which stood on the stairs, and saw it was past one; "it is very odd!" and instead of repairing to her own apartment she went into the drawing-room, leaving the door which led to the top of the stairs open, in order to hear whatever might pass in the hall below. There is a peculiar dismal, desolate look about a drawing-room after the part which it played during the day is over. The fires and lights all gone out, the appearance of recent habitation by the chairs and tables being in

confusion about, contrasting so strangely with its present death-like stillness and desertion. Lucy put down her candle (the feeble light of which scarcely reached to the end of the room) on the nearest table, and sat listening to every noise.

Now and then the sound of carriage-wheels made her start up, but one after the other they all drove by or kept straight on in South Audley-street, their sound gradually dying away. Thus passed nearly an hour, and the carriages became fewer and fewer as night advanced. At length again the welcome sound of wheels rattling on the pavement was heard; it came nearer and nearer. Lucy unbarred the shutter and threw up the window-sash. A carriage drove up to the door, and by the glimmer of the nearly-extinguished lamp at the door-post, she recognised the coachman's livery. She rushed to the top of the stairs and down the first flight, sure, as she thought, of hearing her father's step in the hall; but

instead of that welcome sound, she could only distinguish the voices of the butler and footman in apparent consultation. She ran down. "Where is my father?" she eagerly inquired of Lambert, who came to meet her at the foot of the stairs; "have they not been to Pall Mall?"

"Yes, ma'am, but Edward maintains that Mr. Lushington is not there, and that the servant at the club says he left the house fully four hours ago with another gentleman in a hackney-coach; that the gentleman gave his own orders to the driver out of one of the front windows of the carriage, so that he does not know where they went. Edward now recollected," continued the butler, "that between nine and ten o'clock a person rang at our door and asked for my master, and when he was told he was not at home, inquired where he was likely to be found, and Edward named his club-house in Pall Mall. This person was on foot; he did not come into the house; and as Edward,

therefore, did not see his face distinctly, he could not tell who he was, and he gave no name. Shall I go to the club myself," asked the butler, "and find out how it all is? for there must, I think, be some mistake."

"Yes, yes, do," replied Lucy, her alarm every minute increasing.

After seeing the carriage set off with Lambert, she again returned to the dark, dismal drawing-room, listening to every noise, until her sense of hearing became so strained she scarcely knew the reality of any sound, from the beating of the nerves of her head. Again nearly another hour elapsed before the return of Lambert. He could give no further intelligence whatever. It was still the same story, that Mr. Lushington had left the Athenæum between nine and ten o'clock, with another gentleman, in a hackney-coach, and that the porter, not having heard the orders given to the driver, could not tell where they went to.

Lucy turned so faint she was obliged to catch hold of Lambert's arm for support. He placed her in one of the hall chairs. "Don't alarm yourself, Miss Lushington, I am sure there can be no cause. But suppose I go to Mr. Watson's, at Westminster; I dare say he will know something about all this. Indeed, probably I shall find my master there; for, now I think of it, he wanted particularly to have seen Mr. Watson this evening; and as he was prevented coming here at dinner-time, I have no doubt my master is gone to him. This really explains it all at once," said Lambert (apparently quite relieved by this idea). "I dare say it is only some little matter of business which has to be settled to-night, and I have no doubt my master will be home soon. And after all it is not so *very* late," said Lambert, taking out his watch. (To his surprise he found it to be nearly three in the morning, but that he did not tell Lucy.) "Let me fetch Mrs.

Reid," continued Lambert, " she will help you up stairs, ma'am, and you shall hear directly I come back. But I dare say my master will be home first."

To a degree reassured by Lambert's suggestions and kind encouraging words, Lucy went up to her own room, but not to bed; and dismissing Reid, she again sat down to listen to every sound in the house and street. Before very long she heard the door-bell; she rushed down stairs with the same nervous hope she was at last going to behold her father, to hear his well-known step and voice. But again she was disappointed; again there was a parleying in the hall between some one and the footman (for Lambert had not yet returned), and unable to endure the suspense, she hurried down the remaining flight of steps, and, by the glimmering light of the candle in the footman's hand, saw a person muffled up in a great coat and comforter speaking to him.

"Not yet gone to bed?" said a voice she immediately recognized to be Ned Watson's; "then, perhaps, I had better speak to her."

Lucy rushed up to him, and seizing his arm—"For God's sake, tell me what is the matter? What has happened? for I am sure something has! In pity tell me —my father!"

Lucy could say no more; she sank down in one of the hall chairs. Poor Ned was nearly as much agitated as she was, but he did his best to command himself.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Lushington," said he. "It is nothing; it will soon be all right, I have no doubt. It is only something that has gone wrong at the—the bank; but it will soon be cleared up —settled, I mean; I am sure it will. My father will soon put it all to rights; and he has sent me here to tell you so, and bid you not to be any way alarmed. Mr. Lushington will not probably be home to-night, but you may be sure my

father will take good care of him; so don't be frightened. You really need not, I hope; and I will come to-morrow morning and tell you all about it. Depend upon it all will be right."

Poor Ned's looks gave the lie to his words, while thus endeavouring to speak comfort to Lucy; for he trembled nearly as much as she did, and his usually ruddy, jocund face bore evident marks of nervous agitation.

"Can't I go to him?" at length stammered out Lucy. "Where is he? do, pray, take me to him?"

"Oh no, my dear Miss Lucy, that is impossible; why, it is three o'clock. I hope your father is fast asleep by this time; you would only disturb him."

"But where is he?" reiterated Lucy—"At your father's?"

Ned evidently evaded her question.

"Surely, you may depend upon my father taking all care of your's?" said Ned, endeavouring to smile; but the smile

would not be forced, and, instead, tears started into his eyes. "I promise you I will come early to-morrow morning, and tell you all about, it," repeated Ned; "so will you now go to bed, Miss Lucy; for I see you have made yourself quite ill with fretting."

Lucy held out her hand to Ned. She could not speak.

"I will be sure to be here to-morrow morning early," again said Ned; "so, good-night, pray go to bed;" and he left the house.

Lucy stood for a minute or two in the hall, as if irresolute what to do, and then slowly went up stairs to her own room, leaving strict orders with the footman, that if any one came from Mr Watson, at whatever hour it might be, she was to be informed. Lucy laid herself down on her bed, in the hope of quieting her throbbing nerves; but sleep she could not. For the few short moments of forgetfulness which at times came over her, broken imme-

diately by fearful nervous starts, could not certainly be called by the blessed name of sleep! All sorts of horrible imaginations succeeded each other to her mind. But, fearful as they were, they did not approach to the awful truth!—A truth which would but too soon burst upon her, in all its frightful reality.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 041768158