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THE PEER

AND

THE BLACKSMITH.

A TALE.

BY

R. BEDINGFIELD, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE MISER'S SON," "MARK LATIMER," &c. &c.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

DEDICATION.

TO W. M. THACKERAY, Esq.

My dear Thackeray,

Had I known a man of more liberal views and generous sentiments than yourself, I would have dedicated this tale of the "Peer and the Blacksmith" to him. "A sound thinker, with a clear head, and an honest heart"—as has been said of you so justly, I feel myself honored in claiming a slight degree of consanguinity with you.

Happy shall I be if the result of my labours should meet with your approbation; for you have never been a one-sided critic either on books or men. Were I to add all the sentiments I entertain towards you, men might think I had some object in view in dedicating my book to such a one: but my motive in doing so (and it is a selfish one, I confess), is to join my name with yours.

That you may long continue to enliven with your cheerfulness, to amuse with your humour, to elevate with your wit,

and to ameliorate with your kind philosophy, I most earnestly desire. Were I asked to point out a *man* (there are many *sham* men, alas !), I should say here is one—the generous, the gentle, and the brilliant. I am proud to say he is the friend and cousin of—

RICHARD BEDINGFIELD.

Upper Montagu Street,
September 1844.

INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the Author in writing this work was, as has been already stated in the Advertisements, to impress a moral on the people. The mischievous effects of oligarchy are still felt among us; but new powers have arisen in the State, new principles been developed; and civilization having proceeded thus far, in spite of the obstacles opposed to its progress, it remains to be seen what the diffusion of science can do, when it is universalized. There are two enemies to human progress, namely, despotism and anarchy. Both result from ignorance and want of faith; and never can they be annihilated, while there remain such discordant interests among us, and while the people and their rulers look with distrust on each other.

Crime begets crime: and from the insubordination of the masses, and the crushing physical force of the government, our polity is based on the falsest, the weakest, the vilest of principles. And what shall regenerate society? Ask the Conservative, and he will shrug his shoulders. He has *no* remedy for the evils so apparent; but when they assume a palpable shape, and march in the form of a million men, he can tell you what to do well enough. And the Chartist with the million men—ask him what he would do? Destroy the Constitution? Hurl the Monarch down, destroy the Peers, and remodel the Commons? Excellent well! If by so doing he can make all happy, wise, virtuous and affluent, for Heaven's sake let us have a Republic!

But every rational man knows that a government must be adapted to a people, not a people to a government; and when the time has come, as surely as thunder follows lightning, the people *will* rule. They are now not fit to rule, alas! It is not the fault of the people that they are ignorant; and ignorant they cannot remain. If every honest man in the world could tell what he wanted to have done, we should soon cease to have *parties;* but who knows what he wants? One man says the Repeal of the Corn Laws will do this, another the Ballot will do that; and so on *usque ad infinitum!* But he who regards the actual state of things with

the eye of the philosopher, shakes his head at the cries of parties. Can *he* tell what should be done, then? He only knows what ought *not* to be done. Plato has shown how much easier it is to detect error than to find truth. Yet on the whole in all things "we have too much knowledge for the sceptic side:" and it does not become us to remain idle, when if every man were otherwise than idle, and honest withal, we should have nothing to contend with. Ay, there it is: we want to make all men honest and active, and we know not how to do it. Christianity itself has for the most part proved inoperative to this end; but there is the only hope after all, when people know what it is. Christianity is the philosophy of human destiny: by it alone the mighty man is made good, and the good man mighty, and the absence of its vivifying influence is conspicuous in the counsels of the wise, and the deeds of the simple. There never would be want and crime in the world if all men were Christians. But we have had so much bigotry and fanaticism to oppose true religion, so much contention about articles of faith, and forms and dogmas, that practical piety has sighed to think that hypocrites should "prate of religion with a devil's tongue," and desponded of man on earth.

My object, then, may now be seen. I have shown what *theoretical* atheism leads to, in "The Miser's Son;" in the "Peer and the Blacksmith," *practical* atheism is developed. And let me observe, that *practical* atheism, and not *theoretical* infidelity, has been the bane of humanity. You may be prepared for an open enemy; but how can you be so against the foe who assassinates in the dark?

But it is not only Rulers who have for centuries exhibited an indifference for the good, moral and physical, of the human race. The poor also, not having thought, have neglected to observe that we are all brethren; they have neglected to love their enemies, and to do good to those who persecute them. Such a manifestation of dignified virtue could hardly be expected of them; and rancour and hatred have been busy, producing the germs of those deplorable revolutions which never have done, and never can do anything to afford permanent relief to the poorer classes. Mr. Carlyle, in his work of "Past and Present," has dwelt much on this subject: and it is to be lamented that such a writer should not be more popular than he is: but a fault in style, and a certain peculiar way of thinking, disgust the many when they take up his works. Nevertheless, he is the leader of our thinking men; and a worthy one. Yes, the divine truth is growing apace every day: the worship of Principles is beginning. This is the religion I wish all men would hold, whether they profess faith or infidelity:—there can be no mistake in what is good and right, only in the means of doing them.

And now having dwelt enough on the political and theological portion of my tale, I will add a few words on some of the principal characters,

introduced for the purpose of affording an insight into the human heart, and interesting, while instructing—as far as I am able—the reader. I heard Mr. W. J. Fox remark, that it is to the young we must look for the carrying out of those principles which those of the present generation enunciate. Mr. Fox, I apprehend, would imply that those who *follow* us have greater advantages than those who *precede* us: and he is right. A page is added to the great book of human destiny: but how much easier is it to think than to act! How easy for a man to point out the beauties of Shakspeare, but how almost impossible to realize them. Reginald Travers belongs to Young England; his father is represented as one of that class of thinkers influenced by no philosophical sect, but tolerant and catholic; and these two men are contrasted by Lord Wharton and his brother.

I am inclined to believe that Novelists have made a mistake in sacrificing many to one; and it has been my object here to develope each character as far as possible, and exhibit its relations with others. The sequency of events is evolved through the instrumentality of these,—these agents are operated on by principles: and every principle should be made apparent. Therefore I have dwelt more than is usual on the actual opinions of men; and I hope I have been tolerably impartial in my estimate of things. Let me find good anywhere, and I will adore it.

This book will please no partisan: it was not written with such a view, and cannot accomplish anything of the sort. It will not please the bigot in religion, and yet I have not charged all who are bigoted with being hypocrites: it will not please the unbeliever, but I have never imputed his unbelief to him as a crime. The character of Lord Wharton will offend many a modern statesman: but I put it to any impartial person if I have exaggerated his crimes at the expense of truth? Neither will the Democrat like John Jenkins: yet he is not hyperbolical. I want to make no monsters for my own purposes, but to depict man as he is—which is the sole legitimate province of the poetic Romancist. Nor do I think all statesmen and all democrats are bad and desperate men. There have been honest and noble minds among them, though they have been mistaken. Carlyle says, he would hail the era with joy when *all* men could be Conservatives.

In the delineation of the Prince Regent, I have been careful to abstain from the darkest shades of the picture, though I have not glossed over his glaring faults. Travers Wharton and the brutal Blacksmith are meant to be the worst characters in the tale, and the former, in the Author's opinion, is the worst of the two—for placed in a position which afforded him the means of fame and honour, he has not a redeeming quality.—In the characters of Stephen and Nell, without romance, or high ideal perfection, are realised all that can exalt human nature,

though placed in the worst of circumstances :—but the Author must not be his own Critic.

It is for the Reader to judge whether in the delineation of Greatness in Lord Wharton (but greatness only in *one* sense), of Madness in poor Harriet, and Revenge in Sharp, he has evinced a knowledge of the mysteries of the heart. That heart is deeper than the ocean, and God alone can fathom *all* its enigmas.

THE

Peer and the Blacksmith:

OR,

GREATNESS, MADNESS, AND REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

A BAD ROAD—THE TRAVELLER AND THE SMITH—NELL.

IT was on a dark November evening, some minutes after sunset, that a traveller was wending his way through one of those lonely tracts, which were not very uncommon at the time we write of in many of our counties, but have nearly vanished from the face of the country, owing to the dense population which now crowds every portion of the kingdom.

The road was execrably bad, presenting ruts and huge stones at every other step; and a fog had arisen, which obscured the faint light that yet remained; so that his predicament, with every prospect of a heavy rain supervening, and not a house or place of shelter far as the eye could reach, was somewhat unpleasant. Yet he stepped on briskly, in spite of the obstacles which opposed his progress: and indeed it was not a slight impediment that could have placed a difficulty not to be surmounted by such a man. In age he had numbered apparently about six-and-thirty years: his height was betwixt the ordinary and the very tall, yet though not more than five feet eleven, so great was the breadth of his chest, so erect his bearing, and so imposing the strength and grandeur of his form, that he could not have looked insignificant by the side of a giant. His face was not what is usually termed handsome, but it was yet more remarkable for power, as regarded its intellectuality, than his figure. The brow was broad and massive, indicating strong

determination and energy of character, without high enthusiasm or imagination. The eye was rather large, and dark, penetrating, and thoughtful, though it was difficult to read the cogitations within; the nose was not well formed, being his least peculiar feature, but the nostrils of it were wide, as those of almost all such men are; and the lines which surrounded the mouth, and the mouth itself, would alone have stamped his countenance as that of a person whose mind was aspiring, powerful and vigorously commanding. The dress which he had on was plain, but handsome and gentlemanly, such as was worn in common by the higher class at that day, and had evidently emanated from the shop of a Bond Street tailor; but it was unpretending and plain, as has been said, nevertheless.

"Confound these roads," muttered the traveller to himself as he nearly stumbled into a ditch, owing to the insufficient light and the unevenness of the road. "I will bring in a bill to have them extirpated from the land when I return to town. And yet," he continued, with a dark and icy sneer, "it is not likely I shall ever traverse such again, under the same circumstances; and there is no reason why I should labour for the benefit of others. I do not pretend to broad philanthropy of disposition—what cabinet minister ever really possessed two grains of humanity, however great his pretensions to it?"

Large drops of freezing rain were now falling, and our traveller strained his keen sight to the uttermost to discover some habitation in which to take refuge. The darkness became more and more intense—not a star, not a transient light in earth or heaven assisted him in his progress, and it was hardly possible to place one foot before another without stumbling into some hole or dashing the luckless member against a stone; for by this time it would have been difficult for a cat to see its way. But presently the rain fell furiously, and the thunder and lightning pealed and flashed, and by the evanescent light of the latter, the traveller was enabled to see a low hut or hovel at the distance of half a mile, located in a valley that slept beneath a barren hill; and instantly made for it, unpromising as was its aspect. When he was about a hundred paces from this squalid dwelling, he beheld by the lightning a little urchin, ragged and dirty, of about six years old, and rather diminutive of his age, amusing himself by running into a pond, the waters of which were swelling with the rain, utterly regardless of the weather and obscurity. He was one of those hardy, active children, whose health is so robust and constitution so perfect, that they are not materially affected by any exposure to the inclemency of the elements, and who seem organized by nature to sustain the rude shocks with which they are assailed in their laborious life.

Perceiving the gentleman when he was within a dozen yards of the

pond in which he was splashing with such zest, the child made an attempt at a bow, and ceased jumping in the muddy water.

"Is there any house but the hovel I see there, my boy, near this place?" asked the traveller of the urchin.

"Eh, sir!" returned the child, looking up into his face with some intelligence. "Why yes, sir, there *is*."

"I will give you something if you will guide me to it, then, if it is any better than this wretched hut, which I suppose hardly excludes the wet when it falls so heavily as it does now."

The urchin laughed at this observation. "O, granny and me lives there," he said. "But what sort of a house d'ye want, sir?"

"Do you know of a blacksmith in the neighbourhood?"

"To be sure I do! Jenkins the smith lives yonder. But some folks are afraid of he."

"Why afraid of him, child? Take me to him, and I will give you a shilling."

"Thank'ee, sir! A whole shilling for myself! O, I'll take you to him."

The little fellow started off so briskly, excited at the idea of obtaining such a remuneration for his services, that the traveller had some difficulty in keeping up with him at a moderate pace.

"These are the peasantry," he thought, "out of whose toil we fatten and wax mighty. They are formed to buffet with the tempest, and after all they may be happier in their vocation than the wealthy and proud."

As he thus mused, the fury of the storm abated in some degree, but the rain still fell fiercely; and the high-born gentleman did not much admire the soaking he was exposed to, Herculean as was his frame, and mature his manhood, while the child of poverty ran on by his side as unconcerned as if it had been summer weather, and delighted with the idea of having so large a sum as a "whole shilling" for himself, to lay out in cakes and apples. Strange diversities of human existence! when custom so entirely changes the thoughts and feelings which make us what we are. By way of saying something to his little guide the traveller exclaimed—

"And why are some people afraid of Jenkins, the smith, my man?"

"Ah!" replied the urchin mysteriously and confidentially; "they *do* say he has to do with the devil—he's a terrible person! There now you may see the light of his forge! Don't you hear his hammer? There isn't a man in all the world that can use his big hammer but himself."

"There is the shilling I promised you, little one. You had better not stay out such a night as this."

"Thank'ee, sir!" cried the urchin, joyously, as he received the promised recompence from the stranger, and bounded away with it as if he had obtained the riches of the East.

The lurid flame of a blacksmith's forge was now distinct through the gloom, and advancing farther in a straight line, the traveller soon beheld a man engaged at the anvil, whose appearance was as uncommon in some respects as his own. It was a singular sight to behold the dark form of the smith, as he wielded a heavy hammer with perfect ease, seeming in the midst of the fire, which had a strange look from the fog and darkness, and shot up with noise and glitter, while the bellows groaned in unison with the distant and angry rumbling of the thunder: and the stranger paused for an instant to survey his stalwart person, and admire the strength and dexterity with which he pursued his occupation.

The smith was a man probably ten years older than the traveller, and although two inches shorter, was fully as broad across the chest, and powerful in the whole proportions. But his want of the stranger's height made him appear awkward and unwieldy in comparison,—the other, though rather stout, being perfectly symmetrical;—yet there was a savage power in his swarthy lineaments which redeemed the coarseness and vulgarity of his appearance, even though it added ferocity to it.

Except that he was of lower stature, he was exactly the sort of man Danton, the bloody and brutal colleague of Robespierre, is represented to have been, with the same sort of animal courage in his stern and repulsive face, and with the same characters of rude uncultivated intellect which distinguished the popular demagogue of the sanguinary French Revolution, and whose physical powers and stentorian lungs could sway a rabble's passions more than the subtlety of a Marat and the plausibility of the arch villain whose iniquity caused such an effusion of blood. He too was the fellow of all others to be the leader of a mob, and would have been a most formidable antagonist to the sturdiest soldier that ever breathed.

The stranger advanced then to the burly smith and said—

"Good evening, friend. I want you to go and see after my horse, which I have left a mile hence, so lame that he cannot move a step."

The blacksmith raised his eyes and glanced at the person who had accosted him, with brightness and even penetration in his look: but there were few who liked to encounter the calm, searching gaze of that man who stood before the forge; and suffering his own to fall, Jenkins answered in a deep, hoarse voice from the chest, which sounded not unlike the thunder—

"These are awkward roads for those to travel in the dark who don't know them. I will send a lad to look at your horse directly. Ho, Stephen!"

"Stephen isn't at home," answered a female from within, the tones of whose voice were far from unmusical, and most dissimilar from the smith's.

"Has he gone out with Jack, then?" asked Jenkins.

"I believe he has," replied the same person, who now made her appearance.

She was a pretty, clever-looking girl, with something of sadness, something of radiance in her face, which attracted the traveller's notice, accustomed as he was to exercise his physiognomical acquirements frequently.

"And where's your mother, Nell?" said the smith. "She's at home?"

"No; she went to the village about an hour ago."

"Well, I suppose I must go and look to the horse myself," rejoined the blacksmith. "Where have you left him, sir?"

The traveller described the spot in which he had left his steed tied to a tree, and after the delay of a minute, Jenkins set out, telling his customer to walk into the house, and bidding the girl he had addressed as Nell to draw a jug of ale for him. He whispered something in addition to her, and casting a slightly sinister glance at the traveller, whose back was turned to him, quitted the smithy.

CHAPTER II.

THE STATESMAN AND NELL—"MEMORIES THAT MAKE THE HEART A TOMB."

WELL, my dear," said the traveller as he seated himself beside a blazing fire almost emulating that of the forge, and addressing the girl, who was placing before him some cold meat, bread, cheese, and ale; "so you are the smith's daughter?"

"Yes, sir," was the response.

"You are not much like your father, pretty one! He is as black as midnight, while you look like early morning."

The young girl smiled, perhaps not displeased at the compliment, coming from such a person, and in smiling she revealed a set of even teeth as white as snow. She was very pretty, certainly, and her beauty was not vulgar, if it was not refined, while there was an expression in her intelligent face which, the more it was beheld, irresistibly won on the heart.

The stranger continued to gaze at her with the eye of a connoisseur, and something of a sensualist also. She was not tall, but it was probable that her stature might yet increase, and her form was just ripening into the full and consummate grace of womanhood; but promised to be more voluptuous as she left her girlhood behind. Her hair was a deep auburn, which almost seemed black when it did not catch the light, and fell in natural curls over her ivory neck, one ringlet floating over her swelling bosom, —her eyes were of the deepest, darkest hazel, her nose

straight and small, her forehead wide, though not high, and as smooth and polished as marble; and her complexion was exquisitely white yet healthy. She was just the sort of girl he admired,—without being dazzlingly beautiful, but animated and finely formed,—and he soon gave her unequivocal tokens that he did so.

"And how old are you, my dear?" he asked, with that species of insinuating impertinence which men of the world, of his rank and age, think themselves privileged to use towards females of Nell's years and station, and in which they seldom meet a rebuff.

"I suppose I am not quite half your age," she replied, laughing.

"Indeed, saucy one! And how old do you think I am?"

"Between thirty and forty—middle aged—I am sixteen."

"Tolerably guessed: but you won't think me middle aged when you are twenty and I forty. Won't you eat with me?"

"No, I thank you," answered the girl, but not leaving the room, and seeming to wish to say something which she knew not how to communicate.

"Well, sit down by me," said the unknown. "I never let a pretty girl stand behind my chair. Did I hear your father call you Nell?"

"That is my name."

"Helen Jenkins! The latter is not very euphonious. My dear, you deserve a better appendage to the Helen. Should you like to go to London?"

The girl looked steadily into the stranger's face, but did not speak.

"I dare say I could get you a situation there," he continued. "I know a worthy milliner who is in the habit of receiving young girls from the country."

"O, indeed!" cried Nell, with bitter sarcasm, which astonished the man of the world, coming from one in her situation. "I have heard of your London milliners who engage in the traffic of human flesh; and sell the brightest things of all this earth—virtue, innocence and purity—to those black demons in human form who try to surpass Hell itself in the indulgence of their iniquity. Those who entrap the poor Africans from their country and sell them for slaves are merciful in comparison with such fiends!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the traveller with a cold sneer, "you are learned, I perceive. I hope you have not experienced already the foul arts you vent your indignation against with such eloquence!"

"I have not," answered Nell, sternly, drawing up her figure to its full height, "and rather than submit to be polluted for gold, look you"—(and she drew a dagger from her bosom, much to the increased surprise of her father's guest)—"I would plunge this into my heart. I would stab any villain too, without hesitation, whom I thought to be a seducer."

The traveller laughed outright.

"Pretty female Quixote!" he exclaimed. "You will have to murder some three millions of men in England alone, then, if you fulfil your threat. I myself am not acquainted with a dozen persons who would not take advantage of their natural gifts, to enjoy the glow of rapture which forbidden pleasure can afford! By Jove! I would not trust myself with you alone for four-and-twenty hours—I should assuredly be wounded mortally both in my heart and chest."

"Would you?" replied Nell, "perhaps not."

"Ah! you would not stab *me*, eh? You would heal the wound inflicted with your eyes, and throw the cold steel away with the cold cruelty."

"You would not dare to breathe a word of unholy passion in my ear," replied the singular girl, fixing her bright eyes calmly again on the stranger's face.

"I don't know! I have whispered words which I suppose you would call *unholy* into the ear of a duchess. But I am not a professed seducer now; so sheathe your dagger."

"A duchess! there are painted harlots in the halls of the miscalled *great* to whom it would not be one-millionth part the crime to talk as you describe, as it would be to address a country milkmaid. Have you never seen the misery which man's infernal treachery brings blithe youth and girlhood to? Have you never seen the hollow cheek, and the wild, frenzied eye, the haggard features and the withered form, eloquent beyond words, of anguish and desolation, which are indeed unspeakable? Have you never thought of the burning fever, the madness, and the suicide?—Crime with its catalogue of disease, misery, despair and early death! Has this never haunted you? O the horrors which the victims of foul lust inevitably experience! Man is not punished here, for the laws of society are false and vile; woman expiates her sin in this world. But if you *have* thought on these things, and yet continued in your career of crime, you are a wretch unworthy to burden this fair work of God's hand—this glorious world: and I tell you I would not *save* your life if I would not take it."

"You are eloquent—very eloquent in your way!" cried the stranger, who during Nell's long harangue had been gazing on the ground, many unfathomable feelings casting strange shadows on his haughty face. "Yes," he continued, scarcely addressing the blacksmith's daughter, "I have spent a proud and brilliant youth of intellect and strength and power in the wild excitement of burning passion. I have sacrificed my ambition before the altar of beauty, and hurled away all other things as dust for smiles of loveliness. Shall I now cast from me all other thoughts which interfere with the fruition of the present? I *could* do so; but it must be for the sake of one my soul could worship—not the inanity and folly of courtly dames who disport like butterflies in the sun, and are

inconstant as the gales of spring. And have I repented me of the past? I have grown weary of a repetition of triumphs, yet not of the joys themselves. For what were this life worth, without the sunshine of woman's presence to thaw the ice that grows around the heart? What are its restless struggles, its fevered dreams, its gigantic schemes and energies, spent for a world which must be despised, and to be rewarded with curses, coldness or ingratitude, disappointment and disgust its everlasting shadows? No, while I can, I will bask in the light of beauty's eye. I will live and die, adoring the brief, but thrilling felicities of passion, like a worthy follower of Mahomet and Solomon—two of the greatest spirits that ever led intellect and feelings in their chains.—Ha, ha, ha! Who would believe that a Minister of State has been talking sentiment with the daughter of a dirty blacksmith, to no purpose? But you are not a common girl, Nell, and are worthy of filling a higher station than that which you now occupy. A woman of your beauty would be inestimable to me, if educated to assist in my political intrigues."

"In what way?" asked the girl, who had listened to what the statesman had been saying with breathless interest; for there was something in all he spoke and looked—in the tones of his deep clear voice—in the glance of his eagle eye—in the flashing of his high spirit—which had often commanded the intense attention of a senate, and they were altogether new to one like Nell; and while he described the life he had spent, even though her fine eyes sparkled with indignation during what was in fact ebullient thought not intended for her, she could not but admire the fluent sentences spoken with just elocution and fervour—his natural and not acquired oratory. But before a reply could be given to her question, a female entered the smithy.

She was a fine woman, but with a stern, masculine, and almost savage countenance, though Nell resembled her in some respects. She was of middle age, or nearly so, and seemed muscular and vigorous. She was a fit helpmate for the brawny blacksmith, and such she was.

The stranger had finished his repast, and rose from his seat as the new comer entered.

"The weather seems improving," he said, as he went towards the fire: and as he did so Nell passed him, as if by accident, and whispered, "Don't remain here!"

He looked at her for an explanation; but she walked away as if she had said nothing, leaving her mother and the stranger together.

"Have you any inn near this place?" inquired the statesman of the smith's wife, as Nell vanished.

"No," was the reply, "not within six miles:" and Mrs. Jenkins proceeded to take an accurate but stealthy survey of the stranger's person.

"I know not what I shall do then," he exclaimed, "for my horse is

ame; and in this dense darkness I should hardly be able to find my way, I suppose?"

This was said in order to elicit something whereby he could interpret what the girl had just said to him.

"O," said Mrs. Jenkins, "I dare say you can have a bed in this house if you like. It's a terrible night, that's certain."

A peculiar trait in the character of our traveller was his love of adventure, which in his youth had run away with all discretion, and even now sometimes got the better of his acquired prudence.

"I *will* stay," he thought to himself, while revolving the whispered words of Nell. "Hang it! with the brace of pistols I carry, and the firm heart I bear, I should be a match for any three men in the world: and after all, I know not if I am to apprehend personal violence. It is impossible to proceed along these roads without breaking my neck—and—I am strongly interested in that extraordinary girl, who, though her head is stuffed with romance nonsense, is clever and amusing, and very pretty. I *will* stay."

And having made up his mind to do so, it would not have been a trifle that could have shaken his resolution.

The blacksmith returned in the course of ten minutes after his wife, and addressing the stranger, he said—

"I have seen your horse, sir, and doctored him a bit. I have left him in a shed till to-morrow, and I hope he will be able to walk here by then. My son, John, will then see to him; he is a far better farrier than I am."

"Very well. I am going to stay with you until the morning."

"I'm glad of it," said Jenkins. "My old woman will try and make you comfortable. I wonder," he added to his partner, "why John and Stephen don't come home."

Mrs. Jenkins replied in a voice which was inaudible to the stranger; but the smith's brow darkened, and he muttered, "It's well, if they don't get into a d—d scrape."

He again turned his attention to his guest and said—

"I suppose you've never been in these parts before, sir?"

"Many years ago I travelled through them," was the reply.

"Deborah!" exclaimed Jenkins to his wife, "you had better go and air the bed for Mr.——I don't think you have mentioned your name, sir?"

"My name is Wharton," answered the stranger, smiling.

The smith started, but said not another word, and soon afterwards left the room. Deborah Jenkins then also disappeared, calling her daughter to her.

Wharton was thus left to his solitary cogitations. He watched the burning coals as they assumed wild and fantastic shapes, which an attenuated imagination might have moulded into demons, and memories

bitter and corroding stole upon him, as they frequently do when we indulge in reverie by the side of the wintry fire. There were forms of grace, which lay wasting in corruption before his mind's eye, there were looks of love quenched for ever, there were tones which thrilled his heart, and words which were written in indelible characters upon his soul, all hushed, all gone, never, never to return again. The statesman still kept his eyes steadfastly on the fire, and the snake was gnawing within; but he was not one to droop beneath real or ideal sorrows, and he wrestled with the fiend which he had himself created. He strove to avert his thoughts from the channels in which they had been flowing; but they still returned to the gone with its vanished glories, as he turned his associations into reflections thus—

"Time was," he inwardly exclaimed, "when I used to shape out from these idle things dreams—cherished dreams of unreal, unattainable joy! Then the pulse beat high, and the blood coursed fiercely through my veins, and love, and danger, and strange adventure were my most enthralling pastimes. And still I am young; my heart is colder, but my head is stronger: and I can find delight in the pleasures I sought of old. But, oh! how different are my feelings now. Where is the elasticity, the lightness and the swiftness of my spirit? I dream no more; but advance sternly in the path of ambition, though I know all this world can give will never satisfy the panting thirst for felicity which possesses my being. I dash from my brain the haunting memories of the past, and—I am miserable—most miserable still."

The statesman (for indeed he filled no unimportant office in the then existing administration of the nation) folded his arms across his expansive chest: and again some recollection of the departed added a sadness to the gloom of his magnificent brow, and indeed to all his visage. "Poor thing," he muttered audibly, "I never loved any but her!" Once more his imagination recurred to the shapes of the peopled past, and one above all—a proud and beautiful form radiant in youth and grace and joy arose before him. He clasped it to his bosom—he whispered words of passion—he wooed—and won her. And then he beheld the same fair object wan and pale, her face haggard, and with frenzy gleaming in her eye—tall, gaunt, and ghost-like. And the unhappy one poured dark maledictions upon him, cursed his treachery with bitter eloquence, showed the ravages which grief had made on her charms, and then seemed to sink from him, like a vision of the night, which goes we know not how, but leaving terrible and scathing marks upon the brain—how unlike the mists of sleep, that serve only to enhance present enjoyment, as the dark shades in a picture add splendour to the hues of morning. He averted his eyes resolutely from the fire, and raising them on a sudden, uttered a wild cry.

CHAPTER III.

THE POACHERS—AN AFFRAY.

"HERE, Tom, you stand by the oak and keep a sharp look out. Jack Thompson, you've got more brains than the other boobies, short as ye are! Take that fellow, who is big enough to eat any poacher in England, and keep by the high wall there. I and the other two will lurk behind these bushes. If it wasn't for the lightning we couldn't be seen, so dark as it is:—now then to your posts."

These words were uttered by a man of about two-and-twenty, with a quick, cunning sort of look about him, though he was an ugly little fellow of stunted growth, and his face much pitted with the small-pox.

Those he had just addressed were five in number, all, with the exception of the one he had called Jack Thompson, as stupid-looking louts as it is possible to conceive; but strongly made, and armed with guns and pikes.

Jack Thompson was a miniature copy of himself, about a year younger, and half a head shorter: but there was that in him which promised resolution and courage very different from that of the dogged and brute expression of indifference to danger on the faces of the four assistants.

The first person addressed by the name of Tom, a sturdy young clown with bandy legs, took the station assigned to him forthwith; and the others were not very long before they filled their posts as they had been directed.

The reader must be informed that the leader of the little party was the son of a gamekeeper on a gentleman's estate, and the others were friends of his, who had agreed to assist him,—in consideration of a supper, which he was to give them that night,—in taking some poachers, who had become very troublesome in the preserve where the persons who have been specified had stationed themselves. The lightning was less vivid than it had previously been, but it flashed brightly at intervals, illuminating the whole extent of a park, whose fine and ancient trees towering upwards, caught the innocuous radiance, seeming for an instant to be in flames.

At the distance of perhaps two miles from the spot where the gamekeeper and his friends had taken up their position, and which was nearly at the extremity of the estate, a large and handsome old mansion of solid masonry and of the Elizabethian style of architecture, could be

distinguished: but it was so dark and foggy that when the lightning slumbered, it was impossible to perceive any object at the distance of a dozen yards; and it was singular to see things spring into life as if from the wand of a wizard, beneath the lurid blaze. But in about half an hour, the fog slightly cleared away, and the rain which had been pelting incessantly, fell with less violence.

"They be a long time a-coming," grumbled one of the companions of the young man who had the command of the affair, his appetite sharpened by the keen wind which blew in continuous gusts in their faces.

"Hold your tongue, booby," answered the gamekeeper's son in a whisper, "and don't let the point of your pike be seen through the branches. They will be here now before ten minutes are over."

But the ten minutes elapsed, and still there was no sign of the expected depredators.

"Well, Sam Harris," murmured the fellow who had before spoken, "you see they ben't here."

"I hope I have not been humbugged," muttered Harris to himself, while signs of mutiny became visible in the rest of his followers, whose valour was oozing fast away with the rain and cold.

"I shan't stay no longer," said the first grumbler, sullenly. "It's quite plain you've been misinformed."

"Stay a minute, man. You know Mr. Travers will be home to-morrow, and he will be sure to reward you liberally if these rogues are taken. Hist! quiet! here they are at last. We have them safe enough. There are only two of them."

As Harris spoke, two or three successive flashes of lightning revealed the forms of the two poachers walking along with guns in their hands, and one of them cried—

"Now, Steve, you had better wait here for a minute. I'll go and see if all's clear yonder."

The man who had thus delivered himself was one of the most formidable looking fellows eyes ever beheld. Six feet one in height, with limbs full of vigour, and orbs of fire, which almost seemed to pierce the darkness, his great strength and the determination which accompanied it could not be mistaken.

The other depredator was a youth of some seventeen years of age, active, graceful, and with a countenance full of sense and daring. Altogether two more dangerous fellows to deal with Harris and his comrades could hardly have fallen upon.

"Ah!" said the lad, on a sudden, as his companion was leaving him, "what a splendid stag! Shall we not have him?"

The temptation was great, and the tall poacher casting a hurried glance around, fired, and brought down a noble stag that was crossing the park at a short distance: but the animal regained his legs in an

instant, not having been mortally wounded, and was bounding away, when another bullet stretched him dead on the earth.

"A capital shot that, Steve!" exclaimed the tall poacher to his comrade, "you beat me now all to nothing with your gun. But we have been rather imprudent. Come along; we must not lose an instant."

So saying he was hastening to secure the prize, when Harris exclaimed—

"Now then, my lads, they have discharged their guns—on them before they can reload!"

"Ha! the gamekeepers are on us!" cried the youth Steve. "Now, Jack, we'll show them a bold front."

The poachers turned when the enemy had arrived within twenty paces of them, and levelled their pieces. They were somewhat awed at this hostile manifestation of the depredators; but all being collected together, confident in their numbers, they advanced with a shout, Harris vociferating, to sustain their courage—"Never fear; their guns are not loaded, and we are three to one."

"Fools!" said the Herculean poacher, in a deep, stern voice, which thrilled to the hearts of his antagonists more than if it had been fierce and loud—"Fools! we have double-barreled guns, and never miss a mark."

The opposite party abruptly halted, and a whispered consultation ensued. After the interval of a minute, Harris exclaimed—

"We know you, Jack Jenkins! and will take you dead or alive; so you had better yield at once."

"You will never take Jack Jenkins *alive*, my little man," replied the tall fellow with a slight and contemptuous laugh. "I warn you," he continued, "to retire; for my gun sometimes has a trick of going off, I know not how."

"Shall we be cowed by one man and a boy?" ejaculated Thompson, when the poacher had ended. "Come on, lads; we have guns to use as well as they, and we can see to do so now; for the fog is fast dispersing."

It was as he said; the thick clouds were hurrying across the heavens, and the vapours were flying fast, and the full, round moon, gleamed through a mist which had concealed it, for the space of a minute.

"Again I warn you to keep back," said Jack Jenkins, taking aim as Harris and Thompson led on their wavering comrades. But his menace was disregarded, and a rush was made on him and the youth. The sharp, ringing report of a gun was heard, succeeded by a groan, and one of the men who had stood by the side of Harris behind the bush fell, severely wounded.

Jenkins, who had fired, now clubbed his weapon, and with a brow of thunder, stood his ground, while the young man who had killed the stag

kept close to him without discharging his other barrel, saying, in a low voice, "For God's sake, Jack, keep clear of murder!"

Before the sentence had well passed his lips, Harris darted upon him, fancying, probably, that he should easily overpower so young a stripling, but the lad was much taller than himself, which gave him a great advantage in the struggle which ensued, and though his strength was immature, he was not inferior in muscular power to his sturdy assailant, while in activity and address he far surpassed him. In ten seconds Harris measured five feet three on the earth, knocked down by the gun of the youth, who then instantly hastened to the assistance of Jenkins, who was attacked by four men at once.

It was truly astonishing to see the tall poacher defending himself like a bull against so many dogs, though the huge fellow whom Harris considered to possess such wonderful powers of appetite, and was stouter than himself, and of almost as great stature, had seized him by the collar, and clung tenaciously to him. His clumsy strength, which had never been exercised but at the plough, did not avail him against the practised sinews and muscles of his antagonist, who dashed him down with a blow of his fist just as the man Thompson was aiming at him with a pike. He struck the weapon aimed at him out of his enemy's hand, but at the same instant two others directed their arms against him, and one pike must inevitably have killed him—for it was coming in a direct line with his heart—when it was averted by the gun of Steve, which immediately caused the pikeman to kiss the dust.

"Bravo, Steve! we'll give it the rascals, and bear away the stag in their teeth!" exclaimed John Jenkins, smiling grim defiance at the enemy.

Scarcely had the poacher spoken when a bullet whizzed past him, grazing his hand, which was raised against Thompson, who, actual pigmy as he was, compared with Jenkins, would not budge an inch; but with a thick cudgel, was preparing to attack him once more. It was Harris, who, recovering from the momentary stun he had sustained at the hand of Steve, aimed at the tall poacher; but Jenkins uttering a shout of defiance, knocked down another opponent, as his sole supporter engaged with Thompson, the youth having closed with him as the ball of Harris passed within a foot of his own person. Seizing the short man, then, who was stoutly struggling with Steve, in his mighty grasp, Jenkins hurled him against a tree, which stood at the distance of several yards; and the field now being his, terrible as the odds which were opposed to him and his young ally had appeared, Jenkins and Steve turned towards Harris, who was reloading, but prudently retired, and then made for the dead stag, which they had resolved on taking away. The redoubtable poacher, who had worsted so many foes, threw the carcase over his shoulder, as if a very heavy weight were of air, and made in the direction of a

high wall about a furlong away. He reached it in two or three minutes, when Steve sprang up, though the wall was seven or eight feet in height, and received the stag from Jenkins, who mounted with some difficulty, not being accustomed to much leaping, and being less agile than his associate. Meanwhile Harris and his assistants had collected round the man who had been wounded, and one of their number also being slightly hurt, so as he could not walk very swiftly, it was agreed that they should be left behind to await the coming of several persons they could now perceive approaching from the gamekeeper's lodge with torches; and the other four pursued the daring poachers.

By the time they arrived at the wall over which Jenkins and the youth had taken their departure, those audacious fellows had gained a lane, and bearing their prize between them, ran down it at full speed. At the end of the lane was a broad stream, over which a plank was thrown, and crossing this, they destroyed the temporary bridge, which obviated a circle of nearly half a mile, unless their pursuers chose to swim the river. But in a cold November night, the waters swoln with the rain, no one chose to do this; and the poachers were soon out of sight.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MORAL AND POLITICAL DISCUSSION—THE STRANGE INTERVIEW.

"THIS has been a rare night's work," observed John Jenkins to his companion, after they had baffled the pursuit of their adversaries—who, probably, were not very anxious to come to close quarters with them again—by removing the plank. He added, "the stag we have got is one of the finest I ever saw."

The youth looked sad. "I shall never poach again," he replied.

"What! faint-hearted after having acted your part so bravely! Shame on you, Stephen. I didn't think you were a craven!"

The lad's face coloured at this taunt; but he merely said—

"I am afraid that poor fellow you shot is wounded dangerously."

"O, ho! you are afraid of the gaol, and the trial, and the trip over the water, which our good government so graciously bestows on the men they force into rebellion against their accursed laws. I see! I see!" returned Jenkins. "But look you, Stephen, they shall never clap their darbies on these strong hands, while the soul within me remains; and you can as easily die as I can. What's this life worth? A man can

have it but once; and if he dies like a man, far better to do so, than drag on a miserable existence in want and beggary, and die unheeded, like a dog upon a dunghill at last!"

"But," answered the young man, "Do you not think that in violating the laws, we are injuring others who never hurt us? We should not like to be despoiled of what we possess."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the other, impatiently, "what right has the owner of this stag—the person who *did* own him—to his flesh, more than we have? God gave the earth to man, and every living thing for his use: and if some titled scoundrel possess himself of what is the just and legitimate right of all, why should not we take from him what is but a trifle after all? We are getting wiser than we were before the French Revolution; and all classes begin to think for themselves. Have you read the work of Tom Paine that I lent you?"

"Some of it; but if we do not allow any claim to private property to be just, what inducement should we have to work honestly for our bread? It were vain to labour, when any strong man may come and take from us the produce of the sweat of our brows. No, John, let us abandon our present mode of life, and seek employment which may afford us competency."

"D—n work!" returned Jenkins, moodily. "A man must be a slave who would willingly toil from sunrise to sunset for the benefit of oppressors, for the mere means of life, when others are rolling amid pomp and luxury in their carriages, without toiling at all!"

"But do they enjoy their luxuries as we do our necessaries?" replied Stephen. "Because it appears to me that the question of relative enjoyment is not one of possession of wealth, or the means of obtaining luxuries, but the faculty of deriving pleasure from what we acquire. I have thought much upon this subject lately, John, and I think your arguments weak. Still I agree with you that our operatives are greatly overworked and ill paid; and I cannot respect the men who use them for their selfish interests, thinking of naught, save the amassing of riches, as if those with eternal spirits like their own, were mere beasts of burthen: but the remedy is in our own hands; and sooner or later we will redress our grievances."

Thus ended the conversation, which is inserted here, both as tending to illustrate the respective characters of John and Stephen, and to afford a sample of the moral and political feelings which were predominant with men of Jenkins's class and degree of intelligence, about the commencement of the present century. Such men are by no means uncommon now among the Chartists of Britain and the Republicans of France—men with vehement passions, with some sagacity, and a little knowledge—that dangerous possession—who perceive the existing evils of society, and trace them to their source in some measure; but are unable

to discover their manifold ramifications, and the difficulties in the way of eradicating them. Our operatives are now generally becoming wiser and more tolerant: and if they dislike oppression in every shape, their indignation is vented against principles and measures, and in argument and discussion, rather than in retaliation on individuals and private property, which if unjustly acquired, cannot be equitably seized upon by those who have no title to it, save the fact that they work for their bread, and that others cheat and frequently reduce numbers to utter destitution for wealth which proves a curse to them for their iniquity. God grant that every honest man may one day sit under his own fig-tree, and possess the necessaries and comforts of life, without sighing after demoralizing pleasures and enervating superfluities.

The road which John Jenkins and the youth were now pursuing was steep and rugged; but they were so well acquainted with it, that, even if the fog had still continued, they would have experienced no difficulty in pursuing their path: but the air was now tolerably clear, and though it still continued to rain, the storm had passed away, and several bright stars were looking forth from "the blanket of the dark." Thus they continued walking for at least three miles, John Jenkins buried in gloomy reverie after Stephen had spoken, when they crossed a ploughed field of some extent, and avoiding a village which stretched away to their right, they struck into a by-way which conducted them in the course of ten minutes walk to the top of a hill commanding a view of the adjacent country, and descending which they found themselves in a valley at a short distance from a blacksmith's forge. It was not much past eight o'clock; but at that time of the year not a sound was to be heard, for it was usual for the family of the smith to retire to rest at that hour.

"I'll take the stag into the out-house, Stephen, and you can go to bed," said John Jenkins; and the youth nodding assent, somewhat weary with his recent exertions, entered the smithy by a low door, and closing it after him, was crossing to a dilapidated staircase, through what he supposed was an empty room, when an exclamation, composed of astonishment, alarm, and terror, struck upon his ear, and arrested his steps. Within two yards of the spot where he stood, a strange man was gazing on his face, as if he were fascinated by a basilisk. It was impossible to understand the cause of such emotion in the unknown, as he contemplated with intense interest and pain the fine, healthy face of Stephen; for it would have been difficult to find one of more frankness, comeliness, and even sweetness. Yet there was a spice of the devil in his clear blue eye—which was so dark as almost to appear black, and a decisive character on his broad, manly brow, which seemed to mark one who could both do and dare, although there was no admixture of ferocity with his courage, such as distinguished the countenance of John Jenkins. His hair was of a dark auburn colour, not unlike Nell's (the Reader may

have concluded Stephen was related to the smith, to whom he has been introduced already), his skin brown fron exposure to the sun, but clear, his nose aquiline, and the shape of his face inclining to the oval. Thus, standing the medium height of a full-grown man, the beard not dark on his chin, Stephen bore the earnest scrutiny of the stranger, who had no eyes for anything but him, with much surprise. But that individual recovered himself with a strong effort, and was the first to speak.

"Do you belong to this house, young man?" he asked in a deep, firm voice, which manifested no trace of the extraordinary feelings he had displayed a few moments before—indeed, it was even deeper and firmer than on common occasions.

"Yes, sir," replied Stephen, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Are you aware that there is blood upon your cheek?" demanded the stranger — a degree of wildness returning to his dark but splendid face.

Stephen brushed away the sanguine mark with his sleeve, and muttered something, which was not very intelligible, to account for it.

"Strange! most strange!" said the unknown to himself, as Stephen stood hesitating whether to cross the room or not.

"I hope you are not ill, sir?" exclaimed the young man, more and more bewildered at the conduct of the person he found located in the smithy.

"No, no," was the answer, "I am very well. You say you live with this smith and his wife—are you related to them?"

"I am the nephew——" began Stephen: but he was interrupted by the stranger.

"You may think me impertinent; but you are wonderfully like a dear friend of mine, who has been dead many years! O! so like!" he continued, unconscious that his thoughts found utterance—"The eyes, the nose, the lips, the brow—as if they were cut out of the same piece! I never knew so great a resemblance. Poor, poor thing! She lies at rest; while I wander about on the face of the earth, plunging deeper and deeper into that abyss which has no bottom—the type of Hell!—and all things a desart, all love a dream—all passion a madness—guilty, and lost to good!"

"He is bereaved of his wits!" thought Stephen. "There is something, I can perceive, now, peculiar in his face:—yet, what a noble look he has! I wonder how he came here?"

"I must know more of this boy," muttered the stranger, again turning his attention to him. "Do you follow the occupation of a blacksmith?"

"Sometimes, I assist: but in general there is too little business going on to need any help," answered Stephen, wavering in the opinion he had

almost formed that the unknown was insane, when the penetrating glance of that keen, full eye fell on him once more.

"His voice, too!" ejaculated the stranger. "Should you like to quit this place, and seek your fortune elsewhere?" he inquired.

"I have been thinking of doing so," replied the youth, who seemed growing spell-bound beneath the gaze of the singular person he had encountered so unexpectedly.

"Ay; and what can you do?"

Stephen thought a moment, and the stranger added—

"Have you any ambition beyond the spade, or hammer? You can read and write, I suppose?"

"O yes," answered the stripling, smiling. "And to tell the truth, I believe I am somewhat ambitious, too!"

"Whither does your ambition tend?"

Stephen answered not; but the unknown continued—

"Perhaps I could advance it."

"You are too good, sir. I do not wish to be under any obligation—"

"Nay," interrupted the stranger, "I am in need of a person like you—one I could trust—and would undertake your education, that you might become of service to me. I require intelligence and incorruptible fidelity, and for the rest, you would soon be able to acquire all I want. I am in the present administration: my private secretary is about to leave me. I gave him £150 a year; and will bestow the same on you when you are able to fill his place. I will not take one who has been accustomed to the intrigues of state. I have been cheated and deceived too much. There is my address while I remain in this part of the country. Of course," he added, with something like a sneer, "you will think my conduct in thus tendering to your acceptance a responsible situation, is strange; but there is nothing really so, if we could read the mysteries of men's hearts. I told you that you are strangely like one that I loved and lost—one faithful and true to me,—and I hope to gain in you such another. You owe the advancement, which I now proffer, to that resemblance."

"I thank you from my heart, my lord," exclaimed the youth, as soon as he had read the name and address upon the card, which had been presented to him, "for the kindness and confidence you extend to me; and if you think that my abilities are such, that I may fill the office you proffer, I will exert them to the uttermost in your service, provided that I am not required to do anything mean or dishonourable. I would not be a tool, or a spy, or the slave of a political party which I acknowledge I do not admire."

"This is no vulgar boy," thought the unknown, "or he would have grasped greedily at my offer, without any conditions. What can you do?" he abruptly asked of him.

"My acquirements are few," answered Stephen. "That I can read and write you have concluded. I have some knowledge of arithmetic, a trifle of history and geography—nay, I have a superficial acquaintance with Latin, but am self-taught. I can shoot to a hair's breadth, can use a sword or cudgel, dig, wield a hammer, and wrestle with any lad of my years in the county. Now you know all that I am able to do, except what every living being can. I tell you I have hitherto led a vagabond life; but wish to abandon it; and I think I *could* do something better than bring down a pheasant or shoe a horse."

"I think you can," was the reply. "You will remember the name of Wharton; but let me see you to-morrow, before I go from hence."

"I will frankly tell you, my lord," said Stephen, "that I cannot present myself at the house you have directed me to. But I will come to you in London, if you say I am not to be made a minion——"

"No, no; I do not want you for any political purpose——"

Before Wharton could finish his rejoinder, a burly form, which was that of Jenkins, the smith, advanced to him, and said—

"Your bed is ready, sir, and my wife has lit a fire in your room."

"Very well," was the reply. "Perhaps," added Wharton, in a low voice to his secretary *in prospectu* as he passed him, "you had better not mention anything of what has occurred between us, at present;" and with these words accompanied the smith to his chamber.

CHAPTER V.

THE PICTURE—PLOTTED MURDER AND A DISCOVERY.

The statesman ascended to the chamber which had been prepared for him, and found a large, wood fire burning right cheerily in a huge grate, in an apartment which we must pause a few seconds to describe.

Its dimensions, though not approaching to the size of those rooms where the opulent pass so often sleepless nights on pillows of down, were unusually great for the description of house occupied by the smith. It was long, but rather narrow for its length, and the walls were hung with old faded tapestry; though it was difficult to account for what had once been rich and splendid, existing in such a place. The fact was, that the smithy had formerly been a dwelling of a much superior description to its present condition, and occupied by a gentleman, who lived in it for forty years, and dying, no person would inhabit it.

The legend was that he had poisoned his wife in a fit of jealousy, and had retired from the world to bury his remorse and anguish in obscurity.

For twenty years the old house had been untenanted, the country people persisting it was haunted, until Jenkins, the blacksmith, arrived in the vicinity, and as it was in a dilapidated condition, got it at an almost nominal rent; he having no fear of beings of another world, any more than of this, and being inoculated with a little of the popular philosophy, immediately removed to it. The ceiling was dingy, and had once been painted with figures of heathen gods and goddesses, neither with much taste nor delicacy; but time had obliterated in a great measure the work of the artist, and nothing remained but indistinct masses in place of naked forms—an effect of years and damp; for in one place in the room there was a pool of water where the rain had penetrated the roof, nearly sufficient for a duck to have swum in. There was a bed, a table, a couple of chairs, and one immense picture in the chamber, and the latter object our statesman looked at with some degree of interest. It was intended to represent an aged man with white hair and feeble frame, bending over a fair woman who was in a dying state. There were other figures on the canvass, but these were the most prominent, and the story told itself. The woman was the old man's daughter, who had gone astray, and returned when almost at the point of death to seek his forgiveness. Though the execution was unequal to the design of the painting, it was clever, and evidently the work of a young artist, and o rather recent date. The female was a little, a very little like the youth he had just parted from with a promise of advancement, and there was something in the expression of her faint, melancholy eyes, and mournful, wasted, and still lovely face, which was touching and full of nature.

The statesman remained for about ten minutes gazing at the picture, which extended very nearly over the whole wall at the extremity of the apartment, and crowding thoughts were busy in his brain, which threw strange shadows across his face; and then he paced up and down with uneven steps, muttering indistinctly to himself. He reviewed his past life, he dwelt upon scenes of profligacy and wild debauch, he saw the young fall around him, and those who lived stained with every species of excess and vice, until that proud man of the world, who had lived for twenty years a life of pleasure and dissipation, groaned audibly in bitterness of spirit, and exclaimed—

"I have done nothing but make others miserable through the whole course of my existence. I have seduced innocence, and seen it wither away beneath the breath of the destroyer as surely as flowers in autumn. I have won the affections of confiding youth, and blighted its young being like a villain. O, I am steeped in guilt to the very soul! I am a wicked, wretched man. But it is too late to repent. I have withdrawn from my old companions; but I cannot withdraw from my old habits. When I have toiled through the day, and exhausted the energies of my intellect, I need the blandishments of a mistress—women, wine, and wild

excitement. Yet I no longer feel excitement even in those things which I loved with wild fierce passion in my youth. I am cold to what I was, though the devil has not left my bosom. The Satan has become the Mephistophiles. I did not believe it possible I could ever be what I am."

The statesman seated himself before the fire, and closed his eyes; but not in sleep; for memory with its serpent fangs was gnawing within, and he could not obtain rest or quiet for an instant. Who says that even here the vicious and sensual man does not pay dearly for his crimes and intemperance? What sensualist but has experienced all the pangs and misery consequent on a violation of morality, and not only physical debility, but enervation of mind, satiety and disgust of existence?

Wharton—as he may henceforth be called—with a mighty effort of his powerful mind at length shook off the despair which was clinging to him so tenaciously, and in order to divert his thoughts took out a couple of volumes from his pocket, and having trimmed the lamp with which his host had furnished him, began to read. But when the brain is boiling and dizzy, and the heart is sick, the most inspired of these dreamers and men of science whose genius like the stars glows forth with undiminished glory through the Night of Time "empearling starless ages," can effect but little on the deadened soul. It was a work of the celebrated Machiavelli, and as the statesman of modern times perused it, a gloomy sneer would gather around his mouth, making his fine face appear sinister and forbidding. "Admirable Machiavel!" he exclaimed, "thou art my master in the arts of government. But this book is so familiar to me that I could repeat it nearly all by heart. I wish my memory were not so retentive sometimes. I never forget what I have once read; and there is but little worth studying at all." He then opened the second book. It was a Rabelais, and singular to relate, he opened it in a part which interested him so much, that he at last succeeded in becoming absorbed from himself, and relished its keen satire, its pungent wit, and brilliant sarcasm, so that he forgot where he was, the past, present, and future; and the time flew rapidly by until it was hard upon midnight. Then—the appropriate and orthodox hour for all apparitions and spectres—the large picture, which has been alluded to, moved slowly on one side, and a form advanced towards Wharton.

The statesman had not been giving a thought to the mysterious hint he had received from Nell, so engrossed had he been with his own peculiar thoughts, a flood of recollections having poured upon him on a sudden, with which the reader is in some measure acquainted, and which were awakened by associations toward which his dark thoughts frequently recurred. But he started from his seat, as he beheld a female stealing slowly and hesitatingly up to him; and an expression, very difficult to define, overspread his countenance.

"What, pretty one!" he cried, "have you come to commit assassination, or to keep me company, this dreary night?"

And he advanced with the intention of clasping her round the waist; but she repulsed him with a look and gesture of dignified resentment.

Nell—for it was she, but looking very pale, and trembling—said—

"I am come to rescue you from very great peril. I told you not to stay here. Follow me at once, and I will conduct you into the open air."

"Nay," said Wharton, "I am not going to leave a warm room and comfortable fire, such a night as this, without rhyme or reason. What danger have I to fear, if I should stay in this place—except that of your bright eyes?"

Nell grasped Wharton's arm, and whispered in his ear.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, drawing a pistol from his vest, and cocking it.

"I repeat you have to fear murder," she reiterated, in a low, distinct voice. "Even now, the assassins may be coming. For God's sake, linger not. I will just go and see that all is clear, and then you must run for your life."

With these words Nell disappeared behind the picture, and the statesman was left alone.

We must retrogade a few hours, in order to place important events in due sequency, and return to the smith after he had quitted his guest at the door of his apartment.

He left the chamber with a stern and gloomy brow, and descended into a small room in which there was a fire, (for fuel was very cheap in the locality,) and where his partner, the worthy Mrs. Jenkins, was expecting him.

Presently, as he remained in moody silence, which the female did not attempt to break, gazing downwards, the strong form of John Jenkins entered, and his father—such was the connexion between him and the smith—motioned him to a seat beside him.

"Where is Nell?" asked the elder son of Vulcan of his wife, his deep, hoarse voice more than usually so.

"She is safe asleep by this time," replied Mrs. Jenkins. "I took the precaution of locking her into her own room."

The smith relapsed into gloomy reverie; but his son addressing him, said—

"I have slain a fine stag, father; but have had a set-to with the gamekeepers. I suppose they'll come after me with a warrant to-morrow, but they won't find me."

"John!" exclaimed Jenkins, abruptly, not taking any notice of what his son had said, "I want money; and *must* have it."

"Well; and how do you propose to get it?"

"Thus," answered the blacksmith, with that species of whisper, which

Macready makes distinct to the gods; "there is a rich man above. I know that he has many valuables about him. He is one of the oppressors of the people—one who riots in luxury, while others far more worthy, starve and rot! One who debauches our wives, sisters, and daughters; shall he live, ha? Would it not be a mere act of justice to slay him?"

"How do you know he is the wretch you have described him?" inquired John, with knitted brows, but perfect composure.

"I went to examine the injuries which his horse has sustained," replied the smith, "and I found this torn letter sticking to the gelding's hoof. You perceive the superscription, although apparently destroyed, is 'Wharton.' He said *that* was his name. Read this."

The smith handed to his son a letter, which was covered with dirt, and much of it torn away; the purport being thus:—

"I have some new ladies at my establishment, and one or two of them would just suit" (here there was a bit rended.) "One of them is about eighteen, rather dark, but her complexion is clear and brilliant. There is another rather younger, who is a fair beauty, and has just arrived from the country. She is very delicate and pretty, but not so tall as the first I mentioned. I know that" (another fracture) "particular; but I think I can suit you now. I enclose my account for the last quarter—£350—which is very moderate, it must be allowed, considering the fine suppers——"

This was all the letter contained, except the signature of "Ann Taylor, —— Street, Haymarket;" the rest being effaced or destroyed; but the matter was evident. It was the communication of a procuress to a confirmed debauchee; and John flinging it away with disgust, exclaimed—

"This man is in the house, then?"

"He is," replied the smith. "Wife, go and hear if Stephen's sleeping."

Mrs. Jenkins departed, and the smith looking earnestly into his son's face, said—

"He must die, John; and then we will leave this place and try our fortunes somewhere else."

"And yet," returned the young man, "I would not murder him in cold blood. Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to kill him in fair fight; but to slit a scoundrel's throat is only fit work for a hangman."

"John," answered Jenkins, "your poor aunt was driven mad by such another miscreant; and it would be doing a service to the human race to destroy such a demon as he must be. I must have money, I repeat; and why not take it from one of the oppressors of the groaning nation?—one who to gratify his lusts would commit crimes far more atrocious than the worst of murders, one who——"

"But, father," interrupted John, "well as he merits death, he is probably one of the aristocracy; and we all know how severely the laws are executed, what springs are set in motion to discover the murderer, and what indefatigable exertions will be made against us where an aristocrat is concerned."

Here Mrs. Jenkins returned.

"Stephen is in bed," she said, "but I don't think he is yet asleep. But look what I have found!"

She held up a manuscript written in bold clear characters, and Jenkins, taking it from his wife, read it aloud. "The world," it began, "is a place where there are many rogues and more fools. The rogues live well on the fools, and the fools starve on their labour."

"Do you mark that?" exclaimed the smith to his son.

John's brow darkened, but he said nothing in reply.

"Now, roguery," ran on the MS., "is only respectable when it is successful; and success is only to be attained by following in the footsteps of others. Those who would be rogues, and succeed, must follow in the beaten track; but they must have cunning and discretion, or they will not make much progress in it, where there are so many struggling to the goal. A wise man eschews all principle; but he makes use of much profession, and should steadily adhere to the party he first attaches himself to, first assuring himself that that party can promote his aims. All parties are the same; Tory, Whig, and Democrat care for nothing in the world but place and influence. The Tory party has the most wealth, as it always will have, and therefore I have supported Toryism uniformly, though I should not care if all my supporters, friends, &c. were at the devil to-morrow. The people *will* be humbugged either by their demagogues or their oppressors; the dogs do not perceive that all legislative enactments, and all popular movements only tend to their own poverty and ruin,—and so I join the ranks of the legitimate oppressors."

"Rascal!" muttered John, between his teeth; "do you think it is this man's?"

"I found it under the chair he was sitting on, together with this parcel. He seems to have a knack of dropping things. I saw him take the parcel out, and lay it beside him, and I suppose he forgot to put it into his pocket again, and pushed it down."

While his wife was thus speaking, the smith had broken the seal of the packet she had given him, and uttered an exclamation as he drew forth a miniature beautifully executed on ivory, and displayed it to the others. They echoed his ejaculation of wonderment; and when he proceeded to look at some letters which had been sealed up in the enclosure with the miniature, he said,

"There can be no doubt. The hand of fate is in this business. The

wretch Wharton is no other than the seducer of my sister. Vengeance! fell vengeance!"

"By heaven, he shall die!" cried John Jenkins in a hoarse voice tremulous with passion, and with eyes of fire, "were he king of England!"

The smith grasped his son's hand so fiercely that had not the bones of that large coarse member been almost as hard as iron, he must have writhed beneath it; but he only returned the terrible pressure, and seizing a hammer near him, cried, "I will go, and dash his foul brains out! Such a miscreant must no longer taint the atmosphere of earth with his breath."

And he was striding away to execute his purpose, when his mother detained him.

"Wait till he sleeps," she said; "he is as powerful as yourself, and armed, I saw, with pistols. I heard him stirring in his room just now."

"I will not wait," returned John, vehemently. "I will rend him limb from limb, though he were a giant."

"Nay, let us wait for an hour," exclaimed the blacksmith. "We will strangle him as he lies asleep; throttling makes no noise. If he were to fire a pistol------"

"And what, if he did?" cried John. "I should not care if all the world knew me to be his executioner; and no one *will* hear. He is a murderer himself---the worst of murderers! He has driven my aunt mad; he has betrayed the interests of the people; he is the foulest libertine that ever breathed; and it were a sin to suffer him to continue in his career of hellish iniquity."

"You are my own son," exclaimed the blacksmith, smiling savagely at the vehemence of the young man. "But let us act with prudence. We must steal into his room by the secret passage. If the worst come to the worst, he can but fire; but I would try first of all to obtain possession of his pistols. Stephen and Nell must not know of this business; indeed, I think they would try to prevent it, if they could."

"Ah, Stephen! I had forgot him. The boy's own father," ejaculated John. "You are right; Nell and Stephen are not like us. Yes, we had better wait."

And the smith and his wife and son here entered into earnest conversation, in which they remained a long time. What they had been saying was partly overheard by one whom they believed to be asleep; but Nell had entertained dark suspicions of her father, and having crept out of bed, she applied her ear to the keyhole when she found that she was fastened in. Her chamber communicated with that occupied by her family, and her sense of hearing preternaturally quick, and much that was spoken being uttered with vehemence, she gathered the chief part of the business. Thus she listened to the first portion of the conference, until the smith proposed to murder his guest; and then with trembling haste

she returned from the door, and clasped her hands together. What was to be done? She would not allow the stranger to be murdered, but how to prevent the deed she could not devise. She was locked in her own room, and she must pass through that in which the others were, in order to reach Wharton. But her window---it was grated, and all her strength was insufficient to remove the iron bars. She was in despair. "God of heaven, direct me!" she cried. A sudden thought flashed on her brain. The wall of her room was not thick, and she conceived that she might break through it with a poker; and then she knew she might descend by a window, and get round to the stranger by the other side of the house. But then the noise she must thus occasion would inevitably be overheard by those in the next room. "The deed will be done before another hour has elapsed," thought Nell, in agony, as again applying her ear to the keyhole she overheard the final arrangement. "How dreadful to contemplate! I will rather perish myself than suffer it." Here an unexpected circumstance occurred.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET PASSAGE---NELL AND HER ADVENTURES---THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION.

THE smithy, like many old houses still in existence, contained secrets which sometimes remained undiscovered by modern tenants for years,---accident alone revealing trap-doors and hidden panels, which had served the purposes of concealment during the civil wars, at about which time the dwelling was built, as well as in after periods. The apartment occupied by Nell was in shape similar to that in which Wharton was left, but not so large by a considerable deal. The walls were damp, and had been awkwardly repaired in some places, presenting a heterogeneous mixture of colours---old, soiled paper, with pitch to stick it on as well as to exclude the wet, but effecting the latter object only partially. The storm of the early part of the evening had broken the solitary window of the chamber, and Nell had stuffed sundry articles of apparel in the shattered panes; but as the wind, before it sunk into quiescence, made some expiring efforts, a violent gust blew open the casement, and, to the astonishment of Nell, she observed that it shook a portion of what she had always conceived to be the solid wall---some portion of the masonry and woodwork probably having given way---just where she had thought of breaking through it with a poker. It was there covered with a mass of brown paper, and stepping to the spot where the vibration had been so visible, she pushed against that part, and it yielded slowly to the pressure of her hand. An aperture then appeared, large enough for her body to pass through, and hailing this strange discovery as providential, she hesitated

not to avail herself of it. Quitting her room, she groped her way through a long, winding passage, when she came to a flight of stairs; ascending which, she found there was a trap-door fastened on the other side, but the boards were very crazy, and she doubted not that they might easily be broken through. However, she reflected that it was probable some other part of the building was to be reached by the secret passage, and descending the stairs, she paused a moment to consider what next to do. It was so dark she could distinguish nothing by sight, but, trusting to the other outward sense, she felt along the walls which apparently bounded the passage until she found an iron gate. This with some difficulty she opened, and ascended another flight of steps.

Perfectly aware of the ins and outs of the old building, though she had previously been in ignorance of this passage, she knew that she must now be near the stranger's apartment; but how to get to it was the difficulty. Her hands again were put in requisition, but she could feel nothing but masonry at the top of the steps.

"I must try the trap-door!" she thought. "O, I must be quick! I know not how long I have been exploring this place!"

Who, indeed, can measure time, or describe its nature, when an hour under some circumstances appears a century?

Nell was under the necessity of deciding quickly, and was on the point of descending, when it struck her that she could hear somebody stirring at a short distance from her on one side. She listened eagerly. Yes, she was certain she heard somebody within a few feet of the spot where she remained. Again she groped with her hands, and at length discovered a large piece of metal, similar to the handle of a door, attached to the wall. She pulled it with all her strength, and a door, composed of brickwork on one side, opened, and she found a niche large enough for a person to stand in. The heavy breathing of some one now became distinctly audible, and once more feeling about her, certain that she was in the immediate vicinity of the very room that she wanted to reach, she pushed against something, which gave way, and found herself in the presence of the man whose life she was there to save.

The interview which succeeded has been already narrated; and it is now necessary to follow the girl after she had quitted Wharton. In her haste to reach the trap-door, through which she intended to force a passage for the escape of the stranger, she precipitated herself down the steps, and unintentionally, in an effort to save herself from falling, shut the door of brickwork after her. She lay stunned and senseless for a minute at the bottom of the steps; but recovering, hastened along the passage, her head whirling, and her brain confused from the effects of her fall. Not having a light, it was no wonder, under such circumstances, that she lost her way, and ere she was aware of it, found herself at the secret panel, which opened into her own room. Hastily retread-

ing her footsteps, she was proceeding towards the trap-door, without deviation, when a stream of light dazzled her eyes, and she heard voices.

Merciful Heaven! Her father, mother and brother, one armed with a hammer, another with a musket, and the third with a cleaver, were descending by the trap-door into the passage. She rushed forwards, stifling a cry of horror, and hoping that she might yet reach Wharton undiscovered; but her eagerness again defeated her wishes, and she stumbled and fell, though the soft clay of which the ground was composed, luckily prevented the others from hearing her fall.

It was now too late to pass the intending murderers. The smith had actually descended, John was in the middle of the steps, and his mother was preparing to follow. Again, with difficulty suppressing the scream of agonized dismay which rose to her lips, Nell pressed her hands to her burning brow, and breathed a prayer to Heaven to prevent the commission of the dreadful deed which was contemplated by her nearest relatives; but she could only hope that the stranger, alarmed by her protracted absence, would quit his room by the usual door and fly.

And what course had he really pursued? After Nell had left him, he stood in the centre of the apartment, not a muscle of his face, not a nerve of his powerful frame in agitation, examining the priming of his pistols, as if about to prepare himself for a shot in a shooting gallery. Rapid thoughts darted like lightning through his brain, but he maintained the same wonderful composure, and only seized a huge poker to defend himself in case of need, a proud and scornful smile playing for an instant on his upper lip. He was a master of the weapon in his possession, and was convinced that the balls contained in the pistols would rid him of two of his foes.

"Shall I wait where I am, or not?" he muttered. "Perhaps I had better trust to the girl. I am certain she is faithful. Ah! I think I heard a noise, then;---she is returning. No;---what can detain her?"

A minute,---one, two, three minutes; and now there *is* a noise. Hark! a step---a ponderous, but stealthy step,---and another, a trifle lighter and more elastic, and now a last. The statesman moved not. What a strange scene it was! There he stood, like a statue, one hand grasping the immense poker, the other raised to a level with his chest, and with a pistol in it, calm, cold, deadly determination in his dark and splendid eye, and upon his high, broad, haughty brow, as a figure entered by the same means Nell had previously employed---the form of a Hercules. He spoke not; the only sound proceeding directly or indirectly from him was the clicking of the lock of the pistol.

"Ha!" cried the smith, who had been the first one to enter, and abruptly pausing, "he is prepared."

"Let me get at him!" exclaimed another deep voice.

The sharp report of a pistol succeeded that speech, but it was unaccompanied by the ringing sound which follows when a ball leaves the barrel.

"Damnation!" said Wharton, who had fired, but too late discovered that the bullet had not been inserted. He had still another pistol, however, and this he produced in a single instant, just as the blacksmith made a rush upon him.

Fortunately, most fortunately for Jenkins he slipped, and the ball whizzing from the statesman's weapon passed within a hair's breadth of him, and actually grazed the cheek of John, who was hastening to attack the resolute man, and covered it with his blood.

"Come on!" exclaimed Wharton, in his clear, trumpet-like voice, which sounded as passionlessly commanding as when he enchained the attention of listening senates, his stature appearing to increase, and the large, luminous orbs beneath his stern brow glowing with fearful light. It was the lion in the confidence of strength, and in the high consciousness of courage attacked by fierce enemies, of a like kind, but different species. Jenkins raised his weighty hammer, and sprang on him like a tiger; but his bulk was great, and impeded his agility; while Wharton, though robust, being younger, was more rapid in his movements, and avoiding the tremendous blow which the smith aimed at him, easily managed to elude his gripe, and dealt him a side-stroke with his pistol which stunned him for an instant as it fell upon his face. The poker Wharton reserved for the athletic John, who looked the model of a gladiator panting for the destruction of an antagonist, and as the tall fellow approached him, he struck at his head with such force, that he almost beat down the guard which John, perceiving his intention, raised with a large cleaver. Another instant, and the younger Jenkins had closed with the statesman. Not a word was spoken on either side; and with bloodshot eyes glaring like a wild beast's, John attempted to bear down his opponent, who, had he not been a giant in bone and sinew, must have yielded to the might opposed to him; but by a desperate effort Wharton succeeded in releasing himself from his adversary's clutches, and was making a spring for the door, feeling that he must be overpowered in the unequal contest, as the smith had recovered, and was again about to attack him, when the report of a gun was heard---and then a scream, and another struggle at the end of the room.---A bullet came within a foot of Wharton's head; and turning his eyes toward the picture whence the sound proceeded, he beheld Mrs. Jenkins striving to disengage herself from the arms of Nell.

"Ah!" he thought, "these devils would kill that poor girl, if I left her to them!"

And something of the high and chivalrous nature of a long and uninterrupted line of distinguished ancestors firing the generous spark still

left within that mighty heart, he rushed to Nell's assistance, and with a blow felled Mrs. Jenkins to the ground.

"O fly, fly!" exclaimed the young girl: but flight was impossible.

Another awful struggle for life! What blows were aimed and parried by those three desperate combatants! How the eyes of Jenkins and his son glared with horrible, with vindictive hate, and how undauntedly the statesman stood his ground, although attacked at once by two of the powerfullest men alive!

But now Jenkins and John had succeeded in pinioning the arms of Wharton, notwithstanding the terrific efforts he made to break from them, but when they had done so, it required all their united exertions to hold him.

At this juncture, while Mrs. Jenkins, having arisen, and overpowered the attempts of Nell to withhold her, was preparing to aim at Wharton with the butt end of the gun (she having before fired, and Nell having knocked up the musket), an unhoped-for succour to the statesman arrived. The door he had locked, but it was burst open, and a light, elastic frame sprang forwards, almost in a state of nudity, and interposed between the blow which the muscular wife of the blacksmith was just aiming at Wharton. Yes, another instant, and that man, ordained from the qualities of his lofty intellect to rule the destinies of England and of the world, would have fallen the victim of midnight assassins, when the hand of young Stephen dashed away the murderous weapon from the grasp of the female fiend, and seizing John Jenkins, he ejaculated---

"What would you do?"

"Hold off your hands, or by ------ I'll kill *you* too!" cried John, ferociously.

With a concentrated effort of his remaining strength, Wharton now succeeded in extricating himself from his adversaries---impeded as one of them was by his youthful ally, who was as valuable as many a sturdy fellow of double his age would have proved, from his singular activity and address---and catching up the poker, which he had dropped, the contest remained more than ever undecided. Stephen was hurled away by John, but he regained his feet in an instant, and now stood side by side with Wharton.

"They shall have my life before they take yours thus, my lord," he exclaimed.

For the last time the struggle was renewed; but the statesman was retiring with his face to his foes, by the door Stephen had broken through, that courageous lad still close to him.

"On him," shouted Jenkins, "we'll dash his cursed brains out now." But, even as the words left his lips, there was a great crash below, and the sound of many voices, and the tramping of feet. "This way, this way," was vociferated by several persons ascending the stairs. Uttering

an oath, the smith retreated. "There are a dozen men coming up the stairs!" he cried, and made for the opening by the side of the picture, unwillingly accompanied by his wife and son.

Scarcely had they disappeared, and closed the means of their escape behind them, when a number of men, armed with guns and bludgeons, appeared. "Let there be a guard below," said one of them, "come along." This order had scarcely been obeyed, when there was a groan and a fall. "They are off---they are off!" was the exclamation. Immediately the men who were entering the apartment where the recent events had taken place, hastened to intercept the fugitives, but it was too late. Favoured by the darkness of the night, having killed one man who dared to oppose their egress, the smith and his wife and son---having traversed the secret passage and passed through the trap-door---contrived to elude pursuit.

The first act of Wharton, as soon as he was safe from the fury of the baffled assassins, was to grasp the hand of Stephen. "You have saved my life, young man," he said. "From henceforth you shall be to me as a son." He then hastened to ascertain that Nell had not sustained any material injuries, and found her sitting on the floor, as white as a sheet, and every limb trembling like an aspen leaf.

Stephen clasped her in his arms and cried, "Oh, you are not hurt, dear Nell, you are not hurt?"

"No, no---not in the body," was the reply; "but the mind can never recover."

Several persons now re-entered the room, and the statesman addressing one of them said, "My friends---for I feel that you are so---you have rendered me timely aid. There has been an atrocious attempt to assassinate me, which but for this boy and this girl must have been successful. I am Lord Wharton, one of the ministers of state."

"Oh, my lord," said a voice, "I know your lordship well. I am very glad that you have escaped safe and unhurt."

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAVELLERS—THE MANIAC, HER RHAPSODIES AND HER MYSTIC THEORY.

It was long past midnight, and immense volumes of cloud and vapour were rolling rapidly over the face of the heavens, and through that denseness of mist the pale beams of the moon struggled, and tinged them with strange and fleeting hues as they closed around her disk, when a carriage drawn by four horses was passing through a road flanked by a little forest of trees, and hills, which rose in a nearly perpendicular form to a great height, forming an amphitheatre beyond.

There were two persons within the carriage, a man in the prime of life, and a young boy, who was asleep. The former was a slight, delicate-looking person, somewhat below the ordinary height, with fair hair slightly mingled with grey, which had partially deserted his temples---temples so transparent that they showed every vein beneath---a large, soft, melancholy eye, thoughtful and pensive at once, a straight small nose, a mouth almost womanly in its beauty and sweetness, and a forehead of exquisite formation, wide though not very high, such as Milton's is represented, indelibly impressed with the stamp of fine intellect and imagination. His form was boyish, although he must have been approaching towards forty, yet it combined grace and dignity, and his dress was plain and dark; but there could be no mistaking him for any but one of high birth and courteous manners---one of those true, pure English gentlemen, who, without foreign affectation, are all that the most fastidious can desire in the amenities of society, and yet despise all falsehood and flattery, as much as they love honour, sincerity, and incorruptible integrity of heart.

The boy was very young, it has been observed; yet there were slight lines of thought visible on his smooth but splendid brow, and his features, which were like his companion's, but promising to be larger and more masculine, were all finely moulded, while his form, very tall for his age, would probably become most vigorous and commanding. He was, indeed, a singular resemblance of the elder personage, who gazed upon him as he slept with that watchful tenderness, and proud fond aspect which only a parent's face can wear. The carriage continued to proceed at a tolerably brisk rate, while the father watched the slumbers of the son.

"I wish," he murmured, "that he were more like his mother, though he *is* like her sometimes. His eyes resemble hers in their expression, though they are not so dark. What a noble-looking fellow he is! Poor

boy! he has outgrown his strength. He gets his stature from his mother's family."

Relapsing into silent meditation, the looks of that man who had displayed such feminine tenderness in his regards while fixed upon the boy, now wandered to the firmament, and now again to that calm, happy, and eloquent countenance, glorious as the youthful Apollo of some old Grecian sculptor, and he thought---

"Marvellous are all the works of Heaven! Yet nothing is so radiant and divine as the human face! When we behold the starry vault, and the holy Moon gliding through it with such majestic grace, as if in truth she were the Queen of those countless orbs, we exclaim---Where is the hand that guides these planets through the ethereal space? Where are the pillars which support this grand and eternal dome? Where is the Power which fashioned it so perfectly? But turning to a little breathing dust, scarcely occupying the room of an atom in the infinity of the universe, when we see the mighty passions, the gigantic aspirations, the sorrows, the joys, the feelings which it mirrors, we ask ourselves, What is the mystery of this? Where is the secret spirit which causes these sublime emotions---that spirit, now with the immortal measuring the splendid worlds above, now penetrating into its own vast secrets; which are in some respects almost as unfathomable in their immensity as the mind of God. We know nothing of ourselves: the soul of man could it be demonstrated, could its enigmas be solved, its darkness made light, would open to us the invisible gates which close upon us when we soar to heaven; for all that is unknown is in the mind itself. Great Spirit! I worship thee in the knowledge---limited as it is---of my own strange incomprehensibility! For if I cannot know the greatness of my own soul, nor define its boundaries, nor determine its powers and essence, what must Thou be from whom myriads of minds more lofty than this which now bends in adoration before thee have emanated! The spirits of thy eternity are contemplating thy glory, and are humbled into nothingness when they compare themselves with Thee. Stupendous God! What a thing it is to think on thy omnipresent being, to contemplate Thee in the immutability of thy divine essence for ever and ever, while others are changing and transitory, save those which are sustained by thy love. We look back and are lost in the immortality behind! No beginning! How inconceivable! yet how irrefragrably true! We look forward, and there is the same unutterable eternity. Mystery of mysteries! Thought transcending infinity! I am a worm in my earth, in my spirit how everlasting!"

From these sublime heights of serene contemplation, the traveller descended to his own gentle and warm affections, his sorrows, his joys. How inseparable in the mind of the creature is the Creator with himself!

"My angel wife!" he said, in a low voice, a tear coursing down his pale cheek. "How happy were we! Angels, indeed, were never more so, while it pleased the All-wise to let me keep thee. Thou mayst be looking down upon me and our son even now! Dear Seraph! Is he not beautiful? Look how sweetly he sleeps; he is dreaming perhaps of those sweet worlds above the stars, where sorrow never enters, and peace and love are unfading; where we, through the mercy and beneficence of that great Being who created all, may meet to part no more, breathe the ambrosial atmosphere, and hear celestial harmonies. Oh, ask our common Father to bless our boy, dear love!"

In the fervour of that fond invocation, he had raised his tones, and with clasped hands and parted lips, looked the very image of one of the Saints drawn by the inspired hand of Raffaelle, when his attention was arrested on a sudden by a low, wild dirge, sung in a strange, musical voice.

The carriage was stopped by a tree which the late tempest had uprooted, and which lay in the middle of the road; and during the singular scene which succeeded, the post-boys did not attempt to move their horses. The traveller now perceived a female sitting on the fallen tree, her long hair drenched with the rain that had fallen, streaming in tangled and dishevelled masses over her form, while she sang this wild ballad:—

There are dreams of Joy, young Angel!
  Did you ever dream them when
I saw you as a mortal?
  There are dreams of bliss 'mong men.—

Visions of passionate beauty
  Intense, and like the light
Of the cold stars that waken
  In the dark and dreary night.

But, oh! this earth hath madness,
  And its visions melt away,
Like the moonlight from the river,
  Like the sunshine from the day.

A brighter morning scatters
  All odours on the brain,
A darker midnight sharpens
  The frenzy of our pain.

"Ah!" added the minstrel, "all is night! Never believe there is a day! 'Tis a false glare, and shines but to deceive!"

"Poor creature!" exclaimed the traveller. "I must not suffer her to remain here. I will get out and speak to her." But ere he could execute his benevolent intention, the female arose and advanced to him.

She was of great stature, and, though extremely thin, her form retained symmetry scarcely to be surpassed. Her hair was long and dark---a sort of golden black, but streaked prematurely with grey. She was apparently about the same age as the gentleman in the carriage, and her face, which must once have been very lovely, and still retained traces of surpassing sweetness, was soiled and mournful, yet it had a smile on it. "A cold night, stranger," she said, gazing earnestly into the traveller's face. "A cold night, and a wet one! yet, perhaps, you do not feel like me, for I am thinly clad. Shall I sing to you? I used to love music, for I have heard it is God's breath; it soothes the heart like the soft gale of summer. But, no, I can't sing now; I am hoarse, and my chest pains me. I'll tell you a story.---Oh, my memory fails me! My soul is a cracked instrument, and will not produce sounds of harmony now."

"Poor thing! poor, poor thing!" cried the gentleman, sensibly affected.

"That's a sweet child," continued the female, in her rambling way, looking at the sleeping boy; "but do not love him too much, or Heaven will be angry. I had a child once as fair as he is, but I don't know where he is gone. Every flower departs from me. I hope he is gone up there," pointing to the stars. "There is no safety except in heaven. And yet you know, sir, angels have fallen. Can you tell me why they fell? I think it must have been that they went mad, as I did once, and worshipped mortals. Never love a mortal, if you would be happy; all are false!"

"Why are you out such a night as this is?" inquired the traveller kindly and commiseratingly of the hapless creature, who appeared astonished at the question.

"I love the rain, and the thunder and lightning," she replied; "for then I ride upon the blast, and I sing and shout merrily. The great universe is my home, and the black vault my roof. I go up to the distant stars, and see such wondrous sights. There is one star I visit, brighter than all the rest. It is called the star of love: and they don't fall there. You may see in that pure world blue mountains and golden rivers, and they sing and dance with the fairies. O, it is pleasant to glide down one of the musical streams for ever gushing with song and tender syllables. I have a boat---such a boat---made of pearl and ivory. Its wings are of light, and its oars of precious ore. And continually Love whispers through its transparent sails, and fills them with perfumes never smelt in Araby. Should you not like to visit that exquisite star?"

While the maniac went on in her rambling incoherent strain, the young boy in the carriage awoke, and opening his bright eyes, looked about him amazed.

"His eyes are like those that betrayed me!" exclaimed the mad woman, fixing her glittering orbs on his. "They are splendid eyes, but

as false as Hell. Trust not that boy! I know one that he resembles. Ah me! I trusted, and I sunk---you see what I am become. But," she added, with flashing face, and her tall form erect and haughty---"there is vengeance in store for him. There is a snake within his heart, and it winds and winds around it, and eats away health, and life and hope. They are all gone from me! I sent him that; it came from the black depths below the earth. But he will not live on as I do, with ten thousand serpents hissing around my brain and glaring into my soul with their red eyes. Poor Harriet lives on desolation." The last sentence was uttered in her usual sweet and plaintive voice, and she sighed deeply.

"She does, indeed!" murmured the gentleman to himself. "Reginald,," (addressing the youth) "we must take this unhappy being home with us, and see what we can do for her. Come into the carriage," he said to the maniac, regardless of her dripping clothes.

Mechanically the female obeyed; and the carriage was turned into another road, and rolled onwards.

"And is this madness, my father?" exclaimed the young Reginald, after having taken an earnest survey of the wretched Harriet's worn and wasted aspect. "I had always pictured to myself something much more dreadful. I do not see the rolling eye-balls and the distorted features, and the frantic violence I should have expected."

"My son, the degrees of insanity are as many as its moods. In lucid intervals I have seen these unfortunate maniacs as calm and collected as you and I are."

"I am not mad!" cried Harriet, abruptly. "I'll tell you what madness is. It is that state of mind when all is quite forgotten save the *one* object. You shall hear laughter and screams of mirth---you shall see smiles, gay smiles from the broken-hearted. That's madness. Pray can you tell me what reason is, sir? Can you prove to me reason does not go mad, or that it *is*?"

The traveller was startled at the manner and rationality of poor Harriet, and was preparing to reply, when she ejaculated,

"It was a summer's night, when I saw Love and Death embrace. And what think you was born of their strange passion? Madness! That was a wild conceit. Now I'll explain it to you. But you must promise never to reveal it, for it was a Spirit that whispered me thus:---'Before Time was, Love existed; and it was very fair, but unimpassioned. From Love came Life, as Love came from God, who is Love. Now, can you believe that Love is subject to Death, when Life itself sprung from it? Impossible! But Death *is:* how, then, came Death? What is he? Oh, he is a false wretch, with a thin, shivering hand, and white hair, and cold, icy heart, but he is very beautiful. Look you, Death grew out of the Earth, *because the Earth would not love.* Then Death begot Hate; yet when he saw the Angel Life, he did love, as never aught loved

before. It was madness in him; but he did so. So enamoured was he of his adored, that he forgot he had caused Hate to be; and fell Hate came up between them; and then his brain grew dizzy and he sickened. So Madness was begotten; and there *will* be madness, till Love triumphs over Hate, and God smiles on his well-beloved again!"

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAVERS HOUSE---THE CHARACTER OF A PATRIOT---LIFE OF TRAVERS.

"WHAT think you of the maniac's theory, Reginald?" asked the boy's father, sadly, when Harriet had ended her singular rhapsody---for he was one who did not think it necessary to bring up a child in ignorance of the nature Heaven has given us, and even if he had done so, the inquiring mind of his son would have elicited the truth.

The boy put his finger to his forehead, and thought for the space of a minute. "Madness may sometimes speak great truths," he replied. "Was there not once a superstition that mad persons were prophets?"

"So it should seem."

"Why does God make mortals mad, dear father, effacing his image from their souls, and making that wonderful emanation of Himself all chaos and confusion?"

"It is a mysterious visitation; but probably to show us what unbridled passion may come to, and how glorious a thing is the common reason of mankind."

"I was fancying," said Reginald, with some hesitation, "that it might be for *this* reason, such an infliction is sent among us; namely, that from excess of anguish madness being born, and so shutting out the temporal, from it might proceed words dropped from the heavens upon the poor creature's brain, containing something eternal. For the mad do not live in time; the present is nothing to them. So madness may be an instrument for gathering us to Heaven. There may be inspiration in it."

"Well, Reginald," replied the father of that thoughtful boy, who had numbered but ten years, with a smile of gratified pride and paternal love, "certainly, the illusions of insanity have brought immortal truths to light. But we have arrived at the park, I see. There is the old house of the Trayers's yonder."

The travellers had arrived at a spacious park, the trees of which were extremely ancient; and at some distance from the entrance was a mansion of considerable size, which had formerly been castellated, but the fortifications had been almost entirely destroyed, and the moat was dry, while the drawbridge and huge portcullis, which had defended the fort in former times, were both removed. The building was extensive and its architecture somewhat heterogeneous; but the old gothic order in which

it was originally built, still prevailed over the rest. As they stopped at the lodge-gate there was a vehement barking, proceeding from two or three dogs chained at a short distance, and immediately a venerable porter made his appearance and cried, with sincere fervour,

"God bless you, sir! God bless you, master Reginald. We have been expecting your honours a long time." So saying he threw the gates wide open, and the carriage proceeded onwards.

What a world of feelings are excited by the aspect of old familiar faces, by the solitudes we have loved from infancy, by sights and sounds all redolent of home! Here is the tree which we used to climb when little rosy urchins, with careless hearts and joyous faces, before the cold winters of experience had frozen one well-spring in our bosoms; here is the pond into which we first ventured with trembling hesitation, and here are the stones, the plants, the flowers with which we amused our vacant minutes in luxurious idleness, forming fantastic plans for the future, never to be realized. Home! early home! What magic associations are evoked by that word of love, of hope, of joy; the love buried in the tomb, the hope drooping in the dust, the joy departed, never, never to return.

Such were the unembodied thoughts of the proprietor of that stately mansion, as he approached it once more, after an absence of many months. He was one of those rare and fine spirits, whom sorrow had not soured, whom disappointment had not steeled, whom misery had not made indifferent to things that he cherished in his youth; but he regarded all around him with chastened melancholy, which indeed was but little removed from cheerfulness. There he had wandered with a beloved wife, cut off in the blossom of her days, and tasted raptures which never have been accurately, which cannot be adequately described—raptures which linger in the heart of hearts, like a strain of divine music heard in the dreams of enthusiastic boyhood; and there he had breathed impassioned accents of poetry, and faith, and tenderness. Alas for the heart exquisitively sensitive to joy! it bathes itself for a few brief moments in the waters where the beatified are wont to lave themselves, and then---and then---ice covers all.

The history of the widower may be told in few words.

> "—— It is a common tale,
> An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
> A tale of silent suffering."

His family was among the noblest in the land, and in fact he was entitled to a dormant peerage, which he neglected to take up. What could add to the nobility of such a man? Early in life he entered on his political career, having previously distinguished himself at the University, and about the same time married a beautiful, accomplished and intellectual woman, to whom he was related.

Ada Wharton, the daughter of an Irish peer, was his first cousin, the daughter of his mother's sister, and loved him with a devotion equal to that he felt for her. For his sake she had rejected the most princely alliances, and was perfectly content and happy to be without many of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed; for at that time Wharton Travers---as her husband may henceforth be called,---had not succeeded to the competent fortune which he possessed at the time our story commences. Mrs. Travers had two brothers, both of whom the reader will know more of than he does at present,---and one of them, a rising young diplomatist, was somewhat angry that his sister refused the alliance offered to her by the Duke of ------, who was an importunate suitor, and might have pushed his interests in the cabinet. Travers, however, soon after his marriage, made a brilliant speech on an important question in the Lower House, and was loaded with honours and applause; and, although he rejected all place and party power, his influence in the Commons became very great. If any measure were proposed, the opinion of Travers, the most disinterested politician among the representatives of the nation, was eagerly inquired and canvassed; and he frequently manifested his patriotism and virtue by voting in diametrical opposition to his own immediate interests. He had become a writer in one of the leading periodicals of the day, and his house was thronged by the most celebrated contemporary political literary characters, while the simplicity and dignity of his manners, and his unostentatious mode of life, gained him the esteem and admiration of all parties.

Moderate in his views, far-sighted in his course of action, above all intimidation, obloquy, bribery and adulation, this great and good young man, who, instead of indulging in pleasure and dissipation, or seeking his own aggrandisement, devoted himself to study and domestic felicity, undazzled by the brilliant fame he had achieved, might have proved one of the brightest ornaments of England and human nature, but for an unexpected calamity, which overpowered him with sorrow and desolation of heart.

His wife—his angel wife was taken from him. In the very hour she made him a father, and he clasped his lovely infant with proud affection to his heart, she died. He did not give way to despair, he did not upbraid Heaven for visiting him with his unmerited bereavement: no, he was a philosopher in the true sense of the word. A Christian, not a bigot, without making his religion one of cold performance of moral duties, a man---a brave, true-spirited man, whose heroism was his fortitude---that noblest of all courage---gentle, and firm and undeviating in principle, without the coldness and apathy of the Stoic, he could not but rise superior to calamity. Yet he abandoned the idea of continuing his splendid political career, convinced that his health, which had always been delicate, could not now sustain the intensity of continuous thought he was wont to give

to every subject connected with his parliamentary duties, she from whom he drew life and energy being gone. Grief, however loftily sustained, must undermine the strength, and enfeeble the intellectual powers. Still he determined to occupy his mind as much as possible, and proceeding at once to the Continent, he took his child with him, and wandered over the greater part of continental Europe.

Long was he missed by the gallant little phalanx of true patriots in the House which he had left; but he was not regretted by the masses as he ought to have been; for he was not a democrat, he made no professions, he would not enlist either under the banners of aristocracy, or seek the popularity of a mob orator. His brother-in-law had now attained a great reputation, and his power and brilliancy of intellect attracted more universal attention and elicited more fervent applause, than the quiet enduring enthusiasm, the sustained stability, the moderation and philosophical acuteness of Travers. The only modern statesman who resembles him is the illustrious Guizot---would that there were a few in England like him!

For three years the widower remained abroad, when he was recalled to his native country by the dangerous illness of the near relative from whom he inherited the estate at which we now find him. After this period, he repaired once more to the Continent, in better health than formerly, and with more energy and cheerfulness. His misery which had been so deep and acute, became slowly softened by his genuine piety and religion into resignation, and he now busied himself in superintending various literary works, for which he consulted men of learning and ability, and forming plans for the education of his son. Reginald Travers had received the elements of his knowledge in Germany, his father personally assisting the tutor he had selected to instruct him; and the child early gave indications of fine intellect and sensibility. A second time, after a long interval, Travers returned to England, and visited the metropolis. He was now the owner of the entailed estates of his ancestors, which though not large were amply sufficient for his moderate desires; and he had not been very long in his mother country at the time when he arrived at his principal residence, Travers House, where he was at this time in expectation of his brother-in-law and cousin, Lord Wharton, ---whose identity is probably by this time concluded---visiting him.

It was whispered in political circles that the object of Wharton's visit to Travers was to induce him to take an active part in the administration of affairs, for with the exception of that consummate statesman himself, the ministry was lamentably deficient in ability, and had a vigorous opposition to contend with, while it was little trusted by the nation. Two more opposite characters than Lord Wharton and Mr. Travers can hardly be conceived. Equal in point of understanding, equal in rank, age and acquirements, or nearly so, the mind of Travers was so simple, and his

manners so devoid of everything artificial and constrained, that no one felt ill at ease with him, while Wharton on the contrary was often meretricious in his tastes, his spirit was naturally haughty and overbearing, and his behaviour, even to those who were of powerful influence in the state, marked by sarcasm and stern arrogance, while he was at no pains to conceal his contemptuous indifference toward those who were of a subordinate rank in society. Yet when he had particular views to further, none could be more fascinating, none more complaisant, easy and affable, than the proud Irish Peer, who virtually swayed the destinies of the kingdom.

Travers was uniformly the same. Mild and kind to his inferiors, he mingled with those in his own sphere, as if he did not possess the fine cultivated mind he did, and his opinions and learning he scrupulously kept to himself, unless they could conduce to the amusement and pleasure of others. Still he was not what is usually called popular. He must be known to be appreciated, and his goodness was not on the surface, like that of so many of his compeers. A remarkable faculty in him was that he could converse with all persons with perfect fluency. Now you might hear him discussing some knotty point of statistics with a minister of state, now elucidating some abstract theory with a philosopher, now giving attention to the problems of some man of high scientific attainments, or discussing a mooted point with a scholar, and now arguing tolerantly and profoundly with a theologian. The poet, the romance-writer, the antiquarian, the historian, the man of business, all by turns found him an intelligent and well-informed companion, while those undistinguished by wit, learning, and science were equally delighted with his kindliness, sense and wisdom.

Yet this extraordinary versatility was so singularly unobtrusive, that men of inferior acquirements frequently acquired a greater reputation than his. O, the humbug and the hollowness of pretension and fashion! If we had but a hundred such men in Britain, perhaps we should not be what we are now---vilely oppressed by knaves, and unable to redress our wrongs, from the stupidity and ignorance of those who are content to grumble and to drudge on like their fathers. Where is philanthropy, where patriotism and philosophy? Howard, Hampden, Newton! ye have left but little of your glory and goodness behind. The world is wrapt in selfishness, and does not perceive that the only true wisdom is the search for Truth, and the immediate application of it, when found, to ourselves and others. Such talk as there is too! such display of sciolism, infatuation and---heartlessness!

The object of Travers's existence was to benefit all men. He had no commiseration for vice, yet pitied the vicious, and endeavoured to draw them away from their illicit pleasures; but his brother-in-law saw no reason why we should interfere with other men's affairs. "Let the world

jog on as it likes," he said, in a witty and memorable repartee, adding in verse---

> "We drink—wench—then, if what our churchmen tell
> Be true, we die; and sup and curse in H—ll!

Such man will ever be; and until you can change his nature, how Quixotic to hope for reformation!" There are many very clever fellows who adopt this philosophy. But Travers had more faith in man, as who has not, within whose bosom the divine spark is not extinguished? He was eloquent against oppression, yet he bore no personal ill-feeling against oppressors. Sometimes his enemies, ignorant of his great principles, misinterpreted his moderation, and construed it into a wish to ingratiate himself with them. And it was only in his most indignant rejection of their insulting overtures, when some glittering bauble was offered to him in order to secure his support of iniquitous measures, and to induce him to wield his powerful pen in the advocation of oligarchy and monopoly, and of that disgraceful corruption *openly* practised antecedent to the Reform Bill, that they began to see into his true motives, and to respect what they compelled themselves to contest. Blessings followed in his steps, and they were not mingled with taunts and reproaches at pledges unredeemed and principles compromised, nor was he encountered with the tears and groans of those he had promised to befriend. Such is a feeble sketch of Wharton Travers, which has extended to a greater length than was at first intended, but it is one which all would do well to copy; for although he may have had weaknesses and imperfections, there never lived a nobler spirit "upon this tide of Time."

Arriving before the mansion already described, he gave orders to a respectable female servant, who was at the head of his household, to take care of the poor maniac he had brought with him, and not suffer her to be left alone; and then alighting, proceeded with his son, followed by the murmured benedictions of his domestics, for all of whom he had a kind word or a smile, into a spacious apartment, from which he entered a library, where a fire had been prepared.

There were collected the works of the great philosophers, the poets, the historians, of ancient and modern times. There were few works of a trifling character; but the names of Fielding, Cervantes, and Le Sage were conspicuous in the bookcase. At that period there were very few good novels in existence, a circumstance mainly attributable to the fact that men of superior abilities devoted themselves exclusively as authors to the higher walks of literature, conceiving that thought and study were incompatible with fiction. The examples of Fielding and Scott have given an impetus to our romantic department of letters, to which is owing the immense inundations of good and clever works of this description with which our country at present abounds.

Travers and his son seated themselves before the blazing fire, and helped themselves to tea and coffee; but they had not been long so occupied ere there was a bustle in the hall, and presently the door was thrown open, and Lord Wharton announced. "My dear brother!" exclaimed Travers, rising and taking his guest by the hand; "you are welcome here. You have not seen Reginald, for a long time!"

"What a fine fellow he is grown!" cried the peer. "Well, Travers, you are looking better than I ever remember to have seen you. Hang it! after all, your constitution is better than mine, which has been so impaired by bad habits. Reginald though does not seem very strong. He studies too much, and doesn't run about enough."

"He will be more in the air here in the country," replied Travers. "I am very glad to see you once more at this old place."

"I am extremely fortunate to be here at all," returned Lord Wharton, "without a hole through my heart. Come, I will take a cup of your coffee, and relate the wild adventures which have befallen me within the last few hours. Reginald may make a book of them---for, I believe, he writes tales."

The peer then proceeded to narrate the events which occurred at the smithy, with as much succinctness as possible, and when he had brought them down to the time when we left him, concluded in these words---

"I found that your servant Harris was among those to whose opportune arrival I must attribute my ultimate escape from the ruffians who would have assassinated me. Harris, having furnished me with a horse, conducted me hither; but he wanted sadly to have taken into custody the young fellow whom I told you I intend to make my secretary (I have strange and unaccountable whims sometimes, you know); but at my intercession he allowed him to be at large. It seems the lad was engaged in an affray with your gamekeepers a few hours ago in the park. I am certain he has not been often on such poaching expeditions, and equally convinced was I that you would not prosecute him for his depredations, after the essential service he had rendered me. Shakspeare, you know, your favourite Shakspeare, was guilty of similar indiscretion."

"Certainly, after the important aid he gave to you, I would not on any account injure him," replied Travers; "but the girl---what became of her?"

"O, the blacksmith's daughter and my future secretary are both of them gone to a neighbour's for the present, and will call on me to-morrow. I must get a situation for the girl---send her to school, perhaps, and have her educated for a nursery governess. By the time she is competent for such a situation, I may possibly have children of my own. And now, my dear Travers, as it is advancing into the morning, I will wish you peaceful slumbers, if you think of imitating the example I intend to set

you. I am no great sleeper; but I feel tired with all that has occurred to me within the last few hours."

"I will show you your chamber. I gave directions to my housekeeper to prepare your bed, though you left it uncertain whether you would be able to come to me for some days."

With these words, Travers conducted his brother-in-law up a flight of stairs, terminating in an extensive gallery hung with pictures, and winding round several passages, stopped before the door of an apartment, in which a fire was burning.

"This is your old chamber, Wharton," said Travers, "I dare say you have spent quieter nights in it, and obtained calmer and more undisturbed repose, than since you have risen to greatness."

"Very likely," answered the statesman. "The plague of what you are pleased to call greatness is that something is continually at work within the brain, even in sleep. Yet, for all that, I manage to sleep tolerably well."

Having shaken hands once more, the Peer and his host parted, and the latter returned to the room in which he had been previously sitting. There he found his young son buried in meditation, with contracted brows, and parted lips, which moved inarticulately.

"I thought you would have gone to bed, Reginald," said Travers.

"I shall go directly, my dear father," replied the boy, and taking his hand, added, "Do not be angry with me---you have always told me to speak all my thoughts to you, and I have ever done so. I do not like the face of my uncle Wharton."

"Why, 'tis a handsome, a *very* handsome face, Reginald, full of power and mind, and looked kindly on you," returned Travers, in some surprise, and smiling at the gravity of his son.

"Ay, it *is* a fine face, certainly; just like that which has arisen to my fancy when I have been studying that wondrous Satan of Milton. But the face, you think, doesn't always indicate the character?"

"Assuredly not; and we should be very careful not to yield too hastily to first impressions, my boy. Those at your age are too apt to do so. It may be that I do not wish you to resemble your uncle; yet---"

"Ah, my father," interrupted the young lad, "I know that my uncle is not like him to whom I owe all; and whom I love and admire next to God himself. My first impression of the character of a person from the study of his face has never deceived me yet. How unlike my uncle is to that portrait of my dear mother you have; and yet there is a strong resemblance between them. The one looks like a spirit in Heaven, with the ethereal music and atmosphere floating around, serene and lovely; the other like one in Hell, where all is black or lurid, yet grand and haughty---but so dark and stern, and proud. But still my uncle is a great man, you have told me. What is greatness, tell me?"

"How should you define its elements, Reginald?" replied Travers, who took every occasion of extracting originality from his child, valuing it far more than readiness of understanding, and conception of a difficult meaning.

"*You* are a great man, for you are good," returned the precocious boy; and there was a fervour and enthusiasm in his voice and looks which evinced his sincerity.

Those words were grateful to the ear of Travers, but he answered, "You must not flatter me, my child. I am neither the one nor the other. A poor, weak, erring human creature, who can only *attempt* to rise above his nature."

"Yes, *yes*, you are," rejoined the boy, resolutely and warmly, "all that is great, and good, and noble. I will try to be like you. I would sooner be so, and a beggar---far, far sooner, than to be my uncle, and possess the whole world."---That lad had a soul!

CHAPTER IX.

LORD WHARTON ALONE AGAIN---THE APPARITION---THE PEER'S STRONG SPIRIT IS SUBDUED.

AGAIN in the same night behold the statesman alone in his bedchamber. In such a room how much of our short life is spent in sleep and sickness! The fevered dream, the unrest, the short-lived joy, by turns toss about the ephemeron who makes so much noise in his little world, who hums and buzzes, and basks in the sun. Here he is born, here he receives to his arms his bright and blushing bride---beholds the last hour, and finally sinks into the dreamless sleep. "The rest is silence."

The room which he now occupied was square and large, furnished with much comfort, and adorned with a few pictures in heavy frames that harmonized with the dark paintings. At the side farthest from the door by which the Peer had entered was a closet, into which there was ingress from another apartment, used as a lumber-room. The bed was of unusual size, and extremely high, so that it required an active person to leap from the floor into it. This chamber had once been honored by the presence and occupation of a King of England, when he paid a visit to an old knight, from whom Travers was lineally descended; and had formerly been held almost sacred by the family: but the grandfather of its present possessor, although excessively proud, was a Republican, and appropriated it to any guests who might chance to desire a night's lodging with open and ostentatious contempt for the prejudice of his sires.

Wharton ruminated deeply whilst he proceeded to undress; and in the

course of a few minutes all was still in the ancient mansion; so that there was nothing to distract his mind from what was in progress through its laboratory. "I wonder if he has a latent spark of ambition in his cold heart," muttered the statesman. "Every man surely *has* an ambition, and no doubt it may be turned into the channels in which it has not been accustomed to flow, even as the stream by art. Yet this man---I hardly understand him. I almost fear him---though I never feared breathing man. But I do not believe in the existence of patriotism. Pshaw, a name for love of popularity, not for the love of country."

While thus cogitating the bell of a distant clock tolled two. This was the usual hour of the minister for retiring to rest. He allowed himself six hours in bed, and could sleep, despite anxiety and care, almost as he wished. He was an astonishing fellow, that Lord Wharton; with iron nerves, with unconquerable resolution; and yet the greatest Sybarite in some respects that ever lived. You might behold him one hour in the House of Commons, breathing fire and defiance against a powerful opposition, now overwhelming his antagonists with bursts of vehement eloquence, subtle logic, sophistry and sarcasm, and the next seated at the supper-table of some celebrated courtesan, with two or three wild and jovial companions, and as many ladies of pleasure, venting his heart, as the mood came over him, in repartee, and sensual *bon mots*. No one made more of his time for enjoyment and for business, neither of which he would on any account neglect; and his wonderful constitution enabled him to endure fatigues of mind and body which would have destroyed an ordinary man.

Notwithstanding the excitement of the last few hours he was soon asleep; for he found slumber the great restorative of his corporeal and intellectual part, and never neglected systematically wooing it. There was a regularity in his dissipation which could alone have permitted him to fill the duties of his high office. It may be that were the votaries of pleasure to pursue with more order their excesses, their health would not suffer as it does, but the sooner they are out of the world, the better for society. So Wharton slept soundly, though he had so lately and narrowly escaped assassination.

In less than an hour, however, he became perturbed and uneasy (as all but the innocent ever will---great argument for a divine, moral government!) and he talked in his sleep. Frightful visions haunted him, and it was in vain that he struggled with the incubus oppressing him. Shapes of horror and ghastly sounds were shrieking and groaning in the chambers of the brain, and he exclaimed, in a voice almost suffocated, while "cold drops of sweat hung on his trembling flesh,"

"Avaunt, ye fiends! avaunt, I say! Do you think to frighten the soul of Thomas Wharton with your unmeaning gibbering? Avaunt, ye imps, that laugh at my tortures! Go down to hell, and seek your master,

Satan. What! would you drag me with you into the abyss? Damnation! Save me, save me, Harriet! You are an angel of light! You can save me. Stretch out your arms. Do you shrink from me?---from your Wharton, whom you used to love so fondly, and who adored you! Oh, agony!"

Still, horrified as he was with the nightmare he so vainly contended with, the statesman did not awake. What ages of pain were concentrated in those moments!

"He calls on my name," said a low, sweet voice, close by the side of the bed.---From whom did it proceed?

There sat a woman, of wild and haggard aspect, with the remains of exquisite beauty, the moonlight streaming over her tall and stately form. She had been listening with breathless attention to the ravings of Wharton, watching with eager eyes the changes of his strongly-marked countenance, which now flashed with fiery courage, now gloomed with despair, now glared with hate and scorn---those glances that had withered the valour of his adversaries in the senate---his eyes open and wide distended, and his lip curling with the strong passion; and she now approached yet closer, and bent over him. She remained hushed as death for some moments, and then she murmured, half unconscious that she did so,

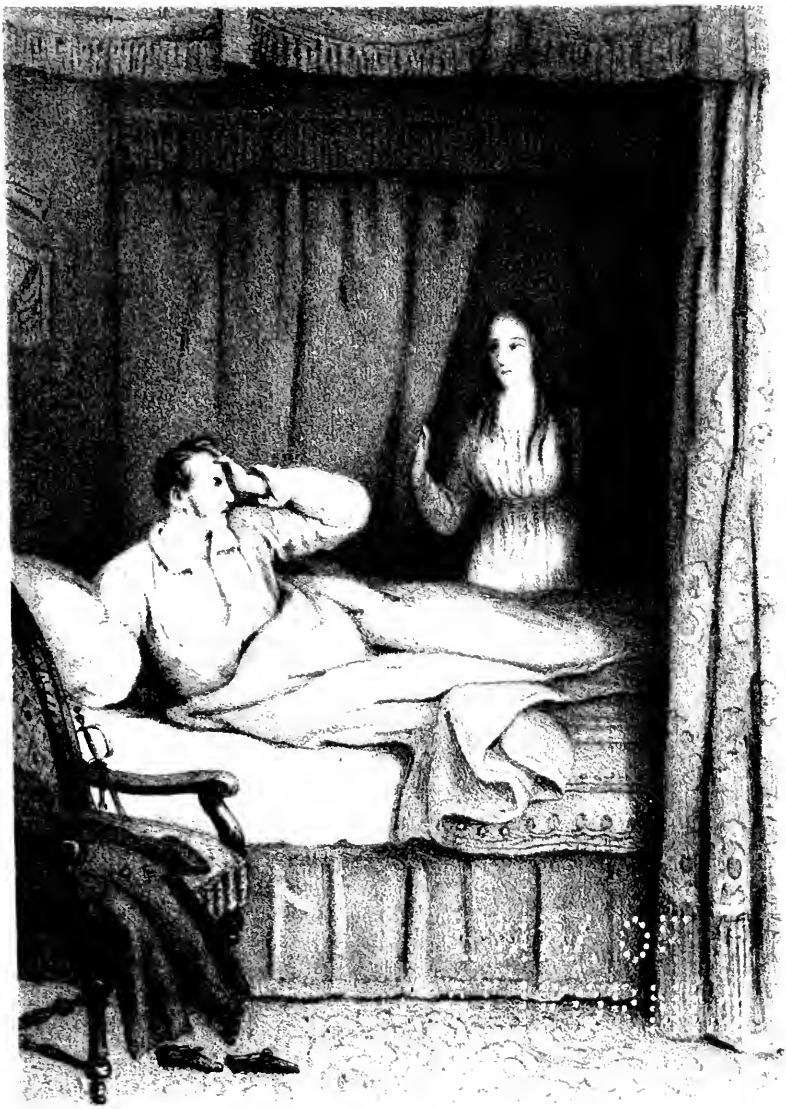
"What a splendid brow it is! What vast temples! Yes, it is the same. I knew him from the first. There is no other like him in the universe. Hark! hush! what says he?"

"Harriet!" cried the sleeper, despairingly, "I implore you to have pity on me! By the memory of our early love------"

"Ha!" exclaimed the female, writhing, as if stung by a scorpion, and her frame convulsed for an instant---"O God!"---But oblivion again came over her poor brain.

"I did love you, Harriet; I love you now.---I swear it. I love that form, though it be mouldering and silent in the cold tomb, better than the most radiant living beauties. You were my first and last adored! Others would deceive me with their hollow words and their hot, wanton kisses; but I remember yours, and perceive the cheat. I never, never loved but you."

"Indeed!" cried the woman, a strange expression passing over her face, in which pain and joy and confusion of thought were mingled.---"Yet he killed me, when he drove me mad. Wharton---ay, that is the name. I forget everything now---even *that* sometimes. Thomas Wharton---that's his real name; but he told me false. What ho! awake!" she exclaimed, in a shrill, piercing tone, which thrilled and curdled the blood of the Peer, and he started from his sleep with frenzy in his looks. The very life-blood congealed in his veins; but he could not utter a word. The woman spoke not again, but gazed on him with her large bright



eyes until he was petrified; and then, with a cold smile, she moved away, and disappeared. At length speech was restored to Wharton.

"I am dreaming still," he cried; "though never was reality so fearful. O God of Heaven, how wonderfully like reality! It was Harriet; yet so changed! It is very dreadful!" He could not move, he could not collect his thoughts, but remained gazing fixedly on the spot where his awful visitor had vanished. "I do not dream," he said. "It is---it must be true, that spectres walk the earth. Pshaw! I am grown a child again; yet I could swear I heard---I saw her; and I do not dream. I see as clearly the pale moon, and the solemn stars---all things---as I did before I went to bed. Do I exist as I did last night? Here are my hands, here my head, here my heart, beating as it never beat before. The brain is dizzy!---O that vision!" He sunk back on his pillow, exhausted with emotion, and suddenly a strain of sad and dreamy music met his ear. He listened, with clenched hands and rolling eyes: now he clearly distinguished a guitar, accompanied by the following words, in a voice soft as the breath of summer, but more fearful to him than the archangel's at that moment, rising into volume and power as it proceeded---

There is a mystery unfathomed yet,
It is the echo of the heart in woe.
Hark! hark! how it fills the vales and hills;
It sounds from the wondrous depths below!

Echo! echo! hush, how sad---how very sweet!
In Desolation's darkness there's a sound
That makes the brain forget its pain,
And the heart and the blood to bound!

The statesman uttered a deep groan. All his strength of mind deserted him, and his muscles would not do their office. That song was one he had heard in his youth, and had been a favourite of his. It used to be sung by the living, with the flush of youth and joy on her cheek, and now he believed it came from the icy lips of the dead. There was almost more than mortal harmony in the strain, simple and unartificial as were the words and music; and it seemed to melt away in distance, even as the echo, so desolate and mournful, which was the burthen of the song. What tongue shall utter, what pen describe, what pencil draw, the emotions within Wharton's soul, and on his haughty aspect? There are, indeed, moments in existence which have never been fully pourtrayed in their depth and intensity, even by a Shakspeare's genius. It could shadow forth, but not embody the full, entire profundity, and height and scope of anguish and rapture and despair. Göthe said, that what could not be described, does not exist in the mind; but there is that within the spirit of man too sublime for words, for melody, for painting, to delineate; too dark for the sculptor, the poet, or the metaphysician to give a

form, a local habitation, and a name. We must therefore leave the feelings of the peer to the imagination of our readers. Behold his colourless cheek, his suspended breath, his quivering lips; the strong frame now shaking with a fit like ague, now stiff as with paralysis, and conceive the sensations which could thus agitate such a man as he was. He who was a Colossus in nerve, a Hercules in muscle! How vast and incomprehensible is the power which the mind exercises over the body! Can idealist or materialist explain the problem of the phenomenon? "Oh, certainly," says the first; "it demonstrates that all sensations are but affections of the soul!" "Undoubtedly," replies the other, "it evinces that there is no real distinction between spirit and matter: they are but arbitrary terms." There may be truth in the hypothesis of both; but it is strange that those who study the mind, will not allow that, if there is something irreconcilable with preconceived theories, it invalidates the extreme, which is considered the only rationality. No person, however, refines and subtilizes on the mysteries of the universe within the soul, when individually subjected to the power of the passions; and Wharton was not inclined to analyse the springs of his emotions, or to reason himself out of the evidence of the senses, like Berkeley's disciples.

He rose, at length, and determined on going into the open air. By the light of the brilliant planet which ruled the night he dressed himself, and, noiselessly quitting his chamber, he descended and went forth. All was calm and beautiful after the desolating tempest. Not a breath was now stirring, and the silence was deep and intense. Wharton slowly paced towards a clump of tall trees at the distance of about half a mile from the house, but so absorbed was he in his own thronging thoughts that he observed nothing in the visible world. Oh, human heart! Oh, great, false, weak human heart! thou art larger than the universe, and smaller than thought can conceive! Thou art pregnant of immortal beauty, and fertile in corruption; life and death, eternity and ashes! Behold the anatomy of it in one brief sentence---infinity within, which nothing but Heaven can satisfy; corruption seeking its earth in rottenness and time; incorruption hunting after the divine, conceiving it is *here!*

The statesman had now reached the trees alluded to. Beneath them, on the green turf, he had often, very often sat, during the long summer days, when he was a wild and wayward boy, with mighty aspirations and quick and haughty intellect, full twenty years ago, and read and thought and moralized by turns. He was not so sinful a being then,---despite many dark errors and vices. There he had devised plans of greatness, of pleasure, and of ease: and greatness *was* his---the greatness of power and external applause: and pleasure also; but ease was not---for his spirit was never still. To subdue the worm of remorse he was compelled incessantly to busy himself, and was but laying up fuel for the fire

hereafter. He busied himself not with schemes for the amelioration of suffering humanity, and was deaf as the adder to the cry of his groaning countrymen. He cared not but for himself. "What am I?" he muttered. "I am despised by myself; and what avails the breath of fools and slaves? Now could I turn hermit, and renounce all my honours; kick away the instruments whereby I have been labouring to secure the rewards I used to pant for,---bubbles and dreams!---and be content with eternal oblivion. I have seen and heard the dead: a warning voice comes to me from the charnel, and crushes me with a sense of my guilt; and I am sick, sick of life! And yet I dare not die. I have often wondered what would be the feelings of a man after he had received an intimation from, or been visited by a being of, another world. And I know now. Would that I did not! What a curse is knowledge! I feel not as Hamlet did after beholding his father; but all around there is an atmosphere of darkness, and space is filled with sounds I never heard before. What am I? Nothing! What do I strive after? Emptiness! Where are my hopes and joys---the nurslings of my boyhood? Tell me, my soul! for I feel thou *art* now more than ever. I am no speculator, as I once was. I seek not to know thine essence; I believe, and tremble. Wretch that I am, who can despise me more than myself?"

Does it not seem a strange thing, that when the mind turns inward to pursue a particular train of thought, innumerable collateral ideas spring up spontaneously, and divert it from brooding exclusively on the one image; and yet return to the original cause of their birth as surely as the needle points to the pole, and the streams wind to the ocean? The Peer was pacing under the boughs, now almost stripped of their foliage, and the ancient oaks to which they belonged almost mingled their branches with those of the elms which grew profusely in that part of the park, so that when clothed with their leafy garb they were nearly impervious to the sun; and he little thought that he was observed by one who heard him utter his reflections, as he stood behind a huge tree which grew in the centre, and before which he abruptly paused.

"There is a destiny in all things," continued Wharton, his brain filling with new associations. "Thought is strangled in its birth, that something else may replace it; for whatever may be the case in the world of matter, in mind there is certainly no vacuum. We are the slaves of our own ideas, which are in their turn the minions of those of others. How vain it is to struggle with Fate! Shall I then yield to *this* impulse I feel within me, and lead another and a better life, or go back to the haunts I have frequented, and let passion lead me still?"

Who knows whether the sad and solemn and serious meditations of the statesman, influenced as they were by an imaginary supernatural agency, might not have really led to a reformation of his way of life, if they had been uninterrupted; for circumstances apparently the most

nugatory fix the balance of our fate for ever; when an occurrence recalled him to the actualities of existence, and threw his cogitations, which had been of a better and more purifying tendency than usual, into other currents. Battledore and shuttlecock! what an illustration art thou of the indestructible mind of man! How it is knocked hither and thither by chance blows, not by skill or science! We have said that Wharton had not spoken unheard, and we must now direct the reader's attention to the personage who had stood behind the tree while the Peer was soliloquizing.

Some minutes before Wharton made his appearance, this individual entered the park by a gate of which he had the key, and was not above a hundred paces from the spot on which he now stood. His age was apparently between fifty and sixty, but rather nearer to the latter than the former. He was of the ordinary size, with hair half grey, half white, a broad, high forehead giving dignity to his face, which was wrinkled and intelligent. His eyes were of a greyish blue, and clear, cold, and searching. His dress was that of a gentleman, but of somewhat antique cut, consisting of dark coloured cloth, his coat being a trifle the worse for wear, and his kerseymere unutterables having evidently seen service, but his appearance was respectable in the extreme.

"I don't see Williamson here," muttered the elderly gentleman, "and yet he promised to be on the spot exactly at four. It is five minutes past that time," he added, examining his large gold watch, and taking snuff. "Ha! I see some one yonder. But that can't be Williamson. It is a much taller man." So saying, he stepped behind the tree, and overheard the monologue of Lord Wharton, as we have seen. His keen, impenetrable, and deeply marked countenance exhibited much astonishment at the apparition of the statesman, and still more was he surprised when he heard the substance of the peer's soliloquy. A dark sneer spread over his face, which was strongly indented with the small-pox, when the statesman said, "Who can despise me more than myself?" and he replied, "*I!*" There was a world of expression in that monosyllable, inaudible as it was to the peer. He waited patiently until the soliloquist had finished speaking, and then quitting the shelter of the tree he addressed him, saying,

"Good morning to your lordship. I was not aware you rose so early."

"What, Mr. Sharp!" exclaimed Lord Wharton. "I did not expect to see *you* here indeed."

"I came here last night, before it was well dark, by the mail from London. I had some business to transact with Mr. Travers, which was necessary to be completed immediately," returned Mr. Sharp. "The time of lawyers is as valuable as that of statesmen, you know, my lord, and I am a very early riser, habitually."

"Nay, Mr. Sharp," rejoined Wharton in his usual manner, which

was generally rather ironical, and was very rarely without a tincture of bitterness, "you are both lawyer and statesman now, and in your combined offices must be able to outwit the devil himself, methinks."

"I try to do so," returned Mr. Sharp, with a cold and meaning smile, which might be interpreted in two ways. "But indeed, my lord, I am no statesman. I have no rhetoric at my command, as you have, and could never be more than a mere practical man. I represent a wretched and corrupt borough, because I have the reputation of riches. Will you walk this path? I should like to speak with you a few minutes, if you are not otherwise engaged."

"Certainly," replied the Peer, shaking off the feelings which had clung to him for the last hour so tenaciously, and preparing to converse sensibly with a shrewd man of the world. His nature was such that events the most extraordinary never incapacitated him from the exertion of his strong, clear intellect; and he was perfectly competent to cope with the subtlety and cleverness of which the lawyer was the very impersonation. Well did he know that Sharp had always some object of his own to further in all that he did.

"Touching this business with my client, Mr. Travers," said the lawyer, looking behind him, unseen by his companion. "I am well aware of the nature of the business which brings your lordship hither. Every one, indeed, forms his conjectures about it." Here he made signs to some person at his back, at the same time looking the statesman full in the face. He added, "Many secrets of the cabinet transpire in a manner you cannot guess at; and I am cognizant of the line of policy which has dictated this measure. My lord, you are a Tory from interest, as from the same cause I am a Whig. We understand each other, and manage to get on very well together. I am willing to serve you as one from whom I have received much business---you found out my merits, such as they are, and employed my abilities---and I tell you that neither Tory, nor Whig, nor Republican, nor any other denomination under the sun, as a party, will ever number Wharton Travers among its supporters."

"You mistake, Mr. Sharp," answered the statesman calmly, "my visit to Mr. Travers is not occasioned by any such matters as you conceive." Lord Wharton thought he was being pumped.

"Oh, your lordship has then changed your determination. For my devil-on-two-sticks was present at the Cabinet Council held on Wednesday last; and he informed me that when the Premier, in his dull, prosy manner, suggested that you should offer to Travers the office of Home Secretary, you taking Foreign Affairs---"

"Ha?" ejaculated Wharton, betrayed out of his usual coldness by surprise, but speedily recovering his wonted imperturbable impenetrability of look and manner.

"You see," continued Sharp, not noticing the interruption of the Peer,

"I have illimitable knowledge. You rose and said---I repeat your very words, which the devil took down in his peculiar short-hand---'Wharton Travers must have *hopes* held out to him of becoming Premier. Of course, we shall not realize such vain promises: but your lordship is aware *they* cost nothing.'"

"Your devil must be a monstrously clever fellow, almost as much so as yourself," rejoined the statesman, adding, "well, sir, and what do *you* think would tempt Travers to support us?"

"That is a puzzling question of your lordship's. It is said that every man has his price, if Satan would give it; but there is no rule without its exception. Mr. Travers has no wants, pecuniary or otherwise, as you and your colleagues have—pardon my blunt speaking—and he has sufficient fame, it would seem, to satisfy his moderate appetite. No, my lord, you, if you live, may become Prime Minister of England, but your brother-in-law will not even put his hand into the lottery. However, I can tell you, as a fact, that he will represent the borough of G------, if they should elect him."

"You are certain of that, Sharp," replied Lord Wharton. "Do you not think *that* looks like ambition?"

"Not at all, my lord," returned the lawyer, taking snuff. "I may not offer the use of my snuff-box to you? But, as I was saying, Mr. Travers is not ambitious. His motive for entering again on a parliamentary career is not in the hope of making a more brilliant reputation than he at present possesses. Then why trouble himself at all? you will say. To oppose falsehood and tergiversation, and introduce his far-sighted views in the place of narrow partizanship and indifference to the welfare of the people. You and I, my lord, would never think of troubling our heads with such old Roman fantasies; but Mr. Travers is a Roman, and something more. He doesn't pant after immortality, as they did. He is a cosmopolite."

"Do you believe in the existence of such a character?" returned the peer.

Sharp shrugged his shoulders. "Among the eight hundred millions in the world, there are about eight such, probably," he replied. "Mr. Travers is one."

"And what is a cosmopolite in your opinion?"

"One that serves the interests of all mankind, and is rewarded with cuffs and blows for his pains," replied the lawyer.

"*Sharp* rejoinder," cried Wharton, with a sneer. "But you shall see that I understand the character of my brother-in-law as well as the sharpest lawyer in the world. I have had a good many more opportunities of studying it than yourself, and I have a conceit that my sight is keen."

"Assuredly, my lord, you can see through a mill-stone if any one can.

But here we are before the house. Some of the servants are already stirring, I perceive. Does your lordship walk in, or not?"

Wharton answered he should not continue any longer in the air, and the lawyer retrod his steps.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAWYER'S OPINION OF TRAVERS AND WHARTON---WILLIAMSON---SHARP ENGAGES AN ALLY AND COMMUNICATES TO HIM THE STORY OF HIS LIFE AND ITS ULTERIOR OBJECT---THE TWO ARCH PASSIONS.

"TRAVERS and Wharton are respectively the two best and worst men in Britain," thought Sharp. "What a wonderful difference there is between them as regards their objects! The last is the tool of a faction, though he makes that faction his tool. The first is the instrument of no man, and the servant of---Heaven---so he thinks. Wharton! you believe that you have greater intellect than the sordid attorney you employ to do your dirty work. But you want his experience. I know the springs and wheels of action in all men---practically know them---and the hearts of mankind are as a book to me. Such a book as they make! How dirty and contemptible! You have more natural talent!---I suppose *genius*, than belongs to me; but you have not my patience, my cool sagacity and practical philosophy, my unscrupulous and many implements:---though you have your spies, your sophistry, and your double-dealing. How I delight to thwart your plans, and throw obstacles in your path! Not because I am a Whig, and you a Tory, save the mark! O, no." And the keen eyes of the lawyer glared with diabolic hatred.

"Well, Mr. Sharp," said a voice, "I have come to meet you."

"Yes, yes, Williamsom. It is better that you shouldn't be seen. I did not expect any one would be stirring at such an hour, or I should not have appointed the park for a rendezvous."

The person to whom the lawyer addressed himself, was a man in the prime of life, with a handsome face, and small, but strongly made form, which wanted two inches of the other's height. His countenance was dark, and bronzed by exposure to the weather, his features delicate, but nevertheless those of one of marked character, and his eyes were quick, restless and luminous. His brow was not remarkably high, but smooth and broad, full of determination and even power, his hair being nearly black, and sprinkled with gray. He wore a plain, well-cut coat of olive, and trowsers of the same cloth, and a rather broad-brimmed hat.

"We had better walk in this direction, perhaps," observed Williamson, "we shall not be exposed to notice here." And he struck into a path

which led to the banks of a river of some extent that flowed through Travers Park.

"I saw that was a stranger you were talking with," said he who had last spoken, "who is he?"

"Lord Wharton," was the reply.

"A dangerous man, I should think," cried Williamson. "I remember him when he was a boy. We were at school together, and he was a devilish clever fellow. We had a fight once, and nearly was I drubbed by him, though I was three years his senior. He had more spirit, strength and talent than any lad of his age then."

"He is a rascal," returned Sharp, moodily.

"I think I have heard of that business of your cousin," commenced Williamson, with some interest.

"Speak not of it!" exclaimed the lawyer from between his teeth, and in a voice low but extremely clear, although he was agitated by violent passions. "I have sworn revenge against that man, and I will have it even at the expense of life. I live but in the hope of crushing him. O, I will humble his proud spirit to the dust! He despises me.---Ha, ha! But I know him, as well as I do myself, and there is not a faculty he possesses which I do not hate, and will turn to my purpose. Damn him! He little thinks what I am."

"Take care," returned Williamson. "The falcon may by chance kill a royal eagle, but the eagle ninety times out of a hundred at least will destroy the falcon."

"*He* an eagle! Oh! you do not know how weak the strongest are. There is always a vulnerable point. But I *will* be careful, Williamson. I know there is a necessity for being so. I want your assistance in a plan which I have laid for the downfall of this man. You are a clever fellow, and I know I can trust you."

"You *may* trust me," replied Williamson, "and I will not refuse to act any part you want me to take. I am a desperate man, and have nothing to lose; but I would advise you to consider well what you are doing. The world always sides with the most powerful, and Wharton has means from his rank and influence you cannot acquire, to rebut any charges made against him. But you have reached a high station in society; you have wealth, and respectability, and is it worth while to risk these------"

"All, and ten times more, for the sake of my cherished vengeance," returned the lawyer, his voice hoarse with suppressed passion. "Yet think not, Williamson, that I am about to endanger myself for the sake of that scheme I have laid to crush the serpent into dust; though I should not hesitate to cast life and reputation into the balance were they necessary to turn the trembling scale of his and my ascendant star. No, no he shall behold me, the low pettifogger he now deems me, in the

office which he now holds, while he is disgraced and infamous. My revenge must be complete and certain. I have long laboured intensely for it, and it is not very far distant."

"I do not understand why the gratification of revenge should be so delightful," remarked Williamson, after a minute's pause; "and yet God knows I have awful passions myself. It is a strange thing that to behold a fellow worm writhing during the last moments of its ephemeral existence, should convey any sort of pleasure to the mind, merely because that worm once trod on its inexorable enemy's heart!"

"O, but if you should ever be wronged or insulted, friend, if the snake should poison the sweet springs of life, and leave you nought but dregs to drink;—if it should coil around your heart, and wither life and hope with their radiance and splendour for ever; you will then feel what agonizing joy there is in watching the tortures of your detested foe, and exulting in his misery and despair. O, deep shall be his degradation! I will make him to be spurned by those he spat upon. Poor, needy, and ignominious he shall descend to his dishonoured grave, and his memory shall be covered with immortal hate and infamy. Williamson, I have loved as few men ever loved, with heart, and soul, and strength. Do you know what love is?"

"Few persons have lived to my age without knowing something about it: but I have never loved deeply till within a short time."

"It was so with me," said the lawyer. "Mine was no boy's passion—a liking, a desire, an admiration which can be transferred easily to another: no such transient thing. It grew around the fibres of my existence, and could not have been plucked out without plucking out the heart. I was nearly your age when first what I *then* deemed the master passion of our being entered into my soul. It was deep from the first, but greatly did it strengthen with time, even as the oak does. I am cold now, and none would deem that the grave, acute and subtle lawyer was of eager desires, intense feeling, and romantic sentiment in years gone by. But I had not loved in my youth, and the force of that feeling was the more overwhelming from its novelty. In mature life the passions are deeper seated, if less violent and ebullient than in early manhood; and they take hold upon the mind more than the fancy: they absorb the whole being. So I loved. I thought I was beloved, poor fool! and I was happy. I was then a poor devil of a lawyer's clerk, with a salary of £100 a year. But love lent me energy and strength, and I felt I could raise myself by the force of intellect and perseverance to almost any station. I did not know how much more potent the desire of vengeance is, than affection can ever be, in stimulating the ambition, and strengthening the spirit to endure. I have borne insult with perfect patience, though naturally hot and impetuous, smiled at the taunts levelled against me, spent long and sleepless nights in profound thought, with

a burning brain and throbbing head, and gone through days of toil and wretchedness; and for what?---vengeance! vengeance! I have hugged myself in the hope of accomplishing my ultimate desire, when all was black around me, and have made the object of my life a sort of gloomy heaven, in which there is a tongue of agony and despair, felicitating my troubled breast on the to-come. The present would be hell* but for that prospect. Would you hear my wrongs? You shall do so. Listen. The woman I adored had consented to become mine; and there appeared no obstacle to our union. I had every hope of realizing an independence, and in the course of a year, my cousin was to be my wife. I was obliged to be in London, where my employment was; and, of course, I could not often see my betrothed. She was at the time I speak of about eighteen. She had sense and sensibility, and though her origin was low (for my mother, who was her aunt, was the daughter of a mechanic, and my mother's family were all servants, or artizans), there was a natural refinement about her, which lent grace and dignity to all she said and did. She gave her consent to become my wife with some hesitation; but I construed *that* into maiden bashfulness, not reluctance. Dolt that I was! I could distinguish them now---indifference and coyness, unerringly; but I did not know the human heart then, as I do now. I was more than double her age; but still in the prime and vigour of life, and the station I filled was a trifle higher than she could expect to marry in. Yet with her beauty and virtue she would have been worthy of a prince. O, Williamson! when I think upon the past; when I conjure up the fair vision of my Harriet's innocence and sweetness, and recal those moments of thrilling transport I passed with her, I am weak as a girl, and could weep, were it not for the strength I derive from hate and revenge. To proceed. I returned to London after a short absence, having arranged to leave it once more, and take a bride home with me, in a few months time. My spirits were as air, and I thought not of a cloud in the bright horizon of my future. Vain wretches that we are! Surrounded with winds and quicksands we see nothing but the light and joyance of day and sunshine, until tempests sweep our barks to eternal destruction. About a week---as I have since heard---after I left the village where my beloved resided, the present Lord Wharton, then a mere boy in age, but

* The grand and terrible character of Richard III. is in some measure an archetype of the lawyer; but the one's absorbing passion is ambition, the other's revenge. Richard says, in his celebrated soliloquy, which developes his principle of action—

> "Why then to me this restless world's but hell,
> Till this misshapen trunk's aspiring head
> Be circled with a glorious diadem."

Sharp is now supposed to be unfolding *his* springs of action. *Verbum sap.*

a man in mind and person, quitted school, and visited some friend or relative at no very great distance from the place I speak of. You knew him, you say, when he was a lad. He was at nine years old sent to a public school, and there had spent half his life. We all know what public schools are. They frequently make the well-disposed bad, and the ill-disposed invariably villains. Wharton had acquired great reputation for his ability, his spirit and dissipation, at the school of which he was the head boy, when he left it. I have heard that even then he kept a mistress, and had horses and equipages. He was about to proceed to college, and great things were augured of him. Well, he came on the visit I mentioned, and all who were at the house he went to, were fascinated with his wit, his talents, and acquirements. His knowledge of the world was great, his acquaintance with the human heart was intimate. He must have been an astonishing youth, for although no great reader, few were equal to him, even in book learning; but he never forgot what he had once read. I have been at some pains to discover these facts, and I tell them to you, because they may throw some light on his subsequent career. He was fond of shooting, and one day he extended his walk, with his gun in his hand, farther than he had intended. Strange is our destiny! on his taking that walk my fate depended. When far away from home, he beheld my Harriet seated beneath a tree, reading some novel I had given her. He was struck with her unequalled loveliness, and accosted her with that insinuating address which he knows well to use for his own purposes. He led her to talk to him, he extracted from her her situation in life and prospects, he charmed her with his brilliant conversation, and the respectful homage he paid to her. Already the libertine knew better how to win a woman's heart than I did.

"O God! it makes me mad, when I think upon the way in which he engaged her affections; how he deceived her with his specious arts and sophistry, and finally ruined as divine a structure as ever Heaven raised from clay. He proposed to obtain for her a situation in London, and some infamous woman, who was his procuress, a milliner ostensibly, offered her high terms by letter to go and live with her as an assistant. She repented that she had promised to become my wife, and unfolded all her guileless heart to Wharton, who disguised his rank, and professed an honourable attachment to her. He called himself Butler, and pretended he was a merchant's son. He said that if she would accept the milliner's offer, as he would soon be in London, he could see her daily; and added, that in a few months he should be his own master, and on the day of his majority would marry her. Actuated by confiding love for him, she left her home without the knowledge of her relations, Wharton giving her some specious reason for doing so, and he conveyed her in a vehicle of his own to the metropolis. You may guess the sequel. He triumphed over her virtue, and took lodgings for her at a suburban establishment which

belonged to the infamous woman who had all along abetted him in his damned purpose. Meanwhile, I was alarmed at not hearing from her for a long time, though I had repeatedly written to her; and obtaining leave to quit my employment for a few days, I hastened to my beloved girl, and found, to my unspeakable agony, that she had gone no one knew whither; but she had left a few lines behind, intimating that she should be safe, and no alarm need be felt on her account.

"Days, weeks, months passed away, and no tidings could be gained of Harriet. I sought her far and wide, driven almost to distraction, but in vain. At length the fatal news burst upon me like the fire of hell. The wretched girl had at length found the falsehood of her betrayer, and that he never intended to marry her; and frenzied and broken-hearted she wrote to her relations, and to me also, detailing these circumstances, and adding that she should soon cease to exist. But we could find her nowhere. Her seducer one day made his appearance at her deserted home, and was recognised by her brother's assistant, an old man who had once seen the demon with her; and this person followed him afterwards, having answered his questions whether he knew aught of Harriet, and learned whom he really was. And I---I---lived on desolate and hopeless. My heart-strings would not crack, though they were strained to the uttermost. But my despondency at length gave way to the consuming desire of vengeance, and I roused myself from the lethargy into which I had fallen. I asked myself the best mode of consummating the oath of vengeance which I had sworn; and knowing the rank and power of the villain, it was difficult for the wretched clerk of an attorney to devise anything to humble and degrade him. I thought at one time of giving poison to him; but then I thought, to witness his living humiliation would afford me longer satisfaction than to know I had ridded the world of a monster. So I sought him out under the pretext of business, and I saw that pride was his ruling passion, and I was rejoiced to know it was so. To wound that passion would be to stab him to the heart. I resolved at once to acquire influence, that I might use it for his ruin. Harriet had been seen mad, with a child in her arms, and it was thought that she was dead;---I could, at all events, hear nothing more of her, for her relations had left that part of the country in which she had resided. I married the daughter of the sordid lawyer who had employed me---a woman of my own age,---and received with her a fortune of £5000. In ten years I doubled it; and, would you believe it? I made my hated foe the instrument of the wealth I now possess. He gave me immense jobs on his coming into power; and my business is now the largest in London. I must mention to you, that my father, who died when I was a child, had a brother and a sister who had risen in the world. The first became a banker, of considerable note, was made a baronet, and actually married a near relation of Lord Wharton. The second was united to a nobleman,

who first kept her as his mistress, and after a great number of years made her his wife. She died a few years ago in presenting him with a daughter: that child I intend shall marry my son. My uncle, the banker, had quarrelled with my father for having married below his station in life, for he had a great idea of aristocracy; and when I was left an orphan, all he would do for me was to send me to a cheap school; and afterwards obtained for me the situation of clerk to the attorney whose business is now mine. When I grew rich, my uncle took a great deal of notice of me; said I was a prudent, long-headed fellow, very unlike my father; and his proud wife even, who had given him high blood for large settlements---she, who was connected with half the nobility in Britain,---condescended to interest herself in my behalf, and to admit me to her hospitality. Oh, what a world it is! that a little golden dust should elevate one so in the opinion of those who profess to believe in an immortality! My good aunt also, before she died---now that I did not want her assistance,---prevailed on her husband to patronise me; and as he was a great friend of Lord Wharton's, he induced that wily statesman, whose imperious will is now law in England, to examine my merits more narrowly than before; and the consequence was, that I became his confidential agent. My wife, you are aware, has been dead some time; my uncle, the baronet, predeceased her; and his haughty partner did not long survive him, so that their only son was entrusted to the joint guardianship of Lord Wharton and myself, to whom he stands in the same degree of consanguinity. It was a proud moment to me when I found that I shared the same office with that villain. I think it humbled him a little, but he could not refuse to be the guardian of his own aunt's only son. This boy is now nineteen, and he has been at school with my son, and they are about to pay a visit to Lord Wharton when he quits Travers House. The son of the pettifogger is to be the guest of the peer; for my shrewd Samuel is the chosen companion of his cousin Sir Algernon, and they are inseparable. Sam is going to the Bar, you know, when he is old enough, and if he live I expect to see him a Judge. He is the most worldly-minded boy of fifteen I ever knew. Now, Williamson, you have heard all. You know exactly how I am circumstanced relative to Lord Wharton, and my motive for wishing to have him under my feet. On you I rely for assistance in a scheme which I will presently communicate to you. Last year, you have heard, I became a member of Parliament, and adopted Whig principles. I did so for several reasons, which I need not particularise at present. I am thought a moderate man by all parties, and respected accordingly. Many are in the habit of saying the medium between extremes must always be right; and this is true, but they will not see that there is a false medium; but though no more inclined to one party than another in fact, my influence in the House is now beyond my most sanguine expectations. I have almost sufficient

power to wrestle with my deadly enemy; and in a little while my weight thrown into the balance will determine the fate of the present administration; but Lord Wharton must not merely fall, to rise again, as he assuredly would, with his great abilities; he must be disgraced beyond redemption. For the present I must make him think I am his fast friend from interested motives, and crush him when he leasts expects the blow. Let us now proceed to business."

CHAPTER XI.

STEPHEN AND NELL—THE HOVEL—THE INFIRM WOMAN AND THE CHILD---THE PROMISE---A TALE OF HORROR---SUDDEN DEATH.

To return to Stephen and Nell, whom we left some chapters since very unceremoniously, in order to detail events, which it was expedient should be narrated without delay. Lord Wharton had informed his brother-in-law, that the boy and girl who had saved him from destruction, had repaired to a neighbour's house after the affray he was concerned in. The blacksmith's house had been shut up, and a constable stationed outside, to watch if Jenkins, or any belonging to him, should venture to return; and several men set forth in the hope of taking them, aware, as they were, of the rank of the person whose life had been so wonderfully preserved.

The reader will recollect a wretched hovel for which the Peer made when overtaken by the storm: and it was to this very place that Stephen and Nell betook themselves. They walked from the smithy hand in hand, wrapt in melancholy thoughts, and when they had proceeded a few yards the voice of the girl was heard—

"O, Stephen!" she cried, "I am *so* wretched! That my nearest relations in the world should be such monsters of guilt!"

Sobs choaked her articulation.

"Do not weep, my own Nelly!" returned Stephen, throwing his arm round her neck and kissing her affectionately—it might be, passionately. "While there is life in this heart, I will be father, mother, brother to you. Come, dry your eyes, dearest! and be comforted."

"Where shall I find comfort?" was the mournful rejoinder. "I know you love me, Stephen; and I would not lose your affection for worlds;---that is the only solace left to me. But, O, it is very dreadful to be the child of assassins!"

"Not so, my pretty cousin! You are innocent."

"Ah, Stephen! in this cruel world, the sins of the fathers are visited

upon the children severely. But it is God's decree it should be so. His will be done!"

"He will not love you the less for anything that your parents can do, my dearest Nelly! Let us trust to Him, and all will yet be well. If we did not make sorrows for ourselves, Providence, I am persuaded, visits us with but few real evils. Let us not murmur, but endure with thankfulness."

"Oh, yes! But we are very weak; and though we know the folly of grief, we must indulge it, or grow into stones. We must be either more or less than mortals not to mourn over the crimes of those to whom we owe existence. The knowledge of those crimes is the greatest affliction we can feel. But here is the hut of Mrs. Thompson."

Stephen knocked for admittance at the crazy door of the hovel; and in a minute or two, a feeble voice asked what was wanted.

"May Nell and I come in?" returned the youth.

"Yes, yes," was the reply; "but what brings you here at such a time as this? The door isn't locked."

Stephen unlatched the door, and with his companion entered.

Stretched on a miserable mattress, and covered with a tattered cloak, lay a woman, who although not very far advanced in the decline of life, was evidently feeble and decrepid. She was bent double with infirmity, and shook with palsy; but there was still a fire in her keen, restless eyes, which evinced the strong passions of youth were not yet extinct in her feeble frame. At a short distance from her, lying on some straw, was the little urchin who had conducted Lord Wharton to the smithy, but buried in such profound sleep that he was not disturbed by the entrance of the unseasonable visitors.

"And what, in the name of wonder, brings you here?" demanded Mrs. Thompson of Stephen.

"You shall hear, my good mother!" he replied, "but I have that to relate to you which will amaze or horrify your soul."

"Nothing will amaze or horrify me," returned the infirm woman. "Say on."

The youth proceeded to relate to Mrs. Thompson the extraordinary events of the last few hours: and she listened with calm attention, without betraying the slightest symptom of surprise, during the narration. When Stephen had finished, she sunk back on her pillow, and appeared to have fallen into a doze; but she was in reality absorbed in intense thought.

"Hark you!" she exclaimed, abruptly, after the pause of several minutes, during which the youth and the girl remained perfectly silent, gazing in dejection downwards---"Hark you! Stephen, and Nell. You do not know my story. But you are aware I had two sons. My youngest son you are acquainted with. He is a cold-blooded fellow,

indifferent to all things, save his own interest. He is a craven;---yet, no!---none of my blood were ever *that*. But O! how widely different is he from what the father of that child who is sleeping there was!---You never heard his fate. He was above his station in all things; and he obtained the love of a gentleman's daughter. He married her privately, and she proved with child. Her accursed father, who was as proud as Lucifer, discovered---what he deemed---the disgrace of his daughter: and his whole heart was filled with a scheme of fiendish vengeance. He employed some villain to induce my boy to game, and it was held out to him, that he might thus acquire the means of supporting his wife in affluence. He *did* game; and lost. His unhappy wife, previous to this, was turned out of her home by her inhuman father: and my poor son, driven to distraction, in a moment of insanity went forth, and committed a highway robbery. He was detected, tried, and condemned to death. I saw him hanged; I saw his manly form writhing in agonized convulsions, and I thought I should have died, or gone mad. But I lived on, bereaved and hopeless. The mother of that poor child heard of what had befallen her husband; and her passionate sorrow brought on a premature labour, of which she died. That old villain, demon---call him what you will---who caused all this misery, is also dead now: but you behold me, after six years of wretchedness and pain of mind and body. I cannot die. Subsisting on the scanty parish allowance, though born to competence and respectability, the son who is left to me, nothing but a curse, far away from where I used to live---I have yet no wish to die until one object is accomplished. Then let me depart. That object I live for, I will now reveal to you. But first promise me solemnly that you will not betray the confidence I am about to repose in you."

"We will not," said Stephen and Nell.

"I know that you will not break your word. You have been kind to the poor, lone woman, deserted of all others. Listen. Some property, which rightfully belonged to the mother of my little grandson, was wrongfully, treacherously willed away by her cruel father, though he had no lawful power to do so. Her death---which took place before she was of age---she not being aware, indeed, that this property was to be her's on her father's demise---precluded the taking of those steps which were proper to secure it. Now, I know, that there are papers which would establish the claim of my grandson to the property; but I cannot devise how to get at them. But, Stephen, you are in a way to right the poor orphan you have been kind to, and I know you will do it. But be cautious; for it is easy for the powerful to put charges to your account which you may not be able to confute. The mean-spirited uncle of this child is the servant of that family from which I have received such deadly wrongs; and will not come near me."

"I forgot to tell you," said Stephen, "that I saw your son a short

time ago. He is a rascal, indeed, to desert his helpless mother, when he is doing well in the world himself."

"I never loved him. He was calculating and heartless from a child; and now, I believe, if he could injure me, he would do so. But you tell me, Stephen, that it is likely you may have a situation with Lord Wharton. Now, I know, that he is guardian to the children who possess the property that lawfully belongs to my little Jem. They live, when they are not at school, with some female relation, about five miles hence. That house is the one formerly occupied by the father of my poor son's wife. This information about Lord Wharton, was given to me by an old neighbour whom I saw a few months since. How often have I cursed my helplessness, that I could do nothing to right my grandson!---Stephen, forgive me, that I have been thinking of my own concerns, after the horrible tale you have told me. I grieve for your misfortune---and still more for Nell's. But all things have grown indifferent, or of little interest to me, now that my boy---the pride of my existence, is gone. Yet I feel---I have always felt your kindness. I had a warm heart once. O, God! Thou alone canst know the agony of a mother, who has felt what I have felt! Who has beheld the mangled form of such a son!---One that ever met me with endearments. Yes, I was present with him when he prepared for a death of ignominy---and I shed no tear, though my heart was bursting. Was it not wonderful it did not drive me mad? But the consequence has been, that my mind has reduced my body to more than childish weakness, and as you are aware, I can scarce crawl from my bed. Stephen, if I should die, be kind to little Jem, and protect him."

"I will," answered the youth, fervently.

"And see him righted, will you not?"

"I will, by Heaven!"

"Bless you!" returned the poor woman; and she closed her eyes, and ceased to speak.

Stephen and Nell supposed that she was sleeping, and conversed together in low tones; but when the morning broke, and they turned their eyes on her, she was dead.

CHAPTER XII.

DEATH---A CONVERSATION---TRUTH AND GOODNESS---METAPHYSICS OF NATURE---TRAVERS'S EULOGY OF NATURE.

HAVE you ever looked on Death? What a stony thing it is! We can hardly believe it possible that a few brief moments of the same Time wherein we live, can have effected such a marvellous change! The course

of Nature is usually gradual and imperceptible; but sudden Death at once checks the course of Thought, puts out the taper of Fancy, annihilates passions and feelings, ideas and aspirations, which have not appeared as if they could be circumscribed by aught less than Eternity; and leaves of power, and mind, and beauty, not a wreck behind.

Stephen and Nell simultaneously uttered an exclamation of horror, when they found their old friend had so silently quitted existence: but she had lingered on month after month, and year after year, until they fancied that she might continue to live to the usual age of man.

Our notions, it would seem, on the subject of Death, are such, that we can scarcely believe that those with whom our thoughts are intimately associated will leave us, until the Great Seal is set for ever. The Eternal and the Infinite are so locked up in our hearts with the things of this transitory scene, that when the spirit goes forth, and our minds expatiate in the boundless future---then, and not till then, we feel the nothingness of all human things, and wonder that man should trouble himself with the concerns of the present. Yet how soon we ourselves do likewise!

While the cousins stood gazing as if petrified on that cold and vacant face, which had commonly worn an aspect of hopeless misery, and speculated "in their own poor way" upon the great Eternity beyond---though they had received little or no religious education, and had acquired almost all they knew on the subject of theology by themselves---the child, who had slept so sweetly until this time, awoke, and beholding them bending over the form of his grandmother, with awe and sorrow in their faces, he crept up to them, and examined the corpse with much amazement.

"How strangely granny does look?" he said; "but she will wake soon. What made you cry out so dismally?"

"My poor child," answered Nell, "your grandmother will wake no more. She is dead; but we hope that she is happy now, and will experience no more pain or anguish."

"Dead!" cried the child. "What do you mean by dead?" And he appeared bewildered.

"Have you not heard that when a person dies, he can no longer speak, feel, or think?" replied Nell, looking on the little orphan with deep pity.

"Oh, granny once told me something about it---but I hardly knew what she meant. Poor granny! But you say she is happy! Why, then, after all, it's good to die, aint it?"

"We had better take the child with us, and send some one to attend to the corpse," said Stephen to Nell.

"But I can't go with granny, can I?" exclaimed the child, with much

simplicity. "She has always been kind to me, and I don't want to leave her."

"You see, my little fellow," replied Stephen, "she is dead, and must be buried. But we will see that you are taken care of."

"Buried! O, you will put her under the earth, as she told me they put my poor father!" And the poor orphan cried bitterly. "Ah!" he added, as Nell attempted to lead him out of the hut; "I don't like those I love should be hid in the dark pit! Why cannot the dead remain as they do when they are alive, with the bright sun above their heads; and hear the birds singing, with the merry light warming their hearts?"

What poetry simple children utter.

"But they can neither hear, nor see, my dear Jem," said Stephen, kindly. "Come along with us."

"And yet granny has got eyes and ears still!" exclaimed the little fellow, refusing to quit the side of his dead protectress.

With some difficulty the youth and the girl succeeded in making the young boy understand what death is. We ourselves, who profess to have science, who can tell in what manner a muscle performs its office, and how parts are distributed economically and wonderfully, what do we know about the cessation of existence? Anatomist! explain to me the great phenomenon of life, show me where the vital spark has its habitation---the cause of its existence being in your mind a combination of elements too subtle for analysis---and then I will allow that you know more of the mysteries of being than the poor peasant, who works, eats, drinks, and dies. "Death," says the philosopher, "is a commingling of Time with Eternity." Ay, Life and Death are the be-all and the end-all *here;* and beyond them we can learn nothing from all the genius and intellect that ever belonged to man.

"And now," said Stephen to his cousin, "it is time for us to set out, as we are going to see Lord Wharton. What shall we do with the child in the meantime?"

"There is Martin, the ploughman at Farmer Hawthorn's yonder," returned Nell. "Jem is fond of him, and I'm sure he'll take care of him for the present."

So the child was consigned to the ploughman's care, and the cousins quitting the house of death also, walked in the direction of Travers Park.

"Ah! There is John Thompson yonder," exclaimed Stephen, when they arrived within a few yards of the smithy. "I'll go and speak to him. You can walk on, Nell."

Quitting the girl's side, Stephen joined the person he had alluded to.

"Well, Jenkins," said the man, who was the same dwarfish fellow who had been engaged in the poaching affair---"so; you are a lucky fellow.

You are in the right way to make a fortune, if you'll be but discreet and prudent."

"You have not seen your mother lately, have you?" returned Stephen to the short man.

"O, no! the old woman gives me such infernally cross looks, if I go to her, that I shan't trouble her again. I suppose you have just come from her hut?"

"I have: and I am sorry to inform you she is no more."

"What! Is the old girl dead? Well; she was only a burthen to herself and the parish. When we get beyond use, it's best to slip the cable.---So you saw her die?"

Stephen was shocked at the brutal indifference of Thompson; but he answered---

"She died very suddenly. Good morning to you."

"Stop a minute," cried the man. "Did she express to you any wish about aught?"

"She only recommended her little grandson to my care. She was not aware she was so near her end."

"Ah! the child must go to the workhouse, of course. They treat the children well there; and he hasn't been accustomed to luxury."

"If I can help it, the child shall not go to the workhouse," replied Stephen, firmly. "Again, good day."

So saying, he turned on his heel, deeply disgusted at the man's utter heartlessness. He soon overtook Nell; and they continued their walk, for the most part preserving silence. It was a bright, pleasant morning, and the sun poured down its effulgence on meadow, stream, and woodland; and although the trees were nearly stripped of their foliage, and the grass was no more fresh and verdant, the earth looked radiant in the light of Heaven, and Nature's heart seemed as joyous as in the early spring.

"Oh," cried Nell, after a long pause, "what a beautiful world it is! That so much sorrow, guilt and pain should afflict us, and desolate natures so formed for happiness as ours!"

"Guilt!" returned Stephen, "ay, whence did guilt proceed, originally? That, to my mind, seems the greatest misery in all the universe, as it is decidedly the deepest of all mysteries. For we are certain that God is infinitely great; and He must be infinitely good. Then what is the origin of crime and wretchedness? We know that He does not create them, He only permits; but from what could they have first sprung? God is alone eternal; and we could not conceive the co-eternity of an evil spirit."

"Oh, no," said Nell, "and since evil was not from the beginning, it will end for ever. But it is indeed inconceivable how, from good, evil came."

"Yes; for with God it is not as with man. *His* nature (if we may speak of such a thing) is not mingled, but perfect and unchangeable. Yet I have thought much on the subject, having lately read an atheistical work, which John bought, and I cannot think that the existence of evil is an argument against the existence of a God. For if it is impossible for the Almighty to do that which would involve a contradiction---as would be the case, if He could make one equal to himself---then he must make an imperfect creature, liable to err. Still we think in our ignorance that *we* should not have suffered sorrow to exist, if we could have obviated or removed it."

"Ah, dear Stephen, and does not the All-wise give us comfort? Does He not relieve our miseries? Even now, when we are so desolate in our condition, I feel a serenity diffused through my heart which I know not how to account for."

"I will tell you what is the cause of it, love. You think you have done rightly, and conscience is the approving voice of God. And we have just seen Death for the first time, and our nearest relations are criminals pursued of justice; but the dear light of truth shines within our souls, and informs them with that brightness which is alone peace. Oh, my beloved! this earth is cold and dark, and we are sinful and wretched; but when we aim at virtue, when we desert guilt, how blessed we are! We catch an anticipation of eternity, in seeking the eternal---for goodness is essentially so. Evil belongs to time, and it shall be annihilated; but good is the essence of the Creator, and in embracing it, with earnest spirits, we grow to Heaven."

Thus did these children of Nature endeavour to elucidate the enigma which all philosophy has left unsolved. It interests as much as it baffles all minds; it humiliates, while it excites the sublime reason that is in itself perhaps a profounder wonder.

"That is a beautiful idea, Stephen," said Nell, in answer to her cousin's last aphorism, "and I know it is your own. What comes from the heart is so unlike what comes from reading. Can you describe the nature of Good to your simple cousin? I have never been able to define even that, of myself."

"I will try to do so. But I will not pretend to give you a satisfactory answer. Goodness, in ourselves, is that principle which is developed more or less in every mind, and manifests chiefly here its divine origin. It sees the hand of Providence even in its afflictions; and is humbled at the spectacle of our ingratitude and crimes. Goodness beholds a soul of purity in all things (I believe I have read that somewhere;) and the gross and sensual, when subjected to its brightness, even as fire separates the base from the genuine metal, become useful to moralize upon. Oh, Truth is the light of Heaven, and Goodness is its soul and its shadow!"

"Very well---very well, indeed!" exclaimed a mild voice, as Stephen

enthusiastically described the essence of Good. So absorbed had the unsophisticated boy and girl been in this conversation, which embraced the topics Plato, Aristotle, and Solomon have descanted so much on, in abstract and lofty theses, that they had not observed they had reached Travers Park, and were now at no very great distance from the house, nor that a gentleman was walking close to their side, and listening to what they said with strong interest. Stephen took off his hat and bowed, and Nell curtsied to the person who had just spoken.

"I suppose you are come to see Lord Wharton?" said the gentleman, who was no other than Travers. "I will take you to him. Yes, my lad, you are right in your idea of Truth. It is, indeed, the light of the immortal, and Goodness is inseparable from it. I would have given something to have originated that notion."

"I am glad you like it, sir," answered Stephen.

"And what do you say about the matter?" asked Travers of Nell, who with a slight blush replied,

"I would add one thing to what Stephen said, sir. Good is the emanation of Truth, as the manifestation of Truth declares Goodness to be its Creator. I hardly know how to express my meaning. But Goodness is Truth in action, if I may so speak. I am a poor scholar, and I have but few words at command."

"Your meaning is quite clear," replied Travers. "How rarely," he thought, "do we meet with such minds as these; so fresh, so original, and so simple! In the splendid saloons of the great, you may hear brilliant sarcasm, and witty apopthegm, ready repartee, and, sometimes, profound philosophy: but they have all been studied, they are all, more or less, the product of laborious thought in the first instance, and are repeated over and over again, until we are weary even of the most excellent gems of fancy, and treasures of judgment and talent. Nature---lovely Nature! how divine a thing thou art! The truth which emanates from thee is beyond our weak conception true. But the facts we gather and build theories upon, are all vain and worthless, unless the illumination of the heart direct them aright. Beyond the highest Art, there is a higher still!" Thus ended his reflections.

CHAPTER XIII.

LORD WHARTON'S SOLILOQUY---THE MANIAC.

When Lord Wharton parted from the lawyer, he repaired to the library, and seated himself in a large arm-chair, which was constructed somewhere about the Elizabethian era. Thus he remained buried in deep reverie for a considerable time, when he arose, and paced slowly up and down the apartment.

"It must have been a vision," he said, in the accent of one willing to argue himself out of the conviction of something that had taken strong possession of the mind, but unable perfectly to do so. "It is absurd in the extreme to suppose that one from the dead could walk the earth in bodily form. Though there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy." He paused, and thought over the possibilities of the case. In certain states of mind, after the occurrence of some extraordinary event, the human intellect is prone to doubt every thing, even down to its own existence. It seems as if the curtain between the visible and invisible worlds were withdrawn, and time and eternity left to battle it out together, in dim, vague, and shadowy shapes, suggestive of things we cannot express even to ourselves.

The Peer continued, in the same voice, indicative of uncertainty and doubt of various shades and degrees---"Yet, though that apparition has often haunted me in sleep, how infinitely more real it was than ever I remember it. I have heard innumerable ghost stories, and laughed at them, even when authenticated so as almost to confound incredulity; but now---I cannot laugh. Oh, no! Shakspeare, in *Macbeth*, describes the usurper at the banquet, after the murder of Banquo, in the same state of mind---for there can be no doubt that the spectre was only visible to him, 'A false creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.' But, then, mine is no crime of recent commission; my remorse is deep seated, but neither startling, nor appalling. It is very strange!" He became silent and motionless, watching the moon disappear from the sky. It was about six o'clock; and the distant song of the milkmaid, or the whistle of the ploughboy at intervals struck on the ear. "Miserable dreamer that I am!" muttered the statesman, with a smile of bitter scorn, "I am not a man yet."

He walked to the bookshelves, and selected a volume from them. He had taken casually the singular work of Lord Monboddo, the Idealist, who substantiates his doctrines by some extraordinary facts, which he

believed were of unquestionable authenticity. It was just light enough to read; and Lord Wharton, proceeding to the window, soon became immersed in a work which he had not read for many years, and which, a few hours before, he would have ridiculed as containing the hallucinations of a crack-brained visionary: but somehow, it had now a novel and engrossing interest for him.

The Reader may not be acquainted with the "Ancient Metaphysics," a work indeed now seldom perused, except by the curious and learned; and so, a case of somnambulism in it, is probably one that never met his eye. It appears, that a young girl was in the habit of walking in her sleep, when she would run with great violence, but always with a certain destination, her eyes being uniformly close shut. When she awaked, and came to herself, she had not the slightest recollection of what had passed while she was asleep.

"It is possible," thought the Peer, "that our minds may sometimes be in a state, when they are not, so to speak, conscious of unconsciousness---as is usually the case in sleep, indeed, when we do not dream; and yet are active as when they are awake. In this case of somnambulism, there is that which is quite as strange and unaccountable as any vision whatsoever. There are states of being which we know not how they arise, and the phenomena of which neither physician nor mental philosopher can explain. All theories of perception, have ever been unsatisfactory to me. Then there may be a disease of the eye, which could occasion sounds and sights that do not exist in reality; and the brain is so delicately organized, that a little thing may derange it for a moment. Certain associations will arise most unaccountably, and many abstractions occur on a sudden, the source of which none can analyse. Yet I should like to satisfy myself on the point I have been thinking over. I am perplexed beyond measure. Never before did I feel myself unable to decide on a point."

While Lord Wharton was thus ruminating, the door of the library was opened, and a light, boyish figure appeared. But he was not noticed by the statesman, nor did the child notice him in the embrasure of the window. It was young Reginald, who had come in search of a book.

"Ah! it is gone!" he exclaimed: and then for the first time he perceived his uncle, and spoke to him. "Good morning," he said. "I did not expect to find you here, uncle."

"Good morning," replied the Peer, rousing himself from his reverie. "What book are you looking for?"

"Why, I was in want of a work called 'Ancient Metaphysics.' I am writing an essay, by my father's desire, on the difference between Superstition and Faith, and I thought I might get some useful notions from the book."

"And what do you know about such a work?" asked Wharton, much surprised.

"It is a curious volume; and I remember reading several things in it, which struck me greatly. Perhaps you have never met with it?"

"I suppose you have seen it in your father's hands?" rejoined the Peer, not noticing the boy's interrogatory.

"No, he seldom or never reads such books, now," said Reginald. "Look, there are the volumes he has in general use."

He pointed to a row of books, consisting of works on political economy, practical science, theology, and history.

"So," mused Wharton, "I see Travers has not been idle. And you," he added to the boy, "what do you commonly read? Not such works as these?"

"O! you have got Lord Monboddo! I should not have expected to have found him with you," returned Reginald. "*I* read almost every thing I can understand, and what I can't I ask my father to explain. There is nothing in the world he does not comprehend."

"What kind of book should you expect to find me with, then?" inquired the statesman of his precocious nephew.

The boy paused a moment, and then went to the farther end of the library.

"Here are the books I should think you study most," he said.

Lord Wharton advanced to where Reginald stood, and cast a glance at the volumes pointed out to his notice, little expecting that his tastes were so intimately conceived by the child. Lucretius, Ovid, Mandeville, Hobbes, the dramatists of the era of Charles the Second, Fielding, and Le Sage, were the chief authors arranged there; and the statesman smiled at the idea of a boy of the age of ten years reading an intellect like his.

"I do, I confess, frequently peruse these books, Reginald; but can you give me a reason for concluding that I do so?"

He conceived that this question would puzzle him; but he little knew the depth of his nephew's intellect.

"Certainly," replied the little fellow readily. "These authors take a position, in which they conclude the corruption and selfishness of human nature; and almost all statesmen, I have heard my father say, govern on the principle that men are worse than they really are. You are like other statesmen, I suppose. But my father, if he were what you are, would try to make men better. He would rule them by their good feelings,---by love and kindness; while others sway by severity and terror."

"What a politician you are," cried Lord Wharton with a mocking laugh, supposing that he repeated, parrot-like, what he had heard his father say.

"Yes, but my father tells me that I should learn to govern myself, be-

fore I think of trying to govern others," rejoined the boy. "He is of opinion that until our rulers are good, the people will never be so. Ah! that is a difficult thing---the conquest of oneself! More so, perhaps, than Alexander found the rule of the world! Do you not think so, my lord?"

Lord Wharton bit his lip, and thought with Richard, that "the brat had got his lesson." But disguising his real feelings, he said---

"Should you not like to be a great man, my boy?"

"Yes," answered Reginald. "But not such a man as Alexander was. What must have been in *his* heart when he wept, because he had nothing left to conquer,---he imagined? I think I could have told him a secret; but he was a Heathen, and would not have believed me. I would have told him that there are countless worlds---some of them never to be quite subdued---in our most wonderful nature; and until we make passions which are evil, the slaves of good, we may triumph over millions, and yet be what the Helots were of old. I would be a great man, indeed, like some of those in Sparta were,---like *one* in Britain *is*."

How mortified was the proud Peer by what that child said, without premeditation or thought of wounding his feelings! Not one of his inveterate political opponents had a sting so keen for him. And yet Reginald would not have done it for the world, if he had known the pain he inflicted. He would not have hurt an insect.

"What a boy it is!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, with his bitter smile, as he looked keenly into the serene face of his nephew. "He looks like 'the innocent flower; but is the serpent under it!'" he thought. He continued aloud, with his bitterest, and most withering irony, "Whence did you learn such wisdom? If you had lived among the Jews in times of old, they would have made a prophet of you. That we should learn philosophy out of the mouths of babes! O, excellent!"

Reginald looked up into his uncle's face, but made no reply. A suspicion of the truth darted upon him. It was at this juncture that Travers entered the library. The statesman's mind was made up that Reginald had been tutored to say what had touched him to the quick; though if he had dispassionately reflected on the character of his brother-in-law, he would have dismissed such an idea immediately. But his irritated pride and vanity communicated an asperity to his tone, as he said---

"Well, Travers, good morning. I must congratulate you on having a child of genius. Master Reginald has been entertaining me with a complete lecture on ethics. Aristotle was nothing to our prodigy. He studies metaphysics, and I dare say has got far beyond Berkeley already. He must go to Germany, and show he is beyond Kant and the Transcendentalists."

"Indeed! I was not aware of his being so deep a philosopher. It is somewhat too early for him, perhaps, to pursue such abstract studies, and

set up for a sage. For at his age, boys when they read hard reasonings, usually con words without attaching ideas to them---a very bad practise------"

"O, but I don't do that!" exclaimed Reginald, eagerly. "I always ask you the meaning of what is very difficult indeed, and you teach me the way to set about overcoming it. Don't you wish me to read such works?"

"I must know wherefore you do so, before I answer you."

"O, the reason why I do so, is this---that works of such a kind seem to pour thoughts into my mind that were never there before. Nothing can give me so many ideas and feelings as they do. But I don't attempt to understand the *very* abstruse parts. I take the simple portions, and work out the rest, as I can, in my own brain."

"Then I have nothing to say against your taste, Reginald," replied Travers. "Think whenever you can, and in any way; for thought will always correct itself: but don't perplex your intellect, at present, with what tasks its powers too greatly. My dear brother," (turning to the Peer,) "I am afraid you have not slept well. You look worse than I ever saw you."

"I have had the nightmare, that is all," returned Lord Wharton. "I am rather more than usually subject to that inevitable concomitant of high living, hard thinking, and intense anxiety.---I have got much to say to you, Travers; but I will reserve it until after breakfast. I suppose that meal will not be ready for an hour, so I will go and write a letter."

The statesman here quitted the library; and Travers turning to his son, asked him what he had been saying to his uncle before he was present.

"I am afraid I offended him," returned the boy; "but I did not intend to do so:" and he narrated the conversation, already recorded.

"You must weigh your words before you give utterance to them, my dear child," said Travers, thoughtfully. "Come, now we will go and look after the poor maniac we brought home with us."

Having thus spoken, Travers proceeded to inquire after the unfortunate Harriet; and found her in a large, gloomy chamber, where the banners and armour of his ancestors hung the walls. She had a guitar in her hand, one that Travers remembered had belonged to his beloved wife; and was carelessly running her fingers over the strings. She greeted her new friend and his son with one of her sweet, sad smiles when she perceived them, but did not rise from her seat, and exclaimed---

"How the busy world goes round! Heaven shines all the same, though the hearts of men be glad as butterflies, or gloomy as charnels! It is morning now, and the birds are singing as if they were in Paradise!

I used to love them when my soul was like a bird, soaring and soaring for ever."

Travers took the afflicted creature by her wasted hand, and spoke some friendly and soothing words to her.

"You will let me play on this guitar, will you not?" she asked with a beseeching face. Nothing can be conceived more winning than the unfortunate creature was. "*He* gave me a guitar once: I learned to play it when I was a little child, of an old, wandering minstrel, who used to be so kind to me! Shall I sing to you? My voice is poor, now; but I sometimes think there is yet a little music in it; and it is pleasing to me to hear it. God gave music to soothe the bruised spirits of such poor wretches as I am."

"O, the deep love that the Seraphs feel!
All other love is vile.
The soul's sweet light false love will steal,
With its bright, serpent smile.

But thou, O mortal! wilt be wise,
Nor set thy thoughts below;
Thou'lt seek the pure and sapphire skies,
Where orbs of angels glow.

O, the deep love of those spirits high!
There's naught but what they love!—
To love like them, and then to die,
Is to be bless'd above!

Then soar, O soar! from all the woe
And desolation here,
And like the heavens' own beauty grow,
Grow like th' immortal there!"

"Poor Harriet!" added the maniac, after she had finished her ballad; "none, none love her! She has done wrong, and the bright stars turn away from her sick eyes, and the pure seraphs will not look on her. Yet one of them wept once for me. God forgive the sinner, say I! If *He* did not forgive, none would inhabit Eternity. And yet how can the lost ones bear to think that all will be known hereafter,---even their most secret thoughts. Try to keep the soul as a glass in which God may see Himself!"

"A beautiful, beautiful spirit wrecked!" murmured Travers to his son.

"A divine one!" replied Reginald, with tears in his eyes. "I will speak to her.---Good Harriet, do not mourn. There is comfort for all," he said, tenderly.

The maniac accepted the young boy's hand. She pressed it to her lips, and a single drop fell from her eyes on those small, white fingers. She looked on the tear intently.

"I thought no tear would ever leave these eyes again!" she exclaimed. "Was there not a woman who washed the Eternal's feet with her tears, and dried them with the hair of her head? I remember something of the kind, though I forget everything, save my own woe. She was like me, that poor soul. Ah! why may not I do likewise?"

For a single instant the glimmering of reason seemed to expand in the brain of the maniac; but again her wild thoughts wandered away (who shall say how or why?) and she said---

"The boy has a fine face: and so has yonder heaven. I sometimes think the Universe is God; it is so strangely beautiful. That dust and rottenness should look so! I recollect *he* told me, that some believe it *is* God. But then, that cannot be true, for the Creator's glory could not be dimmed like this brief dream of beauty we call the earth. O, to see the tempests, and the whirlwinds, and the destruction!---They make me mad. But more than storm and desolation is the ruin within the human heart."

Harriet buried her face in her hands, and became mute as death. Travers and his son contemplated her with unspeakable interest, and speculated, as the man of mature understanding, and the boy of dreamy fancies do, on the *arcana* of the spirit.

"My son," said Travers, after a silence of some minutes, "do you not think every thing is lovely, even when ruined and overshadowed? Madness is not less so than reason: and to my mind it is eloquent of worlds which are invisible to us, and has a voice to touch and mend the heart. When we consider that we are all liable to this sad affliction, how it ought to humble our pride, and show us what poor, dependent creatures we are, and how frail is the tenure of all earthly possessions.---Well, now we will go to the breakfast room. Will you tell one of the servants to take some food to this poor thing? We must make inquiries about her, and see what we can do to alleviate her condition."

"Perhaps," observed Reginald, "it is much better that she should be without her reason than to recal the past: for it must be very full of horror to her. O, my dear father! Even in this, how good is Providence! The mad know not the griefs which made them so; and peace is often attained thus, when otherwise there could be none."

The boy spoke true. Insanity is not so great an evil to those possessed with it, as it is a living sorrow to those whose minds are whole. The mad die away from the actual world; and their withered hearts grow green in a spring of the ideal.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW CHARACTERS---FASHION---TRAVERS WHARTON---VICE AND CRIME.

THE hours at Travers Hall were unusually early, and breakfast was ready on the morning in question still more so than was common, even there. Ham, eggs, fowls, and cold game were prepared for Lord Wharton, but Travers himself partook of nothing except dry toast and tea, with which Reginald was also well content.

"What hermits you are!" remarked the statesman, as he helped himself to the wing of a pheasant, though he did not feel much appetite for food.

"You know that neither I nor Reginald have very robust health, and we are obliged to be careful in our diet," replied Travers.

As this sentence was spoken, a servant entered with some letters, which had come by express to Lord Wharton. "Ah!" cried the statesman, "from the Home Office. Exuse me." The brow of Lord Wharton darkened as he read the missive in his hand, and rising from his chair, he said, "I must answer this directly. I shall take no more breakfast."

Travers finished his meal as soon as his guest quitted the apartment; and taking his hat and stick, walked out to enjoy the morning air. As he was returning homewards, in the course of half an hour, he encountered Stephen and Nell, as we have seen, and conducted them into his house. Just as he arrived before the door of the mansion, he perceived Mr. Sharp, with whom he had to transact some business forthwith, and seeing Reginald at a little distance, beckoned to him and bade him take the youth and the girl into the parlour, and to tell Lord Wharton that they had arrived.

The lawyer eyed Stephen with much surprise, and asked of Travers who he was. But the expression of the human face is so variable, that he did not seem the same individual as he looked a few hours previously, when he created so great a sensation in Lord Wharton.

"Indeed I have not heard his name," was the response of Travers; "but he has rendered a great service to my brother-in-law."

Travers then, as briefly as was possible, narrated the escape of the statesman from assassination; and Sharp, though ordinarily so cold and impenetrable, was so much excited by what he heard, that he could scarcely contain the ebullition of his feelings.

"Thank Heaven," he inwardly exclaimed, "that my scheme of vengeance has not been baffled!" And added aloud, "His lordship, whom I saw at a very early hour this morning, did not mention to me this miraculous deliverance."

"He is not very communicative, you know, Mr. Sharp. Will you walk this way?" And Travers and the lawyer were soon engrossed with the dry details of business.

It is not necessary to enter into the particulars which occupied them for above an hour; but on the termination of the conference, we will follow Sharp, as events were in embryo which exercised a powerful influence over his destinies. How very remote is the chain of events, and how inscrutable the links whereby our own fate is evolved! How wonderfully we are connected with our fellows, and how the fortunes of the individual affect those of nations! Even the reading of this tale---though it be not of a remarkable description, perhaps---may determine the destiny of more than one, by turning thought into channels in which it has been unaccustomed to flow; for thought is the parent of action---it is the spirit to the body, the flame to the fuel; and how small and seemingly nugatory a spark of fire will create mischief scarcely to be conceived. That story of the poor author being ordained to the lowest depths of hell for the injury his works had done, should be continually before the minds of those who constitute themselves the intellectual monarchs of men. A novel exercises an influence more immediate than a philosophical work, and its sphere is, primarily, more extended. But then, it must be conceded that the philosopher rules the mind of the novelist, while he governs the million. The one is a Pope, the other a Bishop. So, ye thinkers, consider the *onus* on your shoulders!

To return to the lawyer. He walked along the gravelled path which extended for nearly half a mile from the house, buried in profound rumination; when to his surprise he was accosted with---

"Well, dad, how are you to-day? You did not expect to see Algernon and me here."

Lifting up his eyes, Sharp saw a lad of about fifteen, and a diminutive young man, some four years older, standing before him. The former was somewhat like himself, with a slight, graceful form, a cold, hard eye, a sarcastic mouth, and high, narrow forehead. There was some intelligence in the boy's countenance, but there was a sneer upon it, which made it very unpleasing. The elder youth was a delicate-looking person, with white face, and flaxen hair which curled naturally; and a singular mixture of the plebeian and patrician in his appearance. His nose was inclinable to snub-*ism*, but the arch of his upper lip, and the polished forehead---which was his finest feature---relieved his visage from vulgarity. His eyes were of a light hazel, and not deficient in expressiveness, but rather inanimate, the lower part of his face being sensual, and

sense, apathy, and pride oddly mixed together in all he said, and looked, and did. He was dressed with great taste and simplicity, and seemed to be one who rather led than followed fashion. Such was Sir Algernon Sharp, the son of a plebeian banker and a patrician lady, and to whom the lawyer had alluded in his interview with Williamson.

"The fact is, dad," said young Sharp---the son, not the nephew of the lawyer, "the little Smyths asked Algernon and I, by their aunt's desire, to pay them a visit; and as we had nothing better to do, we thought we would run down and take a week's shooting. So here we are."

"And when did you come, may I ask?" returned Mr. Sharp.

"Oh, we drove down yesterday. Algernon has got such a fine turnout. We came in no time in it."

"Pray, Sir Algernon, may I be informed where you procured this dashing vehicle?" asked the attorney.

"Upon my soul, my dear sir," answered the baronet, with a fashionable drawl, "my memory is so damnably treacherous, that I don't exactly call to mind the maker's name. We left it at the lodge gate; so you can easily satisfy your curiosity."

"Ineffable assurance!" muttered the lawyer. "Well, if tradesmen are such fools as to trust mere boys with their goods, I can't help it. I suppose you never intend to pay the coachmaker, Sir Algernon?"

"I really can't say---it must depend on circumstances. I have contracted many debts at that d---d Eton, and Cambridge is cursedly expensive; so that I may run through my fortune before I am of age."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, and began to whistle. Then he drew forth his snuff-box, and took snuff.

"I believe I have some remarkably fine rappee here, if you like it," said the baronet, drawing forth a splendid diamond-set box from his waistcoat pocket. "This box was given me by the young Countess of St. Clair," added Sir Algernon, remarking his uncle eyed it curiously. She is a devilish pretty woman is my cousin, the Countess, and I make desperate love to her. By the bye, my dear uncle, I am invited by the St. Clairs to spend Christmas with them, and I must have a supply of cash. Shall I get it of you, or have recourse to the money-lenders? They are extortionate rogues, but very useful. Nothing less than £300 will do."

"You will not have it of me, Sir Algernon; you have already exceeded your yearly allowance, and the expenses you are about to incur at College will be great."

"As I live," here cried the baronet, with an enthusiasm in his manner which he seldom indeed allowed himself to be betrayed into, "here is no less a person than Travers Wharton. My dear fellow! how d'ye do? What the deuce brings you here from St. James's?"

"Good morning, Sharp," replied a very handsome, elegant man of about thirty, who approached on horseback from the lodge, which the Sharps had nearly reached. He was the perfection of symmetry, the *ne plus ultra* of London---Paris---refined grace and *nonchalance*, with regular features, inimitable ease of attitude, studied though every posture was, and dressed in such a manner as would, if modernized about forty years, have driven Count D'Orsay or Sir E. Bulwer distracted.

Is it not wonderful that men, rational men---possible angels, we may hope---should think so much of covering their nakedness with the fine, gaudy rags which will soon leave their backs, and finally drop off the limbs of the beggar, when they are dust themselves? Aye, and good men, by'r lady! men with mind and heart, have stooped to attain distinction in such poor things as these! As for the Prince of Fops now before us---cold-hearted worldlings such as he may "strut and fret their hour upon the stage," like the peacock, and be forgotten, without sensible people giving a thought to the matter; but it seems to me a most woeful waste of time for a man who has one spark of intellect to spend hours, as it were, in decking tombs---for such are the mortal parts of us all.

The Reader may now contemplate as long as he likes the portrait of Captain Wharton, M.P. He was in the Guards, a leader of fashion, an exclusive among exclusives, brother to Lord Wharton, and possessor of a reputation similar to that enjoyed by Beau Brummell and the illustrious Count abovementioned. Just look at him as he sits his exquisite courser! Five feet ten of hyper-Adonisism! What beauty in his hyacinthine locks! What glory in his incomparable whiskers! What perfection in his curled moustache! Polished and easy in his address, as has been intimated, with a clear, low voice, a smile and a bow like George the Fourth's (of whom he was a chosen companion), and no less great in his way than that king of coxcombs, he was the very epitome of the court of the great monarch, whose *virtues* are immortal, whose vices the quintessence of all that is most artificial, heartless, and fascinating. He made a coalition between the moral and immoral, leaving no distinction betwixt them; for his morality differed from his immorality in no way more than a paradox from an absurdity. But some may think, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. If Lord Wharton enjoyed the celebrity of being nearly the greatest statesman in Europe, his brother was, beyond all comparison, the most perfect *Beau*. He was the arbiter of Bond-street tailors, his judgment was law to St. James's-street bootmakers, his *ipse dixit* there was no appeal from, with regard to the Opera, the ballet, and the ladies. He was a great man in his way---that Captain Wharton---and so was James Greenacre, so were Burke and Hare. He was not a wit, yet he had a mode of speaking which prevented aught he uttered degenerating into dullness; he had not superior intellect in any shape

which mind must soar to grasp; yet his refined taste, his coolness, his unutterable impudence---which was never coarse nor vulgar---impressed the mass with an idea of his understanding; and it was implicitly believed in the coteries of Grosvenor-square, that the Honorable Travers Wharton, Captain in the Horse Guards, and representative of some rotten borough, which his brother had procured for him in order that he might not be arrested for debt, was one of the cleverest fellows in the universe.

There were three things which Captain Wharton could do incomparably---viz. dress, walk, and dance. There were four things he could do as well as any---Flatter, make love to silly women, fence, and play billiards; and by this last accomplishment he derived the principal part of his income. There were five things he could do, so as to be surpassed by few---Get up small talk, play in private theatricals those characters where fine attitudes do everything, and ditto in humbug in the actual world, as his duns well knew, fire a pistol, as he had once proved by killing his man in a duel, and in the last place, manage to induce his friends to lend him money, albeit he was never known to repay it.---Come now, is not that a good picture? Who would not have such a man for a friend? Hang virtue, when vice can assume so goodly a shape! Poor, honest virtue! What the plague have you to do in the consummation of a man of fashion?---This admirable Crichton was no worse than ten thousand others. He would not have committed the crimes for which many a better fellow has been hanged; but in small vices he could have paved purgatory with the multiplicity of his offences. I remember the author of "Paul Clifford" is very partial to defining crime and vice, and appears to strike the balance in favour of the former. For instance---An habitual drunkard gets inebriated on a Sunday, and talks scandal of all his acquaintances. Excellent man! The liquor got the better of his judgment. A poor devil of a mechanic simply gets drunk, is fined, and sent in default of payment to the treadmill. But then the one was in a room, the other in a street! That makes the difference.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAWYER AND HIS THOUGHTS---UNEXPECTED VISION---MADNESS AND ITS DREAMS.

Were I to write an essay on fashion, and wanted an analysis of its component parts, I should proceed to anatomize the moral nature of Travers Wharton. He was all that heart of man can desire to look upon, or to hear, but if one searched deeper, he beheld utter vacuity. His

emptiness was not apparent; for he had quickness,---as most such men have,---and he was an adept in concealing his real feelings. He was a man of *honour*,---unsullied honour in his way; he always paid his gambling debts, was never suspected of unfair play, had never been known to betray the confidence of a woman who favoured him (and probably he might have ruined the fair fame of at least a hundred frail beauties with a breath), he could not be accused of want of courage, never having refused a challenge, nor was he destitute, in short, of any quality necessary to constitute the reputation which he so pre-eminently enjoyed. His is a species of character which some of our modern Novelists are fond of drawing, and they do so with such success, that they will probably in the end hurl down these idols of empty heads and frivolous hearts from the pedestals they have so long occupied. But we shall have more of this worthy, anon. Let it be borne in mind that by reversing his christian and sirname, we mention the most admirable of mankind, and that he is intended as a foil to show the lustre of the diamond, and not because we are anxious to draw an elaborate picture of such a "painted butterfly."

Mr. Sharp had business in the neighbourhood, and having a supreme contempt for the coxcomb,---which was only equalled by the coxcomb's disdain of him,---he passed him with a slight bow---just acknowledged by the Captain---and went his way.

"That the world should entertain any admiration for such a thing as that!" thought the lawyer. "Well, the world has strange ideas, and it is nothing to me. It is a crack-brained, stupid world, and the only care of wise men is to gratify their inclinations, and not care a single farthing for any but self. And yet I did not always think so! I remember the time when I was resolved on dedicating myself to the cause of truth and liberty. Ah! that was before I became a roguish lawyer's clerk. What a sublime and beautiful universe I thought it at that time! I could have wished myself a poet."

Sharp paused as these cogitations came to a conclusion, and gazed at the lovely prospect spread out before him. Instead of proceeding to the lodge-gate, he had struck off to the left, and ascended an eminence which commanded an extensive view of the scenery around. The atmosphere was so brilliant that the perspective appeared almost immeasurable, and "distance lent enchantment to the view." Far as the eye could reach were hamlets, and villages, streams, and hills, and valleys alternating; and many a picturesque ruin, and many a rustic church with its tall spire, and tree-adorned burial ground were visible far away; while farm houses, and fields, and cattle were distributed at short intervals in isolated quietness.

The lawyer stood still and gazed; and, in spite of himself, a tear gathered in his eye, and he felt sad and desolate of soul. "My boyhood!

My manhood! My enthusiasm and romance! where are ye now!" he said. "Old age is advancing rapidly upon me; and in a few more years I shall sleep!"

The generality of people when they have reached the age of Sharp are affected by sombre and saddening reflections; for they feel more powerfully then the nothingness of the human, and, in such minds as his, the uncertainty of the divine. Not that he was of an unbelieving or even of a sceptical disposition: but he was a man of the world, and he looked not beyond the grave for that peace which time cannot afford. And in that scene of beauty and extreme loveliness, where the deer were leaping joyously and the birds were chirruping with no less glee, the sense of his condition became painful to contemplation---to feeling: for he experienced the beauty, to know that it must depart, he beheld the radiance to know that it must fade; and the angel of hope was not within him; for what was his hope? The fruition of a dark revenge.---O, insanest of insanity!

Presently, as he still stood wrapt in thought, he heard a melody. Why did he start? It was sung in a low and tender voice, full of sweetness and pathos; but it recalled to his memory more forcibly than aught save music *can* the happy hours which could never more return to him. Within fifty feet of him was a female form, and though it was greatly changed since he had last beheld it, he could not be mistaken. The stature was so remarkable, the loveliness, though faded so exquisite, the voice, the gestures so remarkable, that he at once recognised in her who had been singing his lost Harriet. He rushed forwards, and caught her in his arms; but released her instantaneously, as if stung by some serpent.

The maniac peered into his countenance with earnest wonder; but no token did she give that she remembered him. She struck a few chords on a guitar in her hand, and for a moment accompanied it with her voice; but ceased, and stood without motion before him who had adored her in her youth.

"I felt that she was not dead!" muttered Sharp; "but it would have been better so. She knows me not---poor girl."

"And so I hear that Mercury has been up to the moon," cried Harriet on a sudden. "Do you know what the moon is? It is a great, cold lump of matter, even as this earth on which we tread, though it looks so bright and full of soul: and no one dwells there but a monster who looks out of it with his huge eyes. Some people say that the sun is the place in which the condemned dwell; but that is not true at all. The sun which shines on us now so radiantly is very fair. Nothing so bright can be full of pain. Hell is in the heart; it has no habitation, no locality, alas!"

"Oh, God, has she come to this?" exclaimed Sharp, with bitter

anguish. "Such a mockery of reason! What devil could have been so inhuman, so fiendish, as to have ruined such a being?"

"What calling do you follow, friend?" asked the maniac earnestly of the lawyer. "The best employment is that of a baker; for he supplies the wants of all. Bread is God's gift. I don't much like a butcher, for I love the innocent lambs we see grazing here, and those beautiful stars ---O, I would not have them slaughtered!---Are you one of those that rob the poor---one of those falsely called great, who are the vilest of the mean?"

Sharp took Harriet's hand with quivering fingers and cried---

"Do you not recollect me, Harriet? Do you not recollect your cousin, ---he to whom you were to have been married? I have sought far and wide; but vainly until now."

"Ah! you might well seek me in vain," returned the maniac; "for I am the favourite of Queen Mab, and she will not often spare me. When she dies (if she should ever do so) I am to be Queen of the Fairies:---so she has willed it. What pretty little creatures the Fairies are! *You* do not see them in the heart of the violet, and the bosom of the rose: but I have more than earthly eyes. Mab gave them to me, and I discover beauties mortals dream not of. What a world of glory is contained in every flower and bud! There are kingdoms in each petal, and nations in each blossom. I cannot sing to you of them; for I have not a song: but I'll learn one. Oberon will teach me."

"What! Not *one* spark of sweet reason left?" said Sharp. "O, Heaven!"

"Thought!" exclaimed Harriet. "I cannot conceive what thought is. I once asked *him* the question; but he could not tell me.---And yet there was nothing that he did not know. I almost believed he was God. But, O! I don't think so now. I have seen God, and I behold him beautiful, and pure and benignant, scattering blessings through the universe. I went up to Heaven one night when I was asleep: and I saw such wondrous things! *He* was not there; and I was sorrowful, and asked the reason of Michael, the Archangel. And the Great One replied, 'he cannot enter here. When he quits the earth, he will descend into a region of eternal gloom, where no fair light is seen, and where our Great Father's smile does not enter.' I wept; and then the spectacle of wonder left me ---starless!"

"*He, he!*" ejaculated Sharp, from between his teeth. "*He* in Heaven! Ha, ha, ha! O, Harriet! My poor, dear love!"

"Why do you weep so distractedly?" asked the maniac. "*I* never laugh nor weep. Is not that well? I used to do so when I was a happy, light-hearted girl, before I loved, or thought of loving. Smiles and tears are for the *very* happy! Is it not strange that joy and grief should produce the same results? Come, I am going home, now, and I should like

you to go with me. Give me your arm.---What makes it shake so? Are you not well?"

"Agony! agony!" exclaimed the wretched Sharp: and covering his face with his hands, he sobbed aloud.

What a spectacle would that have been to those who only knew in that man the cunning, clever, shrewd, and stony-hearted lawyer---to see him standing there, totally overcome by sorrow, his chest heaving with the intensity of his emotion, and every muscle in agitation, as if he were shaken by a giant. And he *was* shaken by the giant PASSION, which can unman a Hercules, and nerve a fragile woman with irresistible might. He recovered himself with a desperate effort; but the maniac walked away from him, and he saw that Sir Algernon and his son were sauntering in the direction she took. He also beheld a servant from the house advancing, and loth to expose his weakness, he hastily left the spot, and sought a solitary place where he could indulge his overstrained feelings at will. What a luxury it is to the "o'ercharged heart" to relieve itself by those drops which the cold and unfeeling---those who have not soul enough to be virtuous, or to commit great crimes---are never known to shed. They may be as hot as lava, but they relieve the breast; they may burn and scald, but they prevent madness, they cause the passions to flow in new channels. Were there no possibility of shedding tears, and the earth were full of great deep hearts and fiery spirits, it would be one vast mad-house. Do you say Stoics shed no tears? It may be, stoicism is the stupidest of insanity. To indulge the feelings is sometimes wiser than to restrain them.

CHAPTER XVI.

LORD WHARTON—POLITICAL INTRIGUES—STEPHEN AND NELL—TRAVERS WHARTON—SIR ALGERNON SHARP AND HIS COUSIN.

WHEN Lord Wharton quitted the breakfast-room, he ascended to his own chamber, and re-opened the official missives he had received, with deep attention.

"Fools! fools!" he said, with lowering brow, "they know not what they do. Here is that precious premier about to propose a measure which will utterly divide our already divided party! Let him do it! If he dare, I will resign, and the ministry must break up.---But, then, in the event of a general election, I fear greatly the consequences. I must write to the------He can understand, if he will; but I think that he is about to leave us. The idiots! to concoct this hair-brained scheme

without consulting me!---Then here is another vexatious business! That demagogue has been stirring up the minds of the people against us. We must bribe him; he possesses great influence. Hang the fellow! he will accept nothing less than £10,000, and the treasury is almost exhausted with these wars."

Lord Wharton commenced writing rapidly; and while so engaged there was a tap at his door, and his young nephew cried from without---

"The persons you expected from the smithy are here, sir. Shall I tell them you will see them presently?"

"Do so," answered the Peer.

The boy departed, and he was soon again absorbed in business. There was one letter which frequently caused his lip to curl with bitter scorn as he answered it; and its contents may not be uninteresting; so they are here subjoined. The hand-writing was large and clear, and the diction as follows.

"My Lord,

"I have executed the commission which your lordship gave me, faithfully, and sought an interview with the Marquis. He was very polite, and on my opening the business as you desired me, he said, 'I have a great respect for Lord Wharton, a very great respect, indeed: but there are some points on which we can never agree. It is with reluctance, I assure you, sir, that I introduce division into the councils of the great party to which I belong: but you are aware that were I to submit to all the innovations which some of the ministry propose, I should concede the vital interests of the great agricultural body; and I will not do so.' I attempted to talk him over, but in vain. I had no better success with others of the powerful Tories who are so troublesome in their opposition, but Lady ------ is going to see what she can do with them. Her ladyship's beauty may effect more than my vile logic, I dare say. It will not be advisable for your lordship to remain long absent in the present aspect of affairs. There was a dinner given to a select few by the premier, yesterday; and I never beheld more indecision and stupidity than was exhibited on the occasion. If it were possible to strengthen our party with Mr. Travers, it would indeed be a most important addition. He is trusted by all. Your lordship shall hear more without fail tomorrow from your lordship's devoted servant."

This epistle was from a man whom Wharton had raised to some political eminence, and who held a subordinate office in the administration.

"As I expected," said the Peer, "the worthy marquis is consistent in his opposition. Nothing like interested motives for the conservation of consistency. Well, well, he would lose £10,000 a year, which is, I suppose, about a twentieth part of his income, by the measure in question.

We might make it up to him in some way, perhaps; but he will not confide in us. The man is right. I should do likewise in his situation.---Lady ------! Ah! she has a tongue---a tongue that might 'wheedle with the devil.' She is a wanton woman, though: she cannot be trusted. I know she has taken into favour that young Radical fellow who spoke so ably the other night in the House. O, the intricacy of these state intrigues! Even I myself can scarcely see through all their tortuous windings. Humbug! humbug! Lo! the history of the political Universe! I wonder if there will ever arrive a better state of things? Hum! It is impossible to satisfy all. Every one wants to be better off than his neighbour."

Here came another knock at the door, and a servant appeared with letters by the ordinary post for Lord Wharton. One of them, the handwriting of which---a delicate and elegant one---he was familiar with, he carefully opened. The others he perceived were from his duns, and he threw them aside.

"I know not," he muttered, "whether a creditor we cannot pay, or a loving mistress we cannot love, is the greatest bore."

A portion of the first epistle we will glance at.

"How weary are the hours, my Wharton, while you are absent from your Anna's arms, to her. ('Her old theatrical way,' yawned the Peer.) I cannot tell you, dear one! how much I suffer while my fancy broods over the dangers that may have befallen you. Do not be absent long, if you love me, dearest! I try to read; but my eyes ache from want of sleep: I try to sing; but my voice lacks its melody. This beautiful world has no joy for me, unless it is shared with you." (Lord Wharton gaped.) "Pray write to me by return of post, dearest, for I am sad, I am ill.---Who do you think called on me to day? I could not see him, but he left his card with many inquiries after me. My visitor was the Marquis."

"Ha!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, with animation. "Ha! I will lay a net to catch the lecherous old fellow, yet. But Anna is a fool. She might make her fortune in a few months if she would---Hang it! I did not think that the man at his age would be susceptible to beauty. I recollect the other day I met him when I was driving her in the Park, and he seemed struck with admiration. I wish he would take her, and vote for that confounded measure. We shall see, we shall see! When a man is in love he is ass enough to commit any folly. He will sign away his estates, blemish his honour, or cut his throat. And your old lovers advancing towards their dotage, are most extravagant of all in what they do. Well, now I will go and speak with this lad. He is a clever fellow; and the girl!---I wonder what it is that interests me so much for them?

The boy is wonderfully like her---poor Harriet! They saved my life, it is true; but God knows I do not owe them much for *that*. I wish I had never been born."

So saying, the Peer quitted his chamber, and was soon in the room where Stephen and Nell were talking with Reginald.

"Good morning to you!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, giving one hand to the youth, and the other to the girl. "I am very glad to see you. Have you breakfasted yet?"

"I thank your lordship; but I don't think either Nell or myself could eat," replied Stephen, with perfect ease of manner; for the innate nobility of the heart will always make a gentleman in any station of life.

"A little teaching," thought the Peer, "would make this stripling as perfect a courtier as ever lived. My worthy brother, the Captain, would think him a clown, perhaps, because he has not the St. James's slang; but, now, he is one of Heaven's gentlemen. Ay, he is so like *her!* Wonderful!" He added aloud, "Nay, I must have you try and force an appetite. Reginald, you will be kind enough to order something for our friends here."

While the statesman was speaking, the steps of several persons were heard, and immediately the door opened, and Captain Wharton with Sir Algernon Sharp and his cousin, entered.

"Why, what brings you here?" demanded Lord Wharton of his brother, whom he very seldom saw; for he did not frequent either Almack's, or the Opera.

It was about half a year since he had seen the King of Fashion (as Travers Wharton was generally called), save in Hyde Park for a moment, or perhaps for a few minutes when there was a very momentous debate in the House of Commons.

"O, I've got something to say to you, Tom," replied the coxcomb. "I am staying with the St. Clairs, just now; and as their house is not beyond a ride, I bestirred myself some three hours earlier than usual, and employed them in cantering to see you and Travers. I suppose you visit St. Clair and his lovely lady?"

"Not I," replied Lord Wharton, contemptuously. "St. Clair cannot command three votes."

"They are devilish nice people, though. The Countess is nearly as pretty a woman as any now at Court."

"And how are you, Algernon?" asked the Peer of the young Baronet, afterwards nodding to the lawyer's son.

"I am very well, I thank your lordship," answered Sir Algernon.

"Who the deuce have you got here with you, Thomas?" inquired the Captain in a half-whisper of his brother, glancing at Stephen and Nell.

"Friends of mine, who have prevented you succeeding to the title, by saving my life, last night;" replied Lord Wharton. "Come, we will

leave them for the present to eat their breakfast.---I will speak with you again, in a few minutes," he said to those he had just alluded to. "Travers" (to his brother) "I am obliged to write a short note, and to seal a letter, which when I have done, I will rejoin you."

The statesman disappeared, and Captain Wharton and the Sharps strolled again into the park. They had not walked many furlongs, when they perceived a female figure approaching them, and the Baronet and his cousin, quitting the side of the Exquisite, who was talking to Harris, the gamekeeper, about the moors (for the Captain piqued himself on being a dead shot, and would endure immense fatigue for the sake of bagging a few peasants---though he thought it a most terrible bore to attend parade);---and noticing that there was something uncommon in the woman's appearance, they resolved, as the younger Sharp expressed it, "to have some fun with her."

"That's a handsome girl who was in the room with my guardian," remarked Sir Algernon to his cousin, as they left Captain Wharton. "That fellow has good taste in beauty. He keeps a splendid woman in ------ Street. I am astonished he should bore himself with the affairs of the state."

The maniac was now within twenty yards of the two youths; but if they intended to annoy the poor creature they were disappointed; for Travers appeared on a sudden, and seeing Harriet, asked of a servant, who was passing, why she had been left alone. The answer was, that if a back were turned, she vanished, as if by magic, and Travers advancing, addressed her in his kind, gentle manner; but she took no notice of what he said. The young Sharps abandoning their intention of "having fun" with the strange-looking person before them, sauntered across the park, and Travers giving Harriet in charge to the servant he had spoken to, greeted Captain Wharton.

"I'm happy to see you looking well," said the officer to his kinsman. "I'm going to stay a few hours with you, if you will be troubled with my company."

"As long as you will favour me with your presence I shall be happy," returned Travers, as graciously as he could; but he entertained no little contempt for his cousin.

"Your gamekeeper tells me the preserves are in good order," remarked the Exquisite to Travers. "You must let me see what execution I can do in them some day."

"Certainly; but I hear you are a terrible fellow with your gun."

"Almost as much so as you are with your logic in the House. By the by, I was mistaken for you the other day by a celebrated political character who heard me called 'Travers,' and then 'Wharton!' He took me by the hand, and nearly broke my rings and fingers with squeezing it, exclaiming, 'Mr. Travers! This is the proudest day of my life, sir---

to find myself seated by the best and greatest man in Europe---in the world.' 'My dear sir,' I replied, groaning in the spirit, as the Methodists would say, at his unintentional cruelty in crushing my luckless bones---'I am infinitely indebted to you---I feel sublimely honoured; but I shall be much indebted to your lordship to release my hand.' Of course, I thought he was in admiration of Travers Wharton the exclusive, not Wharton Travers the statesman. But the mistake was afterwards explained, and I shall never forget the fellow's ineffable disdain, when he discovered the real character of the individual he had put to such excruciating pain. Well, perhaps by this time my brother Thomas is disengaged. *Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COXCOMB AND THE PHILOSOPHER---TRAVERS AND GUIZOT---THE PLOT DISCOVERED---THE PEER'S SOLILOQUY.

READER! do you admire the Coxcomb or the Patriot? The Peacock or the Swan? The one all glitter and brilliancy, the other all quietness and grace. How easily you may borrow the plumage of the one, his strut, his vanity, and "a' that;" but how difficult you will find it to acquire the calm comeliness of the Swan, which glides down the tranquil waters like a spirit of love and purity!

Travers floated on the troubled waters of existence, sustained by his own high spirit; and while he lamented the sorrows which afflict mortality, he applied the fine powers of his mind to ameliorate them; and those woes incapable of alleviation, he looked on with the eye of faith, believing Heaven would remove them in its own good time. He had hope even for earth, for his country, and although no optimist, he felt, he knew there is still something beautiful and divine left in the heart of man.

In many respects he strongly resembled a good and great statesman of modern times---M. Guizot---the most enlightened premier France ever possessed. All honour be to Guizot. When Europe has ten such men at the helm of affairs, we may hope great things indeed. We want philosophy sadly in the practical. The coxcomb cared not a whit whether all the world, with the exception of himself, were swallowed up in an universal deluge. Excellent fellow! *His* universe was himself; and he hardly credited there was one out of it. He was the quintessence of Egotism: he could look on misery with a stony eye, and enjoy himself

with wine at a guinea a bottle, when he knew an old friend was in want of a meal. If you want to be in as pleasurable a state as possible *here*, imitate the Coxcomb. What a Stoic he was to be sure in some respects! Pliny's exclamation of "Inexorable death! give me my Horace!" on hearing of his beloved one's death was nothing compared to *his* philosophy. On one occasion his valet informed him that a lady who had received from him vows of love and constancy a short time before had poisoned herself. "Indeed, Francis!" he observed, with a yawn. "Well, I always thought her a fool. Have you got the perfume I told you to procure the other day for my hair?"

O type of coxcombry! O, *ne plus ultra* of the genius of vanity and heartlessness! But invocations have gone out of fashion since---since Tom Moore was the rage of Britain. *O*, will be exploded altogether shortly from the polite dictionary. "An exclamation," observed a modern Chesterfield, "shows a vulgar soul. A man who has lived to any purpose will be neither surprised, nor grieved at anything." Alas! for the sweet poetry of youth, its tenderness, its sweetness, its melancholy—the last, perhaps, the most delicious state of being possible, though some folks laugh at others being pensive. The high romance, the generous enthusiasm all vanish for ever! What sad havoc, what pitiable devastation a few years of mortality make on what should be immortal!

This digression is growing sentimental, however, and will not be relished by the generality of my readers, whose sympathies are antipathetic, and so we'll no more on't; this tale being to please the world more than its author, if the world will consent to be pleased.

Lord Wharton soon joined his brother, and Travers being away, the Captain said---

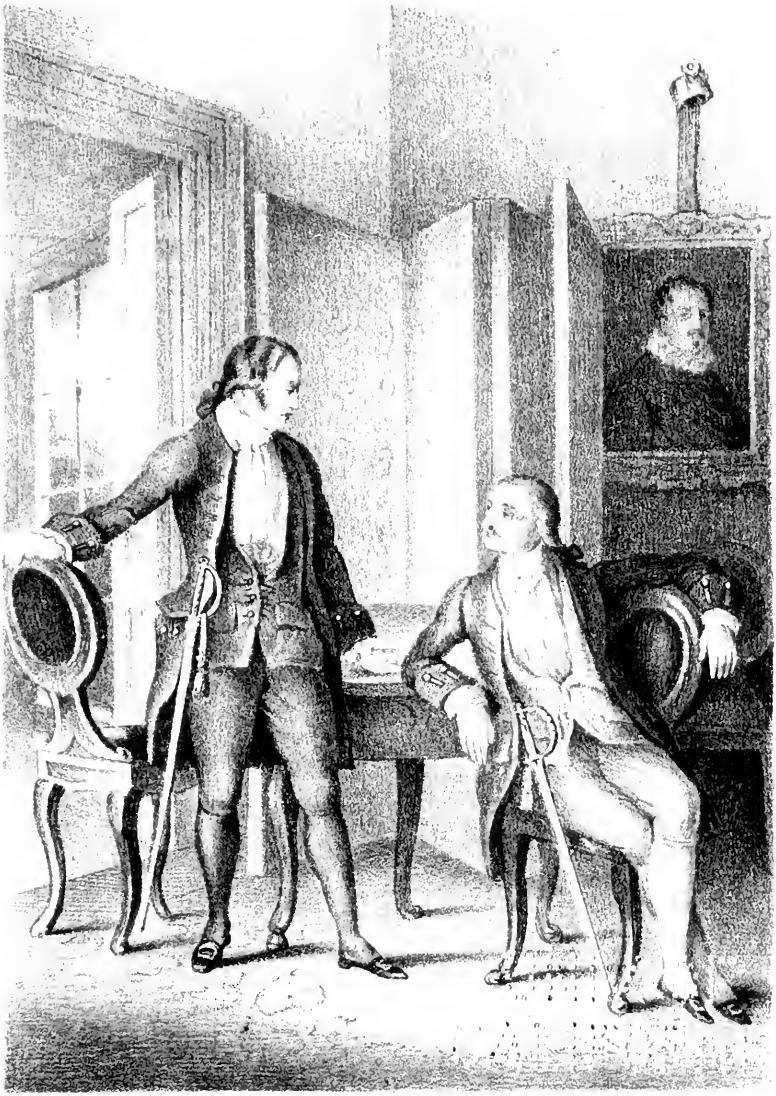
"Well, Tom, I have something to tell you. There is a plot now organizing for your downfall. I wormed the secret out of the Countess, who was told it by her husband,---he having been invited to join your foes. On several accounts I determined to tell you."

"A plot for my downfall! Pshaw! Who should create it, man?"

"Look you here, Tom! You think that the Tories *must* have you, whether they like it, or not. But *they* imagine otherwise. You are very much disliked on account of your arrogance and pride (I must tell it as the dear St. Clair told me.) The Premier mistrusts you; for some one has hinted to him that you are resolved on obtaining his place."

"Indeed!" cried Lord Wharton with a sneer.

"Yes," continued the Coxcomb; "and he has employed several friends to sound the minds of our leading men, relative to the degree of confidence they place in you. Tom, I am very sorry to say that not fifty men in the Commons will support you, if they can help doing so. (Why won't you court popularity?) and even in the Lords there is damnable work going on. Now, my excellent brother, I should lament if you were



kicked out of office for several reasons. The Prince, at present, has little or no power, and can do nothing for me. I am looking out for some place at Court, which will put money in my pocket; for my creditors, like yours, are clamorous and many. At all events, I have warned you. It was with no little trouble I procured the slight information I have given you, for great secrecy is preserved amongst your enemies—whose name is legion; and not one of them has yet betrayed the matter."

Lord Wharton thought a moment, and then striking a table by which he stood with his clenched fist, he exclaimed—

"By the God of Heaven! I'll resign to-morrow!"

"But then, Thomas," expostulated the Captain, with more animation than he usually considered fit to display; "but then *our* party will go to the right-about, and it will be a long time too before it regains its ascendancy, if it is once lost."

There was a silence of some seconds.

"What if I turn Whig, Captain Wharton?" demanded the Peer.

"A turncoat! Damme, that won't do at all, Tom. Stick to your Toryism, for Heaven's sake; for in any case it will stick to you, and prevent your rising as you wish among the others."

"I didn't think you had sufficient sense to make such an observation," returned Lord Wharton. "Come now, what would you have me do? I fancy you are not such an ass as you seem."

"I am much obliged to you for the compliment; but if you mean that I have the slightest knowledge of politics, you are mistaken. However, as you are condescending enough to ask my advice, here it is. Don't threaten to resign; don't let it appear you know aught of this conspiracy; but set to work at once to counteract its effects. If you choose, I know you can talk over all the stupid fools in Christendom."

"Sagacious Travers!" exclaimed the Peer. "How I admire your wisdom! Nature intended you for a Machiavel, but the devil has put it into your head to play the coxcomb. I see it all: they intend to get hold, if they can, of our cousin here, and then they think they can do without me. I did not suspect the Premier would mistrust me! I wonder who has poisoned his ear!"

"That's impossible to say: you have innumerable foes. Such is the curse of greatness, as I myself have found."

"Hum! But they *fear* me; and by Jove! they shall feel me too. Travers, you must learn more from the Countess. Instigate her to cross-question her dull cuckold of a husband cautiously (he is uxorious to a proverb), and lose no time in acquainting me with what you can learn. If you bestir yourself, I'll get you a pension of £1000 a year. But all may be a false alarm."

"Lay not that flattering unction to your soul, good brother!" rejoined the officer. "Although I cannot give you the details, I am convinced it

is a most formidable plot, and there is not only wealth, but even talent among those who are the framers of it. You may conceive that the intelligence coming at second-hand from a fop, through a silly woman, who learned it from an ass of a man, it cannot be worthy energetic counteraction; but if you'll be advised by me, you'll go to London at once, and muster your friends, and conciliate your enemies, leaving no stone unturned to destroy the influence of the premier, so that you may step quietly into his shoes, instead of being obliged to go barefooted yourself."

"You talk like a sensible fellow, and I am surprised you can do so," returned the statesman. "But, Travers, you are not, and no one, indeed, is aware of the exact line of policy I am following. Let the plot ripen; I will do nothing to oppose its progress; but, if it *should* grow into the consequence at which my enemies are aiming, then I shall have artillery prepared which shall annihilate them. But I must know all, and speedily, that I may take my measures accordingly. Mine is a dark and tortuous way, and I must not omit to have plenty of light at every step, not trusting to the stars, lest I should chance to stumble. The more lanterns you can obtain, the better."

"I will do what I can for you. How shall you proceed with Travers himself?"

"As I intended from the first. But those who seek to thwart me will not gain him to themselves. Now return to the place whence you came at once, that no suspicions may be engendered. I have much to do. Good morning; I thank you for your timely information, and your zeal in leaving your bed so early."

The Captain accordingly made his exit. Wharton, when he was gone, lapsed into deep abstraction. His lips moved every now and then, but did not articulate. Shall we glance into the chambers of his brain? It is something to be able to examine the inner mind, and descry the pivot on which the whole intricate machinery of a subtle spirit works, to have a metaphysical not a superficial view of character; and it cannot be long ere our fictitious literature will be philosophical and profound, as well as exciting and romantic. We shall have Hamlet's for heroes, and the drama's spirit will be infused into the novel. I feel confident that an era is arriving in this same species of writing similar to that which characterised the drama in the days of Elizabeth. Marlowe and others were the primary agents, the pioneers of that mighty epoch in the history of literature, whose cycle is not run after so many ages, and to which we owe our Shakespeare, Massinger, Beaumont, Fletcher, and many splendid minds beside; and Fielding preceded Scott, who, though not a Shakspeare, is the greatest of all novelists at present. The master spirit is yet to come. But half a century may elapse first. After natural philosophy and politics have run their course, then we shall have, as a

consequence, philosophy of mind; and it seems probable that it will be developed through the instrumentality of fiction, the most potent of all engines now at work, because the most universalised. I may flatter myself egregiously, but I have the vanity to think I may be ONE of the pioneers of the "to-come."

Well, Lord Wharton thought—"Such is the thing I have so long struggled for. Power! vain, empty sound! There is no such thing as power. It is the weakness of the Many, not the strength of the One which is in fact *his* power. But I will not lose it while I am what I am, and those who cannot fathom my depth are what they are—weak, shallow gulls, whom I delight to trample under foot. That dolt of a premier! Were I to leave him, how soon he would be beseeching me with cringing humility to join him again! He shall not retain his office another year at all events. But I must not prematurely unmask my battery. Just now I would not have my schemes known for half a million. A little while, and I shall be seated in might unconquerable. They know me not; and they shall find it. I will humble the pride of my party as it has never been humbled yet, and from the ashes of the phœnix shall spring up a thing none dream of. The name of Thomas Wharton shall resound through the globe, and England, virtually *his*, be dreaded more than ancient Rome under her Cæsars."

Proudly did the proud Peer walk across the apartment, his majestic form erect and haughty as the statue of a god, and with a stately step and flashing eye, he disappeared through the door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHARTON'S CHARACTER ILLUSTRATED—THE DISCUSSION—THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

THE character of Lord Wharton was hardly understood by his contemporaries,—not because it was not investigated deeply, but because it was a mingled web of good and evil, most difficult to unravel. In ambition and in courage a Macbeth, in policy a Machiavel, he united qualities seldom found in any but the truly virtuous. When a young man, reckless libertine as he was, the slave of unbridled and mighty passion, votary of no god but pleasure—in common with the greater number of those who moved in his sphere at the time in question—he had not only given promise of, but displayed really resplendent qualities. Towards the conclusion of the last century the diffusion of civilization had not

created its re-action from the masses on their rulers,—had not made them, in general, aim to be more enlightened and intellectual than their inferiors. Field-sports in the country, and vicious and demoralizing pastimes in the metropolis, chiefly occupied our nobility and gentry. England stood, as it were, on an isthmus between the Past and the Future, and the spirit of antiquity was busy in contention with the spirit of the to-come. Wharton, even then, surrounded as he was by ignorance and lowmindedness, was brave, generous, a patron of the arts; and though from his early political intrigues accustomed to profound dissimulation and artifice, his natural disposition was the reverse of cunning and double-faced. In all things he was in extremes, and might have been the best or the worst of men: but he had stopped short of the *ne plus ultra* of crime, without reaching virtue's goal. His course of life slowly but surely sapped the foundations of all that was good and exalted in him; and at the time of history when this narrative commences,—although there were some traces of the former spirit left, the glory of truth was not in him: all was *apparent* expediency in his political, all was self-gratification in his social life. O, sacred truth! Never yet hath one single worshipper at thy shrine been guilty of aught that is mean or sinful. The truth-adorer conceives the expedient is a manifestation of the good. There was no sincerity, no high and poetical enthusiasm left in the breast of Wharton. That great fire-soul, which is ever the concomitant of true greatness, he affected to scorn. His lip would curl whenever he heard anything beautiful and aspiring; the logical with him annihilated abstract truth. He was not a philosopher, in the strict sense of the term; but without faith in virtue, without hope in man, without trust in God, he was stripped of the green leaves of life, and all was withered and burnt up within him. Yet it is possible that in other circumstances he might have been a bold and dauntless champion of humanity, and a friend of liberty: for in spite of himself there was a deep, burning spirit within him, which, though it might smoulder, it was impossible could ever be totally extinguished. A mind like his could never be satisfied with itself, while absorbed in demoralizing pleasure, and selfish and low ambition. A man of high intellect and strong passions, it may safely be asserted, can never become so much the slave of self and of vice, as to abjure without a pang the lofty, the holy and sublime in morals, and such a character as Wharton's, preying on itself, presents a fitting subject for the delineation of the poet, and the study of the metaphysician. Its Titanic struggles, its stinging remorse, its bitter and corroding memories, which live on the source of the secret life, like the bird of Hell on its victim's entrails—these are things which thought and imagination delight to grapple with, and afford an infinite variety in the august succession of creative dreams. And the heart of man, which changes not, is ever changing: each moment of being

evolves consequences in a cycle of ideas and feelings, which, if indivisible, are infinite!

Lord Wharton was arrested, as he ascended the flight of stairs to his chamber, by seeing Travers and Sharp engaged in conversation in the hall, and, changing his previous intention, he joined them, for he felt in the vein to surmount all difficulties: and the political man, like the poet, seeks to pour out his heart—to mingle in an element of congeniality; so, wishing to make Travers an ally, at once, in case of the plot against him bursting forth, before he was prepared to counteract it, he addressed his brother-in-law.

"I am not interrupting any business between you," he said.

"None whatever," answered Travers. "Mr. Sharp tells me he has just received a letter requesting his presence in London: he seems to think that an important change in the Cabinet is pending."

Lord Wharton spoke not; but a slight frown gathered on his brow—so slight as to have been imperceptible to any save such an eye as Sharp's—and vanished instantly.

"It is all true," he thought to himself. "My enemies are up and doing, and they want to smuggle something through the Cabinet without my concurrence. Whatever it is, I will be there to oppose it. Since 'Division' is the cry, I will join it, and split my party into fractions."

Travers again spoke—"I am afraid, my dear Wharton, if these important affairs of state are going on, I shall soon lose you; but perhaps you can manage to return?"

"I did not intend to stay long with you when I left London; but it may happen, circumstances will make it imperative for me to shorten my visit," replied Wharton. "If Mr. Sharp is about to return to town, I should be much obliged to him to take a letter for me."

"I shall leave by the night coach," said Sharp.

Very soon after this, the lawyer left Wharton and Travers together; and entering a room, the peer seated himself beside the philosopher, and exclaimed,

"Well, Travers, the time has now come when every man must range himself under the banners of his party. A gigantic change is in embryo, and will soon be born."

"Those who are party men will so act," returned Travers; "but you are aware that, in my opinion, party is the bane of man. It is the curse which shackles all the energy of the human mind, and hoodwinks the judgment."

Wharton smiled sarcastically. "What change was ever effected by one or two individuals?" he asked. "Association is a necessary and not contingent principle, and party the mere corollary of association."

"There it is that I disagree with you," replied Travers, in his calm,

gentle manner, which nothing could ruffle. "Association cannot be division, any more than division can be association."

"Bah! my worthy Travers, these logical subtleties are the bane of you scientific politicians. Logic and philosophy, as they are applied in the schools, must not be dragged into the field of political controversy."

"And why should not the eternal principles of truth be analogically applicable to all sciences? As for logic and philosophy, in the *scholastic* application of the words, I admit that they are distinct from the practical; but I am very far from admitting what you consider an axiom, that it is necessary to legislate before we theorise. It is insanity to say so; although this principle is the basis of modern legislation."

"But is it possible to reason against facts? On facts, you will allow, all systems must be based, or cease to be systems capable of existence?"

"Say, rather, on *truths*. Facts it is impossible to define. Legislate on presumptive fact, and you have no principle whatever to guide you; legislate on an universal truth, and you can create salutary enactments which are not subject to fluctuate with the times."

"That is a Tory sentiment of yours, at all events. You admit that there may be laws it is impossible to modify?"

"No, modification is essential to what is changeable, as all *deductions* from principles are; and yet *truths* can never alter."

"Well, then, suppose I grant this. Still you cannot deny that in order to make salutary regulations for the people, we must first acquire a just knowledge of their wants and their necessities; and we, the rulers, being better able to govern than the masses, we must close our ears against the ignorant cries of the discontented and idle, and maintain the even tenor of our way, unawed by popular agitation. In order to do this, it is indispensable to have a large phalanx of supporters; for a statesman can no more contend without adherents than a general without soldiers; and these supporters must be bound by one common interest to fight our battles through thick and thin, without question. Right or wrong, we must support our party, as on the field of battle we must adhere to our comrades. If we do not, that party inevitably falls. But if disunion creep into our counsels, then we are at liberty to form another union, in which there may be less discrepancy of opinion and action."

"Your premises are at once false and irrefragable. It is the duty of a good government not to be awed by popular commotion, and a just knowledge of the people's wants must be acquired, that they may be supplied: but the principle of government must be dissociated from that most common fallacy of the necessity of *party*, before there can be any effective permanent legislation for the community. You call this visionary and idle; but wherefore? False association and true association are essential antitheses. I call party by the former designation, and

union by the latter. To illustrate what I mean, I will suppose an immense manufactory, in which hundreds of workmen are employed. The business of this manufactory is to make as many coaches—if you will—as possible. Now the common principle which is necessary to the carrying on of the concern is *union*. No thought of self steps in to destroy this bond of coalition, though there are many different opinions as to the proper method of working. Each man may follow his business in the way he likes best, provided there be a principle of association to one end. But it is evident that were *party* mixed up with this concern, it must fall to the ground. If there were half-a-dozen persons who insisted on the operatives enlisting themselves under them respectively, to work in a particular manner, no work would be done at all; the workmen would be contending *against* instead of uniting *with* each other. This is the reason why I object to Party."

"Dreams, dreams," replied the statesman, "you are ever in Utopia. If you had served such a political apprenticeship as I have, you would know that the trade we follow is carried on after this fashion, namely—We do not attempt to form new combinations, which would but exhaust our powers, but work with the materials in our hands. Obedience is necessary to us, it is the first law of the universe, and without it, what can be effected? By obedience, party is implied; that is, a number of persons banded together with an indivisible interest. If we had merely association, as you seem to wish (and what is association but a substitute for party?), each individual would be free to act as he in his wisdom imagined best, and the ministers would be left without agents, utterly helpless, utterly isolated. Why, then, repudiate the name of party? You are yourself a partizan."

"If you can prove *that*, Wharton, you may hope to gain me over to what you desire. But I deny that association is passive, dastardly submission, as party is; although I would substantiate that it is an universal, harmonious *union*. It is *not* a substitute for party; the converse of the proposition is correct. The error of statesmen lies in considering slavery and co-operation are synonymous. Give me a willing servant, whom I will leave to do his particular work as he likes, rather than a stupid slave whom I am obliged to direct, and exact implicit obedience from, because he has no reason, no intellect of his own. You would leave the people in brute ignorance, and instead of having an active influence alive to help, prefer a passive instrument to do as you like with."

"The law of the universe, since you *will* recur to first principles, is not co-operation, but submission, abject, perfect submission."

"And would you reduce reasoning man, with his vast capabilities, to the same condition as the dull atoms of matter? You may wish to do so, but it is impossible. Man cannot be a God over man. To create one opinion is possible only to Deity. Volition could not exist without a

dissimilarity in secondary principles of action. Understand me, then, that I am the avowed and inexorable enemy of party—as I am the unflinching friend of association. A time will come, when England, when the world will start from the bondage of this wretched delusion, and yield peace and freedom instead of war and slavery to man. *Until* then, each person must do his duty, and I consider it mine to stand aloof from the battle of words, and the shouts of partizanship, and the watch-cries of bigots and fanatics, which are all, as such, but the phantoms of a maniac's brain, full of 'sound and fury,' strife and hate, crime and misery, and all for things the nature of which cannot be ascertained, all for objects 'signifying nothing.'"

"The man has got some sense in his brain," thought Wharton, "with all his absurd enthusiasm. It *all* 'signifies nothing.'"—But he made no reply then, and repaired to his chamber in order to write some letters of importance.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRACTICAL MAN *v.* THE PHILOSOPHER—LORD WHARTON AND THE APPARITION AGAIN.

And he could not conquer! The practical man never yet conquered the philosopher, however on a parity their understandings. The practical man confines his observations to a narrow sphere; he contracts his range of vision, while the philosopher embraces, as far as our limited apprehension allows, a whole, and not a part as a whole.

Travers was not one of those vast, comprehensive spirits which may appear once in a thousand years; but in virtue exalted, in intellect elevated, in sincerity fervent and sublime, he never argued save for truth, and cared not for victory, cared not for defeat, so that anything good and rational triumphed. But he was seldom wrong: for his principles were all founded in the highest standard of morality—in Christianity—and *there* is perfect truth. Altogether beautiful and admirable is the philosophy of the one religion; oh! that Theosophy were the spirit of political economy, that the love of God and the love of man,—wisdom which is not confined to this poor world, directed the hearts of Rulers!

But it is not the object of this work to lay down ethics or politics: my readers must make their own inferences, with few exceptions, from premises not to be mistaken, and while they are amused and excited (if the power of working on the imagination in me lies), may I not hope they may be rendered in some measure gentle and forbearing, loving

and *human*—humanity being a noble creature in some respects;—in the truest sense of that much abused, but expressive word, *Catholic*, in their sympathies, their charities, their opinions. "Give me a sincere man," says a true, great-hearted Thinker, "and I will make him what I wish." Give me a man open to conviction, and I care but little what he is, if he will be tolerant and merciful to all: for such is the Christian.

Again was Lord Wharton alone in his chamber at night. He had been employed during the day for hours in writing, insomuch that his dinner had been brought to him, several messengers having been to the house with letters for him on political matters. It was now the hush of night, and he was preparing to throw himself on his bed, and to snatch a short repose (for the toil of mind he had lately undergone was more than even *his* frame could bear without fatigue) as the Hall-clock struck one.

Who says that the operative, when overworked, experiences half the exhaustion, the dead leaden weight of weariness, that the man of thought does after a day of excessive toil? Brain-work is the most speedily destructive to the organization of any species of labour. Mark the flushed cheek, the burning breath, the preternaturally excited eye:—these tell something;—but they are only physical, external indications: if we could see the mind itself, it would speak with eloquence beyond words how dreadful are the ravages intense and continuous tension of intellect make upon it.

But Wharton could sustain an immensity of fatigue; and it was only when anxiety was too keenly alive, when the passions were too powerfully excited, that his iron frame sunk for a moment under their pressure. In a few minutes he was buried in sleep the most profound. Early slumber, undisturbed by the fumes which afterwards rise to the brain, is ever the deepest and most invigorating. We all take too much sleep, if we are conscious of thought; for when the spirit is filled with visions, and haunted with strange shapes, we gain no real refreshment and repose. But that calm death image—more beautiful than death—how much there may be in the soul while such serenity is diffused through its being! I know no grander or fairer sight than still sleep. It is poetry, without passion. Statue-like, but not cold and rigid, it continues without a breath, without an undulation: what a contrast to the ceaseless activity of waking life!

Yes, there he lay, that being of fiery passions, and restless energies, for some few minutes enjoying as blest and unruffled slumber as the infant on its mother's downy breast; but seldom, indeed, could he snatch those Elysian moments; for after the wild debauch, the protracted debate, his first sleep was more like a creeping torpor than pleasant repose.

It was a singular thing, and altogether unaccountable on any rational hypothesis, that engrossed with his recent occupations, the recollection

of the apparition of the preceding night, which had made so vivid an impression on him, had not obtruded itself on his mind. He had struggled violently and successfully to subdue what he believed, even while he doubted, to be a delusion of the senses; and so powerful was his will (for there are degrees in the strength of volition, as in everything else), that he had actually succeeded in conquering his previous conviction. The conviction is not the will, any more than the will is the conviction. Volition sits enthroned in the human mind, like God over the universe; and as there are certain things which Omnipotence cannot do; so, except in the violation of its own laws, the will is omnipotent, and entirely distinct from sense, feeling, motives; it is the *Ego*, or eternal individuality, without which mind could not be.

The Necessitarian may say it is impossible to believe a contradiction; and what of that? If it *were* possible so to do, the will would be utterly useless, continually at war with itself, an abstraction of an abstraction. Then is it necessitated or not? Altogether unnecessitated, inasmuch as it has nothing to do with receiving or conveying external impressions: for I repeat, it is the true likeness of Deity, it is the manifestation of the soul, without which we were material in all our faculties, lifeless, strengthless, and enslaved in action.

Lord Wharton slept. Gradually, dark and strange shadows crossed that haughty and commanding brow, and it was clear the dream-spirit was busy in his brain. There were ghosts in his mind's eye, while the senses were locked, and voices in his closed ear—sounds of wailing, sights of horror, a very chaotic Hell of Vision! How he tossed, how he writhed, how convulsed were his features; while his hands grasped the air, and his lip quivered, as if he were strongly striving to speak, but could not, a mountain being on his chest! A few minutes had produced this unspeakable change from as calm an aspect as ever death wore on a young maiden's face, to madness and frenzy, as though an earthquake suddenly approached over a fair and quiet nook on some moony night. The giant soul was subdued in the statesman's mind by a mightier than itself, and it sunk like the Arch-Fiend in desperate defiance beneath its sterner self;—the accusing angel was victorious over him. The iron nerves, and the unquailing heart may conquer in the day; but who shall wrestle with the spirit of conscience in sleep?

"Ha!" he exclaimed, imagining in his dreams he was pursued by the demons of the past—"Fearful shapes! Again haunt ye my soul? What! ever present? Come, then, and we will feast together! Our banquet shall be spread in wide charnels, and our guests shall be corpses reeking with corruption! Blood shall flow for libations!—*Such* blood! Ha, ha, ha!"

And he laughed long and fearfully a mighty laugh. You may have heard a madman's laughter; you may have imagined a lost spirit when

the eternal seal is fixed on its destinies uttering yells like the hyæna as God drops it from creation (we are all sustained in being); but nothing is so terrible as such sleep-laughter. It ran through the ancient chamber gloomily and appallingly, and reverberated as if taken up by a chorus of ghosts; and as its last echoes died away, and the countenance of the Peer became comparatively tranquil, a female voice cried—

"Ah! that voice makes me shudder! It is the demon of the wind that rides on its black horse among the stars; but high above there is the hymn of the blessed, and peace! Why need we dread, when the sweet Heaven is open to receive us?"

The shadowy form of a woman, dim in outline, and almost gigantic in stature, stood before the sleeper. She surveyed him quietly and passionlessly.

"I'll whisper in his ear," she murmured—"softly whisper, like a bird or a guardian spirit—though my voice is more like a wild harp, *now!* There is a bright dweller in the planets, who often whispers to me while I sleep in the valleys of the moon, and music wafts my soul to Paradise. Blessed are the dead!" she continued, in a sort of recitative, bend in down to Wharton. "Thrice blessed are those who sleep to wake no more! Weep not for those who lie beneath the cold earth, while the stars rain solemn light upon them—those bright, keen stars, ever shining within my brain, though they shine not.—Look how the gentle spectres, all white and calm, walk the earth and the ocean, making wild, sweet sounds!—only we cannot hear them. But they are in the invisible winds, in every breath of life. Hush! Sleep on! Blessed are those that sleep; for they forget the heart-weariness and woe of conscious existence. Happy were it for thee, proud one! if thou didst never wake! Sleep on! Tears are flowing, and sighs are breathing everywhere. Sleep on! There is no rest for man on the green earth;—sleep thee."

Wonderful are the hallucinations of the human mind; but even the mad retain a kind of reason and a poetry from which we may often gather everlasting and sublimest truths. "No rest on earth!"

It seems as if the radiant spark of immortality which has quitted the poor, sick brain, sometimes for a moment returns in glory, and all is beauty and effulgence.

It is a thing which our boasted philosophy cannot explain, but it is incontrovertible, that when the ear of a sleeping person is assailed with certain words, the associations of that marvellous faculty we call thought (though unable to define it) are uniformly directed into those channels indicated by the speaker. The senses are closed, but the principle which acts upon them cannot sleep. Every person has probably experienced the effect of external sounds in this way,—has felt it cold in dreaming, when the bed-clothes have fallen off—or *vice versâ;* and the visions have been of winter and frost, heat and summer, &c.

Lord Wharton was not wakened by the words addressed to him: but his sensations underwent a change almost immediately.

"Would I had never been, O spirit!" he exclaimed. "Have you a secret to make me forget for ever?"

The maniac heard, and understood in *her* fashion. She was buried in profound reflection. Singular it was to see that tall, attenuated form, without motion, not a breath escaping from her lips, while the dreamer sighed deeply, and his breathing was quick and difficult. They seemed the very embodiments, as it were, of the spiritual and material; the calm, bright, glorious eyes of the maniac appearing to look into the statesman's breast.

"Yes," she exclaimed at length. "I can give you what you want. I will visit the great wizard in that planet which looks like one of God's eyes in the purple sky, watching eternally, radiant and tranquil alike in calm and storm! And I will bring you a potion—star-drops and vapours, and congealed waters of the Heavens—wept for the sins of the earth. And I will sing you into the sleep of oblivion, thus, thus:—

"A moment is the light of life,
Catch it e'er it fly!—
'Tis like a bird, a winged bird
That leaves us for the sky!

"A moment—and the light is o'er,
And Hope's sweet urn
Can give no more a feeling blest—
Naught can return!"

There is a deep truth conveyed in the story of Cassandra; no one heeds the words of insanity; but it is prophetic.

"Naught, naught," added the maniac, when her wild, sad strain was done. "Farewell! thou that art the likeness of him I loved more than God! once more, farewell! We shall meet again." And she moved suddenly away.

The spell was broken, and Wharton started from sleep. His strange visitor had turned to look at him, and her large luminous eyes were upon him.

"O God!" he ejaculated, "this is not a dream! Harriet! Harriet!"

She moved away. With a violent effort Wharton started up, and rushed after the maniac. There was a closet through which she seemed to have passed; but entering it, he saw not a vestige of a human being. The perspiration rolled like big tears down his face.

"It was a voice from the dead, then!" he said. "Be it so: a shape not of earth! I have seen and heard the mystery beyond the grave! Awful form! Where art thou?"

A strain of gushing music once more burst on the ear of the statesman. Petrified he stood. If a sculptor could realize that hushed, awe-stricken, inexpressible look, that attitude, so full of wonder and amazement—all seeming to speak of the desperate resolution of a man whose indomitable *human* courage nothing could quite vanquish—he would be immortal. The man was there; but the mind of the man was not in the visible world; and when that sweet and thrilling voice died away in distance, calmly he looked up to the empurpled heaven with its most solemn and august pageantry, and murmured—"Tell me, O ye stars! What are ye? Tell me, O my spirit! what thou art? The dead! The dead! Do they dwell in those ethereal orbs which may have existed for millions upon millions of our earthly years? And do they come down from those spheres to visit the scenes of their mortality? I am an atom—a worm!" . . . . . The *proud* Wharton!

CHAPTER XX.

THE GIPSY—TRAVERS WHARTON MAKING LOVE—FANNY'S POETRY AND PASSION—THE TWO SUITORS—WOMAN'S HEART.

Captain Wharton, after leaving Travers House, proceeded at a canter along a level tract of country, between hedges in which those hardy plants that resist the blighting hand of winter supplied the summer verdure, the sun pouring down on meadow, stream, and woodland, and nature looking as gay as if desolation had not begun its work. After the storm of the preceding night, all was freshness and splendour, though the ravages of the blast strewed the ground. There are days at this season like those in that sad disease when youth fades away, giving a hollow promise of recovery; but the spring alone can renew the departed glories, which appeared once so divine, that they looked immortal.

The Coxcomb, however, being in no humour to romanticise, scarcely raised his eyes from the ground for several miles, being absorbed probably in no very pleasant calculations: but as he emerged from a long lane he had traversed, a sweet voice exclaimed,

"Will you let me tell your fortune, sir?"

The question was put to him by a girl, who had previously been sitting on a bank engaged in an unusual occupation for one of her class; for she was reading one of those old-fashioned novels which preceded the Rosa Matilda school, and which our grandames loved in their teens. At the distance of half a mile from the lane was a gipsy encampment of larger pretensions than we now ordinarily see, occupying part of a common:

and it was evident from the question, as well as the dress of the girl, that she belonged to it.

The Coxcomb was about peevishly to bid the young fortune-teller get out of his way, conceiving her but a child, and heedless of her bell-like voice; for then "his ear was deaf to all sweet melody:"—when happening to look into her face, he was struck with its wild, bright loveliness. She was not strictly a brunette—though her face was embrowned by exposure to the sun,—far less was she of that tawny complexion which usually distinguishes the itinerant race whose origin is so mysterious. Her eyes were large and of a brilliant hazel, her nose straight and delicate, her mouth exquisitely formed, and furnished with pearly teeth which her smile displayed and which would have puzzled a dentist how to procure or imitate, and though her figure was diminutive, it was perfectly symmetrical—being slight, but not childish—her not unpicturesque dress, which had evidently been arranged with care and taste, displaying it to advantage, revealing a foot and ancle of faultless, fairy-like size and shape. Her hair was a very dark chesnut, her forehead smooth, her face oval, and full of sweetness and vivacity—to which a little, a very little *deviltry* added radiance—and her age about eighteen, though from her small dimensions she hardly appeared as old.

"What a pretty creature!" ejaculated the fastidious Captain Wharton, who seldom condescended to notice anything not absolutely perfect in beauty, "who the deuce would have thought of meeting such a girl as this? My dear," he added, "will you tell me a good fortune if I give you gold?"

The girl smiled and blushed a vermilion hue through her sun-burnt skin. "If you'll give me your hand, I will tell you truly," she replied.

The Captain held out his white, jewelled fingers, which were the admiration of himself and the world, and cost him on the average twenty pounds a-year in washes, thirty more in gloves, and an indefinite sum in rings (only he never paid for them), and the gipsy taking it in her own brown, but delicately-shaped little hand, with an air of wonder, surveyed the lines in the ivory palm.

"You are a noble, or of noble blood," she said, "and your destiny is a proud one. You are beloved by many, but I fear me are fickle as the summer wind."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Guardsman, "I perceive you are a cunning diviner in some respects, sweet one!" And he stroked her bare head with his other hand. "By Jove!" he thought, "I should like to take this girl with me to town. She is the most bewitching little thing I ever beheld." The gipsy drew back pouting from Wharton's caressing fingers, but did not look greatly displeased. "What is your name, my love?" inquired the Captain in his most insinuating tone.

"They call me Fanny," was the reply.

"A pretty name," returned the fop. "How old are you? Sixteen?"

"I am eighteen," answered Fanny with a toss of the beautiful head, disarranging a ringlet from the head-gear.

"There's a tress worth its weight in diamonds," cried Travers Wharton, playfully seizing the ringlet. "You should have your picture taken now. Will you sell this curl to me?"

"No, indeed," replied the gipsy girl indignantly. "I sell nothing but fortunes."

"Don't be angry, fair Fanny, or you will drive me to despair. Will you not sell kisses, my divine gipsy? They cost nothing. If you will kiss me, I'll give you a guinea."

"Not for money are kisses to be sold," answered the girl, drawing herself up proudly. "Love is more precious than what is dug out of the earth, and has its own bright coinage. It is like the pure stars,—adorable."

"What! poetical? By Heaven! I must have that idea in the poem I intend to write. 'Like the stars, adorable.' Egad, Fanny, you are a paragon of gipsies! You deserve to be a Queen; and if you will, my Queen you shall be. I will pay you such homage as you demand. Should you like, sweet creature! to go to London with me, and reign over all the brightest there, a planet among stars, a flower among weeds."

"Not I," returned the girl, her lip curling. "I love the free air, with its solitudes and stillness. What in your splendid haunts,—blazing with lights,—can compare for an instant with this blue sky, and this merry sunshine? Your Queen I cannot be, your wanton I *will not be*."

Travers Wharton now fairly shook off his apathy. He was no longer the finical coxcomb, but the accomplished seducer, full of art, elegance, and passion. Had he been making love to a young Countess he could not have taken more pains to be irresistible.

"Not my wanton, loveliest Fanny!" he said, "call not love by such a name as wantonness! Is it not divine to yield to the natural impulses of the heart, and to have no ruler but the affections? Bright one! I will be your slave! I will serve you as if you were indeed a sovereign, and your will shall be my law. If you wish to wander in the country, seeing your matchless image in its glassy streams, you shall do so. Together we will pluck the wild-flowers—yourself the sweetest wild-flower in creation!"

"Hold!" cried Fanny, as the Captain dismounting threw his arm round her waist. "There are those near who will avenge any insult"—

"Insult!" exclaimed the officer. "By all that is sacred, Fanny, a pure fire has sprung up in my soul—for all real passion is sudden—and I would not harm thee for the universe. I would give all that I possess for thy love. Come, then, mount with me, and we will away."

The Guardsman thought he had done sufficient; and would have placed the girl on his saddle, conceiving that a gipsy would be too happy to accept the protection of the all-accomplished Travers Wharton; but she resisted.

"Let me go," she cried, "or I will scream for aid! Though I am a gipsy, sir,—an outcast from society—I am a woman, and if you have a spark of manhood in your breast, you will not outrage a woman's weakness."

"This is growing a bore," thought the officer;—saying aloud, "Go then, cruel Fanny! But why do you refuse to be my companion? I will give you jewels and gold;—accept this ring,—'twill hardly fit that taper finger!—Not that any gems of earth can beautify such charms as thine."

"I cannot accept your ring," interrupted the girl proudly.

"But you must, prettiest, indeed you must; or if you will not accept it as a gift, you must exchange a ringlet for it. I have seen many bright and fair; but never beheld one so near my ideal of perfection—so much perfection's self!"

The fop was now nearly exhausted by his eloquence, and fancied if Fanny did not begin to yield, she must be a stone. He thought she was relenting, but was mistaken. A tear glistened in her eye; and it fell, a large diamond drop on the snowy hand of the high-born gentleman, who instantly put it to his lips. It was years since Travers Wharton had felt so much interest in anything human as he did now in the outcast of his gay world, and of decent society: there was actually something approaching to sentiment in his manner—real and not affected—as he asked,

"Why that tear, love?"

"Ah, sir! You are one of the aristocracy, one of the rich and great, and may despise the poor gipsy; but God made me, as well as yourself."

"Hem!" muttered the coxcomb.

The girl continued, "We are at the very extremes of life, but the soul of the noble is like the beggar's. Man makes a greatness, and God makes a greatness; the one is hollow and false, like artificial light; the other is not borrowed, but pure as the radiance of Heaven. The one is Rank, the other *Virtue*."

"I wonder where the gipsy got that apopthegm," said the fop to himself, "I suppose out of that romance she has been reading; but she shows tact, and would make a lioness in London."

It is in truth marvellous what fine things sometimes drop from those without high intellect or education; but the child of nature, who snatches a grace "beyond the reach of art," enunciates ideas from within, and not from without: it is by much inward communing ideal beauty is evolved:

but simple truth is the one beauty which is the essence and life of the sublime.

"You read, I perceive, Fanny," remarked Travers Wharton. "If you will live with me, I will purchase the prettiest little library for you! You shall learn to sing—you have a voice like the nightingale!—and I will accompany you on the flute. Do not talk about distinctions of rank; love levels all; and I lay at your feet all in my power to bestow, if you will become mine."

"No," answered the poor gipsy, who was the child of impulse, and one moment in this mood, the next in that. "What care *I* for your gauds and baubles? I read books, it is true; but the earth is a book, and full of truths, if you can read them. The universe is a library to the heart that feels, and the brain that thinks. Go, sir! Your fortune and mine are far apart, indeed. But, wide as is the difference in our rank, know that all the world would not purchase the despised gipsy's embraces!"

She fled away with these words, ere Travers Wharton could prevent her.

"Hang the girl!" exclaimed the Guardsman. "What a cursed bore it is that the women want so much pressing! As if they could not yield at once, when they intend to do so at last! I must return home, now; but I will ride this way to-morrow, and bear the gipsy away. They would laugh at me for ever, if they knew I took so much pains about a little ragged beggar, when rich, ripe fruit is ready to drop into my grasp! But she is the most enchanting play-thing—just the girl to show in my new equipage!"

Such were the reflections of the Coxcomb, whose whole existence was vapid heartlessness, indifference, and egotism, as he pursued his way once more. But the young girl ran for more than a mile with the swiftness of a hunted hare; and when she was fairly out of breath, she cast herself under a hedge, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Why was I not born to be the wife of such a being?" she cried, bitterly. "I am of the same mould as he is. Nature has not been much less lavish in her gifts of person to me than to him, and I have a mind, I know, to comprehend all that is fine and glorious.—O, how handsome, how *very* handsome, how full of grace and elegance he is!"

"Why, Fanny!" exclaimed a deep voice, half rough, half tender, as she spoke. "How is this?"

A huge, but fine young man of about three-and-twenty, with a gun on his massive shoulder, stood by the side of the gipsy.

"What! John!" she answered.

The man fixed his keen, full eye upon her, and said—

"Why do you weep thus, my own girl?"

"It is my humour," she responded; and without deigning to say another word, walked swiftly away. . . . . O *Woman!*

CHAPTER XXI.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—LOVE—THE DEMOCRAT—FANNY AND HER ASTROLOGY—THE POETRY OF THE STARS.

THE person thus cavalierly treated followed the gipsy girl, muttering, "How perverse and froward she is! Why should I care for such a silly, peevish girl."

He contracted his brows sternly; but Fanny turned, and seeing how much he was wounded by her wayward humour, she extended her hand to him. "There, John," she said, "we are now friends."

"Wherefore do you treat me thus?" returned the young man, taking the tiny palm of the girl in his muscular hand, every sinew of which appeared like iron.

Fanny answered; "I treat every one in the same way, you know;—especially those who seek my affection."

"You are a perverse creature; but there is a witchery in your smiles, Fanny, which few men could resist. You were meant to be some brilliant child of fortune, dragging the world in chains: but I am a free man, and will not be a slave, even to you. And yet, Fanny, you fool me as you choose—I, that am so rude and stern of nature, bend like a twig to your will. O, that I could do all you wish—give you all you wish! If I could please you, I would go through fire and water;—but I have nothing to offer you, except this rugged heart—these strong limbs—this soul—this being! Life, blood, thought, and intellect I can give you; and assuredly they are worth more than the glitter and noise and show of fools and villains, who oppress and tyrannise over honest men."

There was something violent and passionate in the speech of that young Hercules which grated harshly on the gipsy's ear, after the honied and flowery compliments of the coxcombical officer. He was terribly in earnest—that colossal man—but there was no grace, nor sweetness in his tone and accents. It was singular that that great, strong fellow, with his fierce temper and his mighty passions, should thus obey the frowns and smiles of that little creature, not nearly up to his shoulder, and looking almost an infant by his side. Fanny made no reply to her lover, and he continued,

"Yes, the heart is worth something more than gewgaws, if it be worth anything at all. In that heart, how many pulses of action beat,—how many deep, fiery impulses dwell! This heart, which is all yours,

"John Jenkins and the Gypsy"

Fanny! may be the pivot of a revolution. By Heaven," he added, with lowering brow, and his voice deepening, though it was not louder than usual, "There is that here which shall hurl a despot from his throne; there is that here to kindle a love of liberty, a wild, intense love,—and England shall stir like a giant, to Freedom. You would like to see me, Fanny, heading a rebellion?"

"No, no," returned the gipsy, "I love peace; you frighten me almost with what you say."

"Do I, my gentle one? Then I will speak to you as softly as this gale—eloquent of love,—as the bird that tells his passion to the one he has chosen for his mate! You will become my wife in a few weeks, beloved girl?" Fanny was silent. "A time shall come," continued the lover with kindling eye, "when my name shall be somewhat loftier than it is now! I have that within me which was not born to rot on a dunghill. If I have not great thoughts, I have great feelings; and it is they that animate the spirits of men like myself. O," he exclaimed, with more than his former energy, "O, for the time when the heart of England shall be as the heart of one man, when the name of prince and noble shall be for ever abolished, and the worth of mind be the only title to nobility in the eyes of the human race! For this I would dare death on the scaffold, for this I would face the bayonets of the mercenaries of my country, unarmed, but fearless, for this I would endure the rack and the gibbet. All men are by nature free and equal: and the time will come, —it *shall* come,—when equality must be recognised as the basis of liberty."

"Do not talk with such angry vehemence, John! Why are you so fierce and angry?"

"I have just heard that a friend of the people is to be murdered in cold blood, because he dared to maintain the rights of his fellow operatives," returned the Revolutionist. "O, they grind us down—these masters of ours—till we have not bread to eat; and out of the sweat of our brows,—behold their damned luxury and vices? But since you do not like to hear of these things—which are indeed unfit for one like you —let us change the subject. Talk to me of what *you* love, dearest! I delight in *your* enthusiasm."

"Flowers and stars and rivers have tongues and eyes for me, you know. They are joys which pall not by repetition, for they are ever new and wonderful. The storm of the human heart delights me not; but it is pleasant to watch the lightnings when they are not *very* lurid. *Your* mind is with man; you think on tyranny and injustice, crime and oppression; but *I* am better pleased to occupy myself with all that is sweet and fair."

The gipsy and her companion had now nearly reached the encampment. Skirting the high road were some trees of great size; and a

hovel, in ruinous condition, stood among them, about a stone's throw from the common.

"Won't you come in and see my mother, Fanny?" said John. "The old woman must feel sad and lonely. She is not *quite* the mother I could wish; but she *is* my mother, you know."

"I cannot go to see her now," replied the gipsy; "but I will come at nightfall."

The young girl then made her way to a tent in the centre of the temporary habitations erected by her tribe; and when her form had vanished, her suitor with a sigh entered the hovel which has been alluded to.

Perhaps, from his violence and sentiments, the Reader has recognised in him the son of Jenkins the blacksmith: for Fanny's lover he was. He was a man of mingled good and evil. The generous feelings of youth had not subsided, but they were misdirected and dangerous to himself. He had a larger share of intellect than the generality of his class; but like all *such* men, his passions so ran away with his weaker judgment, that he never gave himself time to think. He had many kindly impulses, but was savagely ruthless when thwarted and enraged; he was in fact a link between the states of barbarism and civilization, and would have made a hero in the vaunted days of chivalry, when men "supped full of horrors." Under happier circumstances he might have proved a worthy member of society; but as it was, his life was one of strife and crime, and he was rather the bravo than the hero. He felt indignation at the wrongs endured by his fellows; but he would have redressed them by the sword and not the head. Such a want of philosophy as the fierce-hearted creators of revolutionary movements display is the real bane of all progress and happiness in our political and moral condition. But we shall see more of the Democrat anon; and character is better conceived by action than description. He stooped under the low door of the hovel nearly to the shoulders, and entered. There sat his mother, buried in gloomy reverie, insomuch that she did not notice him until he took her arm, and said,

"Why don't you walk out, mother, this fine day?"

Deborah Jenkins looked up. "What matters it to me," she answered gloomily, "whether it be fair or foul without? When starvation stares one in the face on one hand, and death or imprisonment on the other, there is a hell within the soul which shuts out the outward world."

She ended; and John paced up and down the narrow room for the space of a minute; then drawing a stool to the side of the woman, he exclaimed, "*Starve* you never shall, mother, while I have a hand to use,—and as for the gallows and the prison, there is one way to baffle all enemies. This life is nothing; and when we are wretched, what reason is there we should be tied to it longer than we like? I defy the oppressors to their teeth; I laugh to scorn their bayonets and their

dungeons; and I would tell them face to face, there is a heart to throb to liberty, and a hand to arm for freedom, and that all the despots in the world, that all the infamous laws and hireling soldiers shall not crush what is within me." . . . . That man had all the elements of a mob orator, for he never could speak except with passion, and his fervour lent him words and ideas in abundance. But he had hardly sufficient argumentative powers to lead any but the ignorant. . . . . He added, "I see my father coming: we had better chalk out some plan of life at once; there is plenty of choice."

Jenkins now made his appearance, and seated himself in moody silence, which he preserved till addressed by John.

"We must arrange our future course, I have been saying, father," he began. "Shall we wander about with the gipsies, who are good sort of rascals, for the present, or take to the road, or beg, or stir up rebellion?"

The blacksmith muttered a curse.

"First of all," he replied, "we have left a deed undone, which I should have thought you were anxious to finish."

A dark cloud came over the brow of the young man.

"I know not how it is," he exclaimed, "but my wrath always evaporates, unless I feed the fire by brooding on wrongs. We English are not like the Italians, and do not make revenge a master passion."

"*I* am not one to forget so easily," returned the smith, savagely, his swarthy lineaments lit up with a fierce glare. His scowl was very different from the frown of his son. The one was that of an assassin; the other, of a bold, fierce nature—more of the freebooter than the bravo. What a pity it was the democrat did not live a few centuries before; he would have made such a splendid Robin Hood!

"We must waylay that man, and murder him," concluded the smith. "Would he were able to die a hundred deaths!"

"But," interposed Deborah Jenkins, "we must not run our necks into a noose, without a second thought. We have had more than one narrow escape. If you kill Lord Wharton, you will be sure to suffer. Might he not be poisoned, or some secret means be found?"

"Peace, woman!" interrupted Jenkins, who had been drinking freely, and was wolfish in his temper then. "What should *you* know of the matter? We must dog his movements, and watch our opportunity. He has a good deal of money about him, which we must make ours."

"Curse the money!" cried John, who, somehow, always subdued even his father; "I wish no such thing were in the world."

Some more conversation ensued, which it is unnecessary to particularise; and as night fell, John went forth. The encampment of the gipsies slept in the peaceful moonlight, and myriads of stars were shin-

ing in the firmament. The young man paused when he had proceeded a few yards from the hovel, and lifted up his eyes to heaven.

"I wonder," he said, musingly, "what is in these worlds, that look so bright and glorious, as if they could not know sorrow or death? Yet even this earth appears as beautiful in the pathless space; and they who dwell in the planets may be speculating about *us*. Is the same scene of woe and strife and angry passions enacting in those distant spheres as on earth? Strange, that we should be left to work out our destiny as best we may, like ships on the ocean without a pilot! We speed along a trackless sea, and rocks and tempests are around and about us!" Here he felt a light hand touch him, and found Fanny by his side. There was a melancholy in the face of John that mellowed its somewhat harsh expression; and when he smiled on that being, in whom his rough but deep feelings were garnered up, there was a softness in his aspect, such as it seldom indeed wore. "Ah, my Fanny!" he said, "you are at least given to be my load-star and my guide. You will not desert me, dearest?" And his strong voice faltered, and was so tremulous with tenderness, that it sounded almost womanly, while a tear gathered in his fiery eye. But he seemed ashamed of that mild mood, even while it had not disappeared.

The gipsy sighed. "Why do you love me thus, John?" she asked. "It is not good for mortals to love mortals too well; we are all false and fickle; and I am the weakest, vainest of earth's children. You know what I am. Why cannot we be happy without love, which seems as if it ever mocked us with splendour which is *not*, only to leave us darkest desolation?"

"We *must* love," was the rejoinder. "All nature does so. The law of the world of matter and of mind are the same; each atom is regulated by an attractive sympathy—as I to thee. It is true we cannot be perfectly happy, but let us enjoy the present: for the future—it is an unknown country, and we cannot ascertain where it leads to."

"Do you not think," returned the gipsy, in a mysterious voice, and with solemn brow, "that the stars have tongues, to whisper our destiny to us?"

John smiled disdainfully. "That is one of your superstitions, and the most preposterous of any, fools and madmen have muddled their brains withal," he said. "If we were content with such knowledge as the senses afford, without speculating beyond our reason, we should be far wiser."

"Say not so. The stars perform their mystic mazes in the incomprehensible eternity wherein we live, and their light may not be only for our earth. God raises our souls, while he destroys our clay; and it seems to me those high things were put for the immortal soul to cling to, and to believe they rule our fate, mingle with our being, breathe into our secret life, and finally receive us after we die."

The gipsy spoke with subdued enthusiasm and solemnity, but her lover burst into a hoarse and bitter laugh. He was not one to disguise his real feelings, or to curb his impetuous thoughts; and Fanny (a spoiled and wayward creature), almost worshipped, from her superior acquirements, by the wild beings with whom she lived, did not like to have her prejudices thus openly contemned. It is too often the case that people would rather their prejudice were flattered, than their good sense admired.

"The stars," said John, "have their appointed spheres, and the mind has also its circle. They describe their round, and who shall say how, or in what manner they are links in the same creation? Why are we to perplex ourselves to no purpose, in trying to solve the mysteries which do not belong to ourselves? Some say the universe is a series of links; but I can't believe it. Come, my Fanny, it is growing cold for you to be standing here in the night air!"

"Nay, I feel not cold. It seems to me there must be a connexion between our spirits and the stars; for are they not the sublimest essences in creation? There are those countless orbs looking down upon us, as if to invite us thither, to tell us the earth is dark, and they are beautiful; to raise, to console us is their office; and methinks *there must* be the home of the soul;—they are so endearing, holy, heavenly!"

Jenkins stifled a sigh. "An impenetrable veil," he said, "is thrown over the destiny of man. Where shall we find certainty, where seek for rest?"

Sceptical in religion, rather from ignorance of its great principles than from any fixed ones of his own, that man had no curb on his stormy passions; and without the pure, deep love of wisdom, which in some isolated instances may supply the place of a creed to a great and philosophic mind—without having thought much below the surface,—he was almost necessarily what he was. The moral and metaphysical are linked together, inasmuch as all virtue and ethics, reduced to first principles, must emanate from the Spiritual Reason, or law of pure Mind. Virtue is the victory of mind over matter; vice, the converse. Take the passions away, and there is but intelligence; and take the intellect away, and all is material. Thus then the predominance of the physical over the spiritual, proves mental philosophy is moral also—REASON IS VIRTUE.

Fanny looked down sorrowfully on the earth. "I could almost weep sometimes," she murmured, "when I see all that I love die—the flowers, the trees, the verdure; but then I see afar off, as in a vision, the fair spring, and I know that they live again transfused! The starry science, telling us of human destiny, is also a religion, and comforts me. When the soul goes forth, its emanations may mingle with every pure gale; it may shine in all brightness, it may breathe in all music, and sigh in all fragrance."

"That is poetry!" exclaimed John, pressing the fairy form of the

gipsy in his powerful arm. "I love to hear you talk thus; for it is well to delude ourselves sometimes, and I deem your voice the sweetest music in the universe! It is the warbling of a young nightingale, full of strange melody! That voice, and those looks, are to me all that is beautiful and sweet in life; they are the honey-drops in the bitter cup I quaff, and my spirit is subdued while hanging on your thrilling accents. I am cast in a stern mould; but if you value love according to its intensity, you will prize mine justly. Ah, Fanny! there is that in love which poets cannot describe, which words cannot even express; it is to me the assurance that I have that within me which cannot perish with the brutes, but is eternal!"

"Poor fellow!" muttered the girl, touched by her suitor's impassioned feeling. Her eyes were swimming with tears, and she looked with compassion, if not almost with affection, on her lover; but he was so engrossed with thoughts—such as we seldom experience in this life, evoked by powerful sentiments and desires, and redolent of the immortal and divine,—that he heard, he saw her not. It was a thousand pities that such a man should become an outcast and a ruffian; but how many a fine nature has circumstance perverted! Surely, he might have been a hero with that wild, passionate heart, and that stern enthusiasm—perhaps a Hampden—certainly an honest man; for what is honesty but sincerity? There are few indeed whose nature is so vile that it cannot be cultivated until it produce some valuable fruits, for does not the Book say, 'all is made very good,' and if it were not so, how could we believe that the origin of man is more than human? The lover and the beloved remained silent for some minutes, now measuring the dark space of ether, now contemplating the earth; and they then bent their steps to the hovel where were Jenkins and his wife.

CHAPTER XXII.

LORD WHARTON AGAIN—THE ATTACK ON THE ROAD—FANNY TAYLOR—ST. STEPHEN'S.

The mind of Lord Wharton was of that rare description which never sinks beneath despondency; but appears to have elastic properties, even when all around is darkness. Many men of great intellect are subject to long fits of depression; but the statesman, although he was frequently absorbed in gloomy thought, derived strength even from desperation. Small minds sink beneath inexorable fate, invariably, and it is not even all strong ones that are superior to circumstances. A most singular change had been wrought in the current of Lord Wharton's ideas and

feelings by the incidents of a few hours, and yet he was not less resolutely bent on pursuing the path he had marked out for himself than before. The resiliency of the mind had operated to give it sternness and power. Though fully persuaded that a supernatural agency was at work on his destiny, he resolved it into a kind of vague mysticism, and his carriage became elevated by the essential sublimity connected with such an impression; but like that of Macbeth, in common with whom he shared many good and evil qualities, under somewhat similar events, it was a courage dark and terrible. Some few there are who will not yield to anything, even if they know to struggle is vain, and in this category he was. Such natures are incapable of fear, though not of awe, and appear as incapable of being turned away from crime or led to virtue by any considerations save such as they themselves create. They are essentially of *this* life, and the action of the temporal is the staple of being. It is quite possible that a man, aye, or a nation may become more attached to guilt by the supposition or fact of a supernatural agency, than without it. The Bible most emphatically points this out, and history and reason attest it. The passion of fear is low and sensual—and awe is another phasis of the same principle; the sentiment of love is high and pure; the Jews had a religion of terror, the Christians have one of endearment. And the objection of the sceptic that God's mind cannot change, and consequently the two dispensations cannot be reconciled with the Divine attributes, is very shallow. In the first place religion never *had* terror for the good; in the next, it is *man* that changes—not so much in kind as in degree—and therefore, the Christianity of one century is not that of another, not because the religion can be subject to mutation, but the recipient must. Nothing can be permanent in time, in form—only in substance.

About an hour had elapsed since the apparition had struck awe into the dauntless soul of Wharton; and he was standing like a statue in the centre of his apartment, many shadows chasing each other over his brow and face. The everlasting and the infinite were battling with the temporal and the finite in that stern mind—for the moral is of the one, and immoral of the other.

"This life," murmured the statesman, unconsciously, "to me appears an unreal vision, a mockery, a madness! O, what is it that we seek? What is it that we grasp? Phantoms and bubbles! Yet still we chase them on, still reap the bitter fruits of ignorance and frenzy! Strange! most strange! We are the victims of our own minds; and a most wild delusion enthrals passion and intellect, like the spells of a magician, and leads us to destruction! We are like foolish children, who chase the glittering insects in the air, and fall into an abyss of death! For, O! there *is* a death more fearful than mere physical dissolution!—Yet, shall *I* sink, shall *I* be appalled? Shall an unsubstantial spectre awe me into

dust? No; my soul was not made to know dread, my soul was made for conquest and command, for triumph and for rule! It is such towering and fearless hearts which tread sceptres into dust, and make the crowned fool a puppet in their mighty drama. The vulgar spirit may quail; but the lofty never."

He was silent. Like the master-mind whose development is about the most stupendous monument of Shakspeare's genius, when tied to the stake, he "pulled in resolution." Is it not wonderful that the heart of man every moment should be the sport of the passions? The very greatest have thoughts beyond measure weak! And still the statesman thought on, and his lips moved: but he did not articulate. What a world of rushing feelings and ideas he was!

"Yes," he thought, "we seek for what is worthless, when attained: but the search is the joy, the pursuit the rapture! We all know that it is nothing less than insanity to be ambitious; but if insanity can afford more pleasure than reason, why not? We are all aware that the senses cheat us, ruin us, debase us! But where the feelings are strong, nothing but the sensual delights. I could not be a sage, if I tried for ever. My fiery passions are my rulers—demons—God!"

He paced to and fro with long strides.

"O, Soul!" he exclaimed, "why do you whisper to me in these low, and thrilling tones? I tell you, unfathomed essence! I will not be your dupe, your gull! What if I were to become such a dreaming, visionary wretch as Travers, foregoing all excitement, and eschewing the fever which makes life endurable?—Bah! is not THAT vainest vanity? The wise king of Israel did not live thus! By heaven! the cold, dull, heartless wretch, that *will* not be led by the fiery impulses of nature is a very blank, a void, a nonentity in existence. I tell thee, O my soul! thou art deluding me. The unimpassioned may be satisfied with what they call virtue: but the heart, whose breath is lightning, never!"

Erect and haughty, looking defiance and daring, the statesman then would have afforded an admirable impersonation of Satan to a painter. The strong intellect, the indomitable spirit looked forth from those large, dark eyes, dilating with pride, in splendour and in terror. There was a gloomy majesty in the vast forehead, a fearless grandeur on the noble countenance, which though not of the soul, were magnificent to behold. It seems as if every sublime emotion, no matter what it is, imparts a radiance and a glory to the human form: for the mind is so constituted, that it can raise itself to a false elevation by the darkly great, the sublimely sombre, as well as by the serene and holy.

"Yes, yes," added Lord Wharton, "I will not be duped, I will not be deceived. Have I not thought and resolved, and shall my firm purpose change?—I swear no power in earth or heaven shall avert my course!—

False spirit! I defy thee! Thou art a mere abstraction—though thou *art*. I will say—

> 'The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
> Shall never sag with doubt, nor shake with fear.'"

Again was the statesman mute for a considerable time. The eternal balance was wavering, the battle of the indestructible was fighting. There was no roar of artillery, no shouting, no groaning, but heaven and hell looked anxiously on. At length he cried thoughtfully aloud—

"In the eternal cycle of our fate, spirits and angels may walk with us, and the rise, decline, and fall of the individual, is as certain as that of nations. This is the law of the universe. Nothing endures but change!—What brings this change about? *There* is a mystery, indeed! Why should not these beings of another world guide the immense machine of existence, why should they not be busy in the earth?"

To follow the workings of Lord Wharton's powerful, but perverted mind during the long hours that succeeded would be curious; but would occupy far too much time, and would hardly be relished by the ordinary reader. To record every fine thought in a high spirit under common circumstances for an hour were almost impossible;—what then must be the difficulty, when events altogether strange and wonderful are evolving the course of the individual's life-direction! It is well to speculate sometimes on the abstract workings of the intellect, but it is impracticable to trace all their minute springs and filiations. The heart of man is only less buried in mystery than the wisdom of divinity. The reader, then, must endeavour to conceive as a whole what is but cursorily noticed, and fill up the outline which a feeble hand has imperfectly sketched.

When the sun arose in glory and effulgence, looking like a ball of fire in the east, the appearance of Wharton was composed and tranquil. No person could have detected the trace of the convulsing emotions with which he had been so long struggling; and save that his cheek was a very shade paler than usual, and his eye lacked its usual fire and keenness, an ordinary observer would not have imagined the slightest burthen was on his mind. But troublous thought was still busy in the seething brain, and the composure apparently so perfect was but on the surface. He was racked with mental torment, and vainly he struggled to banish from his memory the apparition of the night. It glared upon him continually from every shape in the universe of thought and sight, and drove him almost to madness. We have *all* haunting ghosts that scare us, and it is not the bodily form we give them, but the hue that memory endues them with that scares and horrifies us. The cadaverous and ghastly colour, the grave-clothes and corruption, appal not like the MIND'S spectre.

He was about to descend to the breakfast-table with that tranquil

brow and feverish brain, when a servant brought him letters, which had arrived by a special messenger: and no sooner had he perused one of them, than his whole mien altered as if by enchantment.

"Ask Mr. Travers," he said, "to lend me one of his swiftest horses. I must read on." And he tore open another letter as the servant hastened to deliver his message. "Ah, is it so?" cried the Peer, with quivering lip. "My enemies have taken advantage of my absence, and a change is effected in the Cabinet. They dared not beard the lion when at home. My old foe, Lord ——, has accepted the post of Foreign Affairs. Enough!" he added, indignantly, "my voice shall be heard in the House to-night, and the roar of the forest king shall send the jackals trembling off. My party—curse them, the cowards! shall feel what they never felt before!"

With a savage laugh the proud statesman descended. He had now an object of sufficient importance to engage all his thoughts; he shook off the images that had crowded on him, as a gallant stag at bay shakes off the dogs that hunt him. He was met by Travers, who said---

"I hope you have not heard of ill——"

"My presence is required instantly in London," interrupted Lord Wharton. "You must pardon all ceremony, for every moment is big with fate—with the fate of England and myself.—Is the horse ready?" addressing a servant who made his appearance.

"Yes, my lord, he is at the door."

"Farewell, then, Travers; I shall be again with you soon, whether conquered or a conqueror."

With these words, the Peer, shaking hands with his brother-in-law, hastened away. He galloped about seven miles, in less than half an hour, and arriving at a post-town, ordered a post-chaise, which was no sooner ready, than bidding a person ride home with Mr. Travers' horse, he threw himself into the vehicle, and was borne away as swiftly as four horses could take him to London. The ideal presence of the supernatural visitor no longer oppressed him, and his mind was distracted from all but the actual, effectually. He rapidly shaped out for himself the mode of action he conceived the most politic to pursue.

"They have none to oppose me in the House," he said, "no Pitt, no Burke now exists; and they will tremble beneath the mere flashing of my eye. I know the base herd of which I am the real head. There is not a valiant spirit there. I could almost wish there existed one worthy to struggle with: I should like to be opposed by a man of genius."

The statesman was somewhat unpleasantly disturbed from his meditations by one of the horses falling and injuring himself severely. As it was quite out of the question to hope the poor beast could be of farther use for the present, one of the post-boys, mounting a second horse, led him away, and the chaise proceeded at a less rapid pace, much to the

annoyance of its occupant. But it was no great distance to the next post-town, so that he could only be delayed a few minutes by the accident, and was soon again buried in reflection. Every stratagem, every expedient of subtle and profound policy, passed through the mind of Wharton while the vehicle rolled on through a picturesque district—hills and streams and valleys appearing at every winding of the road, in beautiful profusion. But leaving these behind, the chaise approached a common, on which might be seen an encampment of gipsies, and on the other side arose precipitous banks which sometimes were of such a height as to exclude the prospect beyond in that direction; but for the most part meadows and fields might be seen in the distance, though there was not a trace of the habitation of man visible to the naked eye, save the tents of the wandering tribe. But Lord Wharton saw nothing of the surrounding country, but, his eyes fixed on vacancy, reviewed the intricate plottings he had laid out with severe criticism, such as the author of a thing rarely uses, lest any part of the whole might be defective or impracticable. But so masterly a tactician was he, so clear his view, so keen his insight into the inner machinery—all was so much the scheme of a potent spirit, that it seldom required modification. He was never hasty in his judgment, but was swift in arriving at conclusions: he had the wings of the eagle, but the cunning of the serpent. As the post-chaise was proceeding at the rate of nine miles an hour, and was turning an angle of the road, a man jumped out from behind some bushes on the bank skirting the highway, and seizing the horses' heads, he knocked down the postillion with a heavy bludgeon, and set his foot upon him. Almost at the same instant, a second man rushed forwards from the bushes, and pointed a gun at the Peer, while a woman rose from the other side, having been concealed by an oak, and picking up a heavy stone, hurled it at Lord Wharton. The statesman was alive in an instant. He drew a pistol from his pocket as the stone hurled at him struck his left arm, and exclaimed, to the person with the gun, "Die, ruffian!" The gun and the pistol were discharged together; but the bullet of the one struck the frame of the chaise window, and the ball of the other whizzed within an inch of the robber's head. Lord Wharton had no other weapon of defence; for he remembered he had left his case of pistols at Traver's House, and the one he had with him he had put in his pocket by accident. But he was not one to be daunted by danger the most imminent, and, suddenly opening the door of the vehicle, he leapt out, and rushed on a tall fellow who had fired at him; and who, clubbing his gun, aimed at him. Though this man was somewhat disguised, the Peer had no difficulty in recognising in him the younger Jenkins; and when he saw the deadly fire in his eye, knew he had no mercy to expect. The other ruffian who had seized the horses was hastening to attack Lord Wharton, the woman taking his place, and, in a minute more, the fate of the statesman must

have been sealed, when the galloping of a horse was heard, and another person appeared on the scene of action.

The order of events has been rather anticipated; but they may be narrated briefly here. From the summit of a bank, rising to a considerable height, the post-chaise containing the Peer had been descried some minutes before by Jenkins, and, hastening down, his wife and son, who were below, stationed themselves in the manner described, and he did likewise. But this procedure was not without a witness: the gipsy girl, Fanny, was strolling about when she beheld the smith mount the bank and hastily descend. She was at an intermediate distance between the chaise and Jenkins, and she thought there was something strange in the affair. She had her suspicions of some design of violence being contemplated by the smith, and was resolved to frustrate it if possible; but how to do so was the problem. Should she hasten onward, and forewarn the occupant of the chaise? While undecided in what way to act, she noticed a person, whom she had not previously seen, concealed in some measure by a cluster of trees about a hundred yards from the road, and a dark bay horse grazing near him, he having dismounted to let the beast do so. —"It is Williamson," she cried, and speeding to him, in a few words intimated her suspicions. Even as she did so, the post-chaise passed them; and the man mounting, and drawing a pistol, hastened after it, and arrived just in time; for Lord Wharton having caught the gun of John Jenkins ere it descended on his head, was fiercely struggling with him, and the smith was about to strike his hated foe with a heavy weapon, when the horseman shouted, "Hold, or I fire!"

"Dare to interfere with us, and I will dash your brains out!" returned Jenkins, while his son maintained the desperate and doubtful contest with the Peer. But the horseman was not in the least intimidated; he was of low stature, but firmly knit, and muscular; and there was a world of daring in his clear, keen eye, and around his mouth; while on the wide forehead every line appeared of firmness and resolution.

"I have you at my mercy," he said to the smith, "and I will assuredly fire, if you raise an arm either against me or that gentleman.—Ha!" as Jenkins, rushing on him, attempted to dash him from his horse. He fired, but in his haste did not take aim accurately, and the ball grazed Jenkins's cheek, but did not harm him. In an instant the horseman produced a short sword, and, as the smith sprang on him with ferocious strength, cut at his bare head. But Jenkins, by a well-directed blow of a huge bludgeon, shivered the blade to pieces, and grasped his opponent by the arm as with a vice. The horseman promptly caused his steed to rear, while his assailant clung to him like a wild beast, and succeeded in taking him off his feet. Jenkins jerked himself on to the horse, and the contest became desperate and deadly—arm to arm, hand to hand! The post-boy was struggling with the woman, and the Peer and his antagonist

were so equally matched in all respects, that there was no probability of their battle terminating. A more even conflict there never was. It might have been thought that the horseman, shorter by half a head than the smith, and of smaller size altogether, was no match for his savage foe; but stoutly did he maintain his seat for a long time. At length, they rolled from the back of the affrighted horse, who was kicking and plunging, and fought with unabated fury, until the bulk rather than the strength of Jenkins prevailing, he succeeded in getting his opponent undermost, and lifted his iron fist to strike him.

"Quick, quick!" here shrieked a female voice, and a man's diminutive figure was seen running along. He arrived opportunely to save the vanquished foe of the smith from the awful blow descending on his face, and collaring Jenkins, strove to drag him away. Other persons were now advancing with all haste; and the Jenkins' family, deserting their prey with curses, bounded up the precipitous banks that skirted the road, and disappeared.

"Do I behold Lord Wharton?" exclaimed the very short man who had seized Jenkins, but had been hurled away by the burly smith, when he fled, nearly to the stateman's feet.

The Peer was almost exhausted with the violence of the struggle; for it is not to be supposed all he had undergone within a few hours had no effect on his frame. It was only the towering spirit that sustained him; but he exclaimed—

"A hundred guineas for the apprehension of those wretches!"

"They are the very devils we are in search of, my lads!" cried the short man to several persons who had arrived. "They have again attacked his lordship: we will take them, or die." And the smith and his wife and son were pursued by half-a-dozen armed men.

Meanwhile, the individual, who had been unhorsed and so nearly killed, arose, and shook the dust from his clothes, while the young girl, who had been a party in saving the Peer—for if the horseman had been a second later, Wharton would have been struck at disadvantage,—inquired with anxiety if he were hurt? During the contest, she stood with trembling limbs and closed eyes, unable to stir; but when she heard advancing steps, started as from the effect of electricity, and brought the short man up.

"No, no, Fanny!" was the response; "but is the gentleman unhurt?"

"Yes, I thank you," said the Peer, recovering his breath. "I am much indebted to you for your timely succour." He glanced at the horseman, to ascertain if he could offer him any pecuniary recompence; but hesitated to do so. "You had a hard tussle with that brawny ruffian," remarked Lord Wharton; "and the post-boy fared but ill in the clutches of that tigress."

The old man who rode the post-horses had indeed fared worst of all;

for he was no antagonist to the muscular Mrs. Jenkins, and was rubbing himself before and behind, muttering, "The devil's in that woman! My old gal's nothing to her!"

"There's an ointment for your bruises, man," said the statesman, scarcely forbearing a smile at the post-boy, and tossing some money to him. "And who," he added, turning to Fanny, "are you, my pretty gipsy?"

The girl blushed, and replied, "I am rejoiced I was in time to bring you help, sir."

"Oh, my fair ally! take these guineas, then. Hang it! I thought my purse was better supplied. You will not accept them? Nay, but you must! You," he continued, addressing the horseman, "I will not offer to remunerate; but here is my card, and I shall be happy to see you, and to serve you." Lord Wharton's hawk eye was fixed on the hardly less piercing orbs of the stranger, and appeared to read his character in an instant. His insight into the human heart was astonishingly great, and physiognomy had once been his favourite theoretical and practical study. He was profuse in his liberality, and willing to return any obligation he felt himself under to the horseman; but he hardly knew how to do so.

"Your lordship," was the answer, the card having been glanced at, "is very good; but I have done nothing to merit your thanks. I am happy to have rendered aught in the way of what you *esteem* a service to so illustrious a man."

Wharton was now certain he addressed one in the rank of a gentleman; and extending his hand to him, said, "Indeed I will not allow you to underrate yourself;—may I inquire your name?"

"Certainly. I am called Taylor, and have served in the army."

"If you will come to me, in London, I will endeavour to do something for you," returned the Peer. "I do not forget such obligations, and have interest at the War-office. I am certain, should you intend to follow a soldier's career, you will adorn his majesty's service." . . . . . It was thus the statesman gained friends. He did not serve connexions, but bound others to him.

Taylor bowed, in return to Lord Wharton's compliment; and by this time, the party who had pursued the baffled assassins re-appeared, not having found a trace of the fugitives; and Lord Wharton, distributing money among them, once more entered the vehicle.

"Will your lordship allow me to accompany you?" said the very short man, as he received a handsome gratuity from the Peer.

"No, I thank you;—indeed, I hardly think so small a personage would be of much assistance," answered Lord Wharton.

"Oh, my lord! it is not the size of the form, but the courage of the heart, that avails. My name is John Thompson, and I live with some

friends of your lordship's." But the Peer heeded not this address, being anxious to resume his way.

"Can any one sell me a brace of loaded pistols?" he asked.

"Here are some at your service," returned Taylor. "I am proceeding, I think, in the same road as your lordship, and, for the space I ride, shall be glad to escort you."

"You are very obliging, Mr. Taylor; but I hardly think the villains will attack me again. Your company, however, will afford me much pleasure. Where is that little gipsy? I must say adieu to her." But Fanny was nowhere visible.

The post-chaise was soon again in motion; and Taylor rode by the side of it, conversing with the ease, fluency, humour, and shrewdness of a clever man of the world. The Peer had seldom conversed with so agreeable a companion; and the distance seemed short while he accompanied him. On every subject started, Taylor showed judgment and discrimination; but he listened to all that Lord Wharton said, as to the voice of an oracle. Such is the way to curry favour with the great and mean!

"Happy are the destinies of England," remarked the horseman, before quitting the minister, "when such a pilot is at the helm of state; for I know such is really the case. I need not assure your lordship, I shall ever remember with pleasure the minutes I have spent in your society."

"And remember you call on me soon, in town," returned the statesman, pretty certain his invitation would not be neglected. As Taylor rode off, Lord Wharton gazed after him, muttering, "I could turn that fellow's talents to account, if I could trust him Ay, there it is! Oh, this curse of knowledge! what an impossibility to find perfect truth and fidelity! But, still, interested motives will make men faithful. I must see more of that fellow: there is something about him I do not quite understand: but I see he is willing to serve me. I want an unscrupulous agent."

One remarkable feature in the deep and subtle policy of Lord Wharton was, that he never, if possible, neglected an opportunity of securing to himself an available coadjutor, or assistant, to carry out his projects; and his choice of instruments was, on the whole, about the happiest that minister ever made. As his designs were not straightforward, he was necessitated to have recourse to "indirect, crooked ways;" and for this purpose surrounded himself with a whole army of spies and agents. The servants of his enemies were feed—the friends of his opponents won away from them—and his means of procuring intelligence of the movements in the hostile camp, baffled the keenest conception. But he had been not a little startled at finding the lawyer Sharp had procured such accurate information of events that he thought could not have got abroad; and it taught him to be most guarded in his own operations, and to suspect the lawyer was playing a deep game. He feared lest the weapons he employed in his offensive measures should be turned against himself; but he was not

by nature a cautious man. His haughty and overbearing disposition overleapt all obstacles, and the audacity of his courage awed the hearts of those willing to oppose him. Success had uniformly attended his counsels, and he rode on the sea of opinion like a gallant bark that seems to dare the winds and billows. His vast energy, his brilliant intellect, his eloquence, wit, and rank, conspired to raise him above the herd of statesmen; and his dauntless spirit crushed the cabals against him with a rapidity and completeness which did not allow the foe to rally. It was against this man a formidable conspiracy had broken out; and he smiled bitterly as he thought how easily he should make it succumb to his strong mind and bold heart. . . . . It was quite dark when he reached London, without further adventure than has been detailed; and stopping not for refreshment, took his way to St. Stephen's. None would have imagined, as the celebrated Peer strode with large and royal steps to his seat in the House—his eye appearing to search the souls of all present, and to annihilate the courage of his adversaries,—that such things had so recently occurred as the reader knows. It was a fine sight to behold him, with his lofty mien and lion port, among the flower of the nobility and gentry; some of whom regarded him with moody anger, some with ill-suppressed fear and dislike, as he rose to make a memorable burst of splendid eloquence!

CHAPTER XXIII.

LORD WHARTON—THE SPEECH—LAWYER SHARP, THE RIVAL OF THE GREAT MAN—THE NIGHTHOUSE—THE CORPSE—LORD WHARTON'S FRENZY—THE MISTRESS—AND THE FEVER.

"By Jove, G——!" remarked one of the opposition, a wit of the first magnitude, to another, as Wharton got on his legs, "his lordship means to give it the unlucky Premier to-night! Look at his curling lip, and dilated nostril! I did not think he would be here."

But every breath was hushed, every murmur stilled, and all was eager expectation, when Lord Wharton opened his mouth. Even the old dozing members, that usually take their evening nap in the House, rubbed their eyes, and looked interested. He was not like most orators, afraid of coming to the kernel of the matter at once; for he had too much to say to make a long exordium—but reserved himself, nevertheless, until he had thoroughly warmed his hearers,—and that high-pressure enthusiasm at its height,—the souls of all carried forward, like soldiers in battle,—he threw himself, with all his mighty powers, like

an avalanche, against his antagonists. Sarcasm, invective, reasoning, were poured forth with a brilliancy and a swiftness that carried away men's minds, while the thunderbolt of his indignation caused the stoutest of the enemy to quail. The dull wondered at the effect produced by that eloquence, the imaginative were seduced by its flowery beauties, the logical admired its sequency of parts. Never, perhaps, did a speaker command the attention of the House more thoroughly than did Lord Wharton. Fox, Pitt, Burke, and Sheridan, might sometimes surpass him in the electric effects they caused; but neither of them could be more uniformly brilliant, fluent, and commanding,—neither of them possessed a more thrilling voice, a more passionate elocution, a more acute logic, or finer judgment in the rhetoric of disposing aright their oratorical displays. His noble figure, his perfect self-possession, his fire, his manliness, his diction, impressed the auditor with an idea of a great man, to whom might almost be applied those splendid lines of the poet—

> "With all that Demosthenes wanted, endued;
> And his rival, or victor, in all he possess'd."

He always chose the fitting time to speak with exquisite tact and discrimination, never waiting until the powers of waking in others were exhausted;—and curiosity dormant, hung not on his breath. I wish I were able to give my Readers an idea of the imposing attitude of the Peer, as he elevated his arm like Kemble in Coriolanus, and concentrating his glance—which had previously traversed the whole House—on the doomed Prime Minister, until the unhappy man appeared withered beneath it, commenced. It is not my intention here to record any portion of one of the most Demosthenian speeches that ever electrified the peoples' representatives, to dilate step by step on its powers, its coherency, its bitterness: but only to mention its effects. His party appeared stricken into nothingness beneath the oratory of the speaker, who on that night surpassed himself in what he did. He was more terribly in earnest, more intensely carried away by the storm he raised than was usual with him. The memory of many fine, great things of the sort was yet fresh in the minds of those present; but for the time that speech almost obliterated it. That is the true *mens divinior*, which temporarily produces oblivion of what has preceded it, will not allow of comparison,—but gathers up the feelings of passions, and plays with them while it leads them, like a magician. That must be a second-rate spirit which cannot banish the past, and make all one Great Present, like the first dawn of Eternity!

The spell was over, and the inspired orator, who had paralysed the energies of some, and silenced the doubts of others, who had convinced, warmed, turned the irresolute and the cold, seeming like a God to the meaner flock, sat down amid thunders of applause.

"I never heard him speak like *that!*" remarked one of the old Whigs, who had sat on the opposite bench to Lord Wharton for years. "He does not seem *himself.*"

"That was sublime, Wharton!" whispered one of the few who supported the eloquent Minister through thick and thin. "I wonder who will reply?"

The Peer smiled, his pale cheek flushed with triumph, and his eye dazzlingly,—preternaturally bright—with his elated feelings, and wandering over the crowded benches of the House of Commons. The very reporters in the gallery appeared petrified with amazement at what Lord Wharton had done—those cold, stony fellows who ordinarily seem hardly to have hearts beating in their bosoms, as they scribble on, as if for dear life.

In vain the Speaker looked first at one, then at another; no one answered to the appeal. The most arrogant and conceited felt their inferiority to the great Tory Minister then. At length, to the surprise of all present, one of the Whig members—a moderate, consistent man, of elderly appearance, and who had hardly ever opened his lips before, rose and spoke.

"What? Sharp, the attorney?" was the general whisper. "What the deuce can *he* have to say?"

The new speaker, as if very conscious of the disadvantage of following the orator *par excellence* of the day, prefaced his remarks with a few deprecatory sentences, relative to his own inability to disprove the arguments so admirably stated by Lord Wharton,—thus forestalling failure, or elevating success,—adding, that after such a display of brilliant and thrilling eloquence, of command of language and transcendant genius, his own homely, matter-of-fact mode of speaking would seem tame and dull: but he asked if men's minds were to be enthralled by rhetoric, if their judgments were to be warped by an appeal to the passions—blowing hot and cold in the same sentence, after the manner of Marc Antony in Julius Cæsar. He criticised the speech of Lord Wharton piecemeal in a very short space of time, even while he did not seem a critic, so that he made the very ornaments of it a handle for his own argument, and having analysed its substance, and divested it of its flowery beauties, like a botanist anatomizing a plant, or a surgeon a lovely corpse, until all is bare and skeleton-like, he put some shrewd questions to "the right honourable and noble lord" on some points which he was perfectly aware he was incompetent to answer.

The Statesman bit his lip with vexation at finding his efforts so neutralized: for the House, which at first listened to the blunt, strong sense of the lawyer, after the oratory of the Peer, with indifference, gradually became interested, and then absorbed in what he said. There was no such thing as apathy among the members, ten minutes after

Sharp began. The lawyer, however, had artfully made it appear that he was rather favourable than otherwise to the line of policy proposed by the Peer,—as those of his sentiments might well be—but questioned its practicability; and, a perfect master of minute details, tiresome to gather, but weighty when well arranged, he astonished his hearers with his sagacity and strength of reasoning.

"Lord Wharton saw things in too general a light," he said; "but the abstract must not be neglected by him, and he wished he would satisfy his objections!"

It seems as if universally there must be re-action; and the loftier feelings of the assembly having been well nigh exhausted by the demands upon them made by the last speaker, they were content to listen to the plain, unvarnished statements of the rich solicitor, much more than they would have been induced to hear a new orator with inferior powers to those of Wharton.

There is a chilling scepticism, apparently natural to men of the world, more easily excited than its antithesis, and Sharp, well-knowing the hearts of those he addressed, failed not to appeal to their interests and prejudices, while he combated the logic of the Peer with all his intellect.

The measure proposed by Lord Wharton was calculated to be popular, and must have destroyed the integrity of his own party: but it was evident to those who thought below the surface, that his ulterior design was to re-unite the forces thus scattered, and take upon himself the generalship of them. But an impression was to be made both on partizans and opponents; and the Peer, well-knowing the difficulty of this, had not been sparing in his attempts to accomplish it. His boldness terrified the weak, and the strong, when his fervid eloquence was over, suspected him.

The House broke up without any thing being decided, although Wharton had hoped the event would be immediately settled. Men of high abilities are apt to overrate themselves; and while this very conceit may in some measure tend to give them strength and fearlessness, it is apt, at the same time, to render them too confident of victory; so that they do not weigh contingencies, but think to sweep away all trivial matters by their unaided power. But trifles occupy the mass of mankind. They will listen attentively to minor details, but fear measures too sweeping. Their narrow minds cannot grasp such plans as a Napoleon may think facile; they cannot overleap the intermediate at a bound. It is this circumstance which gives those who look into the mean parts of human nature,—who dissect the small portions which fused into a whole constitute such omnipotence,—who though they *make* not public opinion, direct it.

Colossal as was the mental strength of Lord Wharton, Sharp on a

smaller scale had no less proportionate vigour: but it was compact, not comprehensive, astute in its perceptive faculty, and not profound in its principles, so that he was seldom or never above the apprehension of the vulgar; while the other, though what is termed a practical man, laid his schemes on too large a scale, to be a favourite with the careful merchants and prudent men of business who have so much influence in commercial England.

The Peer quitted the House with a feverish pulse, and excited spirit. He could not subdue the agitation of his nerves, with all his efforts: and, as a strange expedient to quell the disorder, he hastened to procure wine. Those who habituate themselves to the use of stimulants, it would seem, fly to them on all occasions for refuge: and it may be well for those who take them in moderation to reflect if they enlarge such a portion, they inevitably acquire a habit hardly to be overcome. There are many like Lord Wharton who, ere they can exert their intellectual faculties to the uttermost, fly to the wine-bottle for artificial brilliancy; but I agree with Macdonald of Leeds, "that the genius which requires alcohol to sustain its wings, can have but little of the royal vigour of the eagle."

The air was keen and frosty; but it allayed not the heat of the statesman's blood, though he purposely extended the walk he usually took from the House to his residence. There are in London innumerable dens of iniquity open long after midnight, where vice and sin may be descried in all their hideous phases, where faded beauty, where detestable harlotry are mingled in similar, yet heterogeneous groups. Here may be seen the boy, with his smooth, beardless face, his wild, rolling eyes, and reeling form, embracing the rottenness which lures him to destruction. Who has not heard the boisterous laughter, the hollow and reckless merriment, which the thinker traces to its true source—for wild mirth and despair are near akin—even to desperation;—who has not gazed upon the girl scarcely emerged from childhood mingling in ribald conversation hardly to be hinted at; the beastly drunkenness, the brutality, the curses, the stupid inanity, delighting in filthy song and licentious dance, objecting themselves to the stunned sense, and has not groaned inwardly to feel how deep a hell may human nature sink into? Profligacy is in truth "a monster of such hideous mien," that when we first contemplate it, we shrink from it with loathing and abhorrence; but soon, too soon, the foul demon assumes a radiant angel's form to the morbid brain, and the fiends rejoice over the fall of what might rise to heaven!—That he who is able to contemplate eternity, should sink to such a thing!—The first step in guilt, how few in millions retrace!

There was in the metropolis at the period to which this tale refers, a place, which has fortunately ceased to exist. Hither resorted the gay and the vicious, the rich and debauched of all ages; and scenes were of nightly occurrence, the bare recital of which might make the most callous

who have not engaged in them shudder. Here innocence and virtue were betrayed into the foul embrace of lust, and hundreds perished miserably as prostitutes who had been entrapped into it. Delicious wines and costly viands were consumed by those who frequented this most brilliant Pandemonium, and lights, and music, and voluptuous odours were blended to captivate the senses and to seduce the passions. Pictures executed with consummate skill, but all licentious and indecent, statues calculated to excite the imagination, women half-naked lolling on sofas, simulating sleep; and all collateral stimulants to sensuality were in abundance everywhere in the temple of sin; while dark recesses and secret chambers were not wanting to complete the purposes of the abode of smiling damnation that Lord Wharton entered:—but he did not mingle with the throng; he chose to pass through a private door, and proceeding through a long passage, lit by coloured lamps, found himself in an apartment, where beamed a solitary light. He rang a bell, and a young girl, painted to the eyes, and gaily dressed, answered the summons.

"Bring me some of the guinea Champagne, Bess," said the statesman, throwing himself into a luxurious easy chair.

"Yes, my lord!—Any thing else?"

"Are there any new girls, who have come since I was here?"

"I think there are. But I'll send my mistress to you."

The servant departed; and the Peer compressed his heated brow with both his hands, and exclaimed—

"What a racking pain is here! A curse on that debate!" And he paced up and down the room with uneven strides. "Let all thought be buried—deep—deep!" muttered Wharton. "What should *we* do with thought?—we who are born to rule and to enjoy. Shall we be chained to intense brain-toil, like the drudging scholar, and the poor poet, who pants for immortality? No, no: the passions are the only true friends: they only ask to be gratified, and we are happy.—Quite happy are we in the embrace of beauty, and the mad intoxication of wine!"

Of all the miserable delusions of ignorance and folly, surely that is the most frenzied which places enjoyment in sensuality! There may be a wild thrill, ending in a pang, but nothing more in the fruition of passion, when it is not elevated by pure and ennobling sentiments. What is of the body is in time,—a sensation, not a state:—what is in the mind is in eternity,—a state, not a sensation. But there are periods when all are mad; when the soul quits its ethereal altitude, and corruption claims us for its own. Far be it from me to praise the gloomy and ascetic, to remove the bright flowers from the path of youth, and to leave the blight and the mildew,—even to quench *one* pleasant light of hope, one joyous feeling:—but, oh! pause ere it be too late, when conscience utters its warning, and intellect and reason rise indignant against the dictates of passion.

It is my decided opinion that when the nerves are highly excited as Lord Wharton's were, after the oratorical display in the House; and the brain is wrought upon from without and within; when wine is taken profusely, though not to inebriation, that a man may be delirious; he can scarcely be called in a sane condition: and no sooner had the statesman swallowed two or three successive bumpers of the intoxicating beverage, than the reign of unreason began.

The girl he called Bess had brought him wine and told him that her mistress would wait on him instantly, but was engaged with the Duke of ——. As Lord Wharton was again filling his glass, he heard a strain of gushing melody from a short distance, and presently could distinguish the words of a song, harps and flutes accompanying female voices;—it died away, it rose again, and these were the words.

"Bathe thy soul in rapture
While the time is thine!
Drink, and let sweet woman
Quaff the sparkling wine!

"Let soft music—thrilling
Every vein with bliss,—
Tell thee there is heaven!—
It lives in woman's kiss!"

More there was: but here a form of middle age, attired most splendidly, entered the apartment, and dropping a low curtsey, apologized for "not having waited on his lordship before:" adding, "that there was something going on in the theatre which he might like to see."

He nodded, and she preceded him into another room, brilliantly illuminated, in which there were several boxes, something like those of a theatre, and in one of these Lord Wharton was left, curtains concealing him from view. There was a stage at one end of the chamber; and there might be seen beautiful women dancing, and falling into voluptuous attitudes, delicious music floating in the air from invisible instruments. It was like a scene of enchantment, strange but intoxicating, such as has been described by some of the ancient poets, though tinctured with an indecency which, if not disgusting, was the more dangerous. It is the aged wretches who strive to excite the smouldering flame within their foul hearts, who patronise scenes like these—Wharton, though long inured to debauchery, not having exhausted the mighty passions within him. In those days the licence in existence was greater than now; and few men were proof against the united influence of temptation and example—with the *many*, fate.

When a boy, Wharton had been a Don Juan; and it was unlikely he should be less so at his time of life. But he had no longer time, if he

had inclination to pursue the amatory intrigues of his early life, and he was a patron of such establishments as those, which are so demoralizing in their nature that they cannot be entered without defilement. Ambition and pleasure were the two occupations of his life, and he was always dissatisfied when otherwise employed. But there is one thing to be explained, not easy to be done. Does it not seem strange, after the supposed supernatural visitation that had made so vast an impression on him, he should seek such a scene as that of the Night-house? Is it not a fact, however, that the murderer, after the deed of blood, has acted likewise? It is to fly the pursuing conscience that the wicked rush into sin.

Wharton had succeeded in shaking off the awe that clung to him after the nocturnal apparition; but he secretly dreaded lest the excitement which sustained him ceasing, he should become the prey of nameless terrors. Fiercely he battled with himself; but all the efforts of his powerful mind were insufficient to destroy the impression that he was the subject of a supernatural fate. How we dread the incomprehensible: not because it is in itself fearful; but because we are ignorant! Now he persuaded himself it was all a vision, now he was convinced it was reality, now he was undecided; but he ended in flying from thought, and fortifying himself beneath the barriers of sense. He thought to conquer the spiritual by the material! Even during that eloquent oration, the Form of the Dead seemed to rise, the Strange Presence seemed to haunt him; and he could almost have uttered some wild exclamation in the midst of his fluent sentences: but he conquered his impulse,—the consciousness of strength, against the superhuman, imparting a nameless majesty to him,—and betrayed not an emotion save such as was excited by the hour.

When it was all over, and the shouts of an admiring multitude had ceased to vibrate on his ear, when he was in the lonely street, with the starry heaven, and the solemn silence above and around, what horror stared him in the face as he walked onward! But though his hands clenched, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, he suffered not the awful recollection to prevail, and he fancied wine would make him a man again. While in the Night-house, a voice rose above the harmonious song and the ringing laughter, a form of light and grace flashed upon him among the airy throng on the stage, and he could have absolutely shrieked aloud: but not a muscle of his face moved; the Titan will vanquished the ghastly fear, and he said to himself, "There is yet something which may banish this fell phantasm!" And acting on the spur of the moment he quitted the box, and sought the infamous woman who had conducted him thither.

"There is a delicate little creature from the country with me," said the procuress. "Her price is but a hundred guineas. Shall I send her to your lordship?"

"Yes," was the reply.

And Wharton was alone again, in a small, square room, stuffed with a soft material in the walls, and hung with velvet. He shut his eyes resolutely; and then had recourse to the wine-bottle. He drank long and fiercely, until his brain reeled, and his blood boiled like lava. "Still here!" he muttered, striking his forehead with his fist. . . . . The minutes passed. Many were the shouts of laughter, many the shrieks of terror then in that dark place. But they were not heard beyond the immediate vicinity where they resounded.

"Why does she not come?" said Lord Wharton, frenzied with the large quantity of liquor he had consumed, superadded to all that had passed. And hastily quitting the room, he ascended a flight of stairs, and traversed a gallery. He might have heard an awful cry then; but his ear was locked, and he knew nothing of what took place around him. He opened a door, and entered a small chamber in which there was a bed. He seemed as in a hideous dream—as one to whom the actual was *not*. A female figure had retreated but a few seconds before by another door, and the room appeared vacant. Mechanically, Lord Wharton drew aside the curtain of the bed, and gazed into it.

"Oh, God of Heaven!" he exclaimed, when he had done so.

He might have expected to gaze on breathing loveliness, on features sculptured like those of some Grecian statue; and he *did* behold a form of beauty, calm as the statue, and as motionless. What was it, then, that petrified the Peer with horror? What was it that made him shrink away, and then remain rooted to the ground? . . . . . From the snowy bosom of a beautiful girl with golden hair, and large azure eyes, trickled the life-blood from a ghastly wound. There she lay, a knife in her hand, the breath having gone forth—the mysterious breath, which is All and Nothing!—and the exquisite clay yet warm.

"Dead!" cried Lord Wharton, regaining the use of speech. "I am mad—I *must* be mad!" he murmured, again shutting his eyes; but opening them beheld the pure, soft, melancholy orbs of the corse gazing on him reproachfully. He looked for the space of a minute, and then uttering a loud, agonizing scream, that was like nothing earthly, he rushed away, and was in an instant in the street.

There was a cry that night, a fearful cry, which waking those that slept was only less tremendous than the last trump; but who thought it was the celebrated statesman who had lately caused such a sensation in the House? They woke, and their blood ran cold: but they supposed it was some houseless, famished wretch, driven to despair. They fancied it impossible,—poor fools!—the madness from the depths of the great human heart could spring from any save a worldly cause. The lazy watch beheld him flying, but did not attempt to stop him, for there was a ghastly, freezing glare in his rolling eyeballs that petrified them. On

he sped, as if driven by the Furies, rushing with the speed of the wind along the empty streets; and at last gained a small house in a rather fashionable quarter of the town, when opening the door with a latch-key he disappeared. . . . . One had seen him before he gained the abode, who little thought, until he had passed, it could be the proud Minister; but when he saw him enter the house, he uttered an exclamation.

"By Heaven, it is he!" said this person, an elderly man of respectable exterior. "He must be mad! I wonder what it can mean?" It was Sharp, the lawyer, who recognised Lord Wharton. "I am revenged!" he muttered: for as he gazed upon that wild form he was certain—

"All hell was in his heart, and he himself in hell."

How impotent are the efforts of malice and vengeance to punish, in comparison with the self-torture of the guilty! It is only those who sin deeply, who can suffer continuously.

The following morning it was announced to the public that Lord Wharton had been attacked with brain-fever, probably caused by the excitement of the last few hours. The physicians considered his life in danger, the fever running high. What a sensation that news caused! . . . . The lawyer, after Lord Wharton had vanished, was turning towards Piccadilly, in order to cross to that part of the town where he resided, when he noticed a short man in a cloak advancing, and hastening to meet him, said,

"Well met, Williamson. I did not think to find you in London. Will you walk with me?" They proceeded together at a brisk pace, and Sharp said, "I have just witnessed a most strange apparition! After quitting the House, I supped with a friend, and on leaving him, was arrested in the street by the spectacle of a flying figure. What think you? It was Lord Wharton! I never saw so horrible a face in all my life—and I have seen many fearful things. My revenge begins!" and he smiled terribly.

For days and weeks the Peer hovered between life and death; and but for one of the finest constitutions in the world, he must have died. The fever ran to a fearful height, and he was bled profusely. His incoherent ravings alarmed the neighbourhood sometimes, and were of a description truly awful.—But it is expedient to follow him from the first. . . . When he had closed the door of the house, with tottering steps he ascended a flight of stairs, and entered a chamber, in which there was a large couch. On it reposed a lovely woman, whose slumbers were uneasy, and who was talking in her sleep.

The Statesman stood before her, the perspiration rolling down his white face in big drops, and the functions of life seeming suspended. He moved not, he spake not, but remained statue-stricken there, until

the female opened her eyes, and uttered a joyful cry,—but it died away in a terrified scream, when, by the light of a solitary lamp, the death-like rigidity of the form, and the horrid glare of the starting eyes, met her view.

"My Wharton!" she exclaimed, "you are ill, you are very ill!" And she threw her arms round his neck, and gazed on him with all the deep solicitude of a woman's devotion. But the Peer did not reply. "For God's sake, speak, love!" cried the woman. "What is amiss? Sit down, and let me send for a physician." The lips of Wharton moved, but no sound escaped them. "Oh, I shall die, if you gaze on me thus," said the woman.

"The dead have voices!" murmured the Statesman. "The great Heavens have thunders; and the Sun hell-fire!"

"This is most dreadful," exclaimed the female, as with trembling limbs she hastened to ring the bell for aid; but Wharton prevented her—

"What are you?" he said; "oh, I know you—false spirit!"

"I am your Anna, love. Let me ring the bell."

A momentary ray of recollection returned to the haggard face of the Peer; but it vanished, and he ejaculated, "Have you brought me the poison and the dagger from perdition? Come, then, I'll drink, and you shall stab. Look there! Is not that a ghost? Ha, ha, ha! Glorious vision! Who would not look on thee? Behold, what a wound is in the heart! See! it quivers yet; but I did not tear it out.—Damnation! does the heart *speak?* Blood, blood! The universe vomits blood—hell belches forth its flames! They rise and overspread all space!—I care not.—Wine, wine! Oh, I am all on fire!"

The screams of the woman, whose arm Wharton compressed, at last brought assistance; and lights flashed on that fearful countenance, as he burst forth with—

"Recreants and cowards! you have deceived me; but as the Lord liveth I will be revenged! Worms and reptiles! you dare to sting the lion who can crush you into dust! Begone! Look at them, how they shake! What! is not *one* bold enough to confront me! My lord! you are a traitor, and I will leave you!"

"Run for help," cried the woman, whom Wharton had detained, to the terror-stricken servants; "his lordship is very ill." A physician was sent for; while the ravings of the statesman were incessant.

"As for you, Sir," he said, with an assumption of withering scorn, "as for you, who have meanly deserted me, and truckled to power, who have endeavoured to destroy that which made you, I will tread you under foot, as I would a serpent, and crush you.—I triumph! Hark, how they shout! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear Wharton," again uttered the female, as the Peer exhausted sunk into a chair, "try to be calm."

"Yes, I'll be calm," returned Lord Wharton, his voice, which had previously been like the thunder, sinking into a whisper. "It was not Harriet I saw there bleeding! She is dead! I will not believe she could walk the earth! Spirits exist not in time!"

"Oh, heavens," exclaimed the female, "he knows me not!" . . . What a dreadful, agonising thing it must be to see that face so dear to the heart, wont to beam with love and intelligence, altogether vacant, and turned on you as on a stranger! The woman could not bear it, and choking sobs rose from her bosom.

"Be still!" exclaimed the Peer. "Such sounds as these are mockery! Ha, do they laugh in heaven!"

Here the physician who had been sent for entered, and Wharton was put to bed. . . . . And during the long illness that followed, who kissed the dry lips, moistened the parched mouth, smoothed the pillow of the sufferer?—Lord Wharton's mistress.—She whom he would have cast off with disgust, whom he had neglected for others, tended him with a deep, intense solicitude, that never flagged. That erring woman's soul was bound up in the haughty being laid so low. How she hung on each laboured breath, wept at each pang, watched the slightest movement of the patient! And when, at last, the fever was over, and the mysterious Reason returned from its abeyance, and he smiled kindly on her, was she not rewarded?

Lord Wharton recovered, reduced to infant weakness; but most unfortunate for him had been that fever—it lost him the helm of State.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRAVERS WHARTON'S WISH—LADY RIVERS—THE HAG—FANNY AND HER SUPERSTITION—THE ALARM AND THE PURSUIT.

"WHAT a cursed bore it is, sometimes, to live! I wonder we were not made with the possibility of ceasing to have the consciousness of existence, when we wish it!" yawned Captain Travers Wharton, as he sat in *dishabille*, and in his chamber, every luxury the ingenuity of man can supply around him.

A splendid mirror was before, and a blazing fire behind the Coxcomb; the polished grate glittered in the light of the blaze, which was reflected by the mirrors that decorated the walls. Embroidered slippers, evidently the elaborate work of a lady's fingers, were on his delicate feet; and scents and washes had just been applied to his hair and hands. The apartment which was honoured with the presence of the King of the

Exclusives was of considerable size, and furnished with consummate taste and elegance. The carved bedstead, the easy chairs, the sofas, the cabinets, and tables, were all costly and superb, and pictures hung the walls, such as money can hardly purchase. Yet, as the Coxcomb sipped some coffee, and looked at himself in the glass, he was not happy, delightful as was the vision of that handsome face, and faultless the taste of the beverage.

"I must marry, I suppose," sighed the fop. "What a thing it is that we must come to this! To be tied to a stupid, boring woman for the sake of a few thousands a year! But my creditors grow importunate; and I may not be able to retain my seat. O, Travers Wharton! Thou fop among fops! Dear Travers Wharton! The Light of all Lights, and the wonder of all eyes! must even *thou* grow old and hideous?—Bah! I shall grow sentimental, and talk about suicide: and then half London will be flying to the chemists' shops for prussic acid!—I want amusement!—What shall I do to day? I'm quite tired of the Countess,—there is such an eternal sameness and insipidity about those women of fashion! —I think I'll really ride after the Gipsy! If I take her to town with me, pretty gipsies will fetch a thousand a year in the market."

The Coxcomb looked out of window. Each moment then was big with destiny. If it had looked less inviting, he might not have made up his mind to go out: and if he had not, it might have been better—if all things are not for the best. But the sun was shining so brightly, the sparrows were chirping with such exuberant gaiety, and the air seemed so mild and fresh, that the guardsman roused himself, drank off his coffee, and rang his bell.

"Order the brown mare to be saddled," he said to his valet; "and come back, and help me on with my coat."

Captain Wharton was soon equipped for riding, and was descending to his horse, when he met a little, and rather pretty woman, clearly a person of high fashion, whom he instantly recognised. She was about the same age as the Coxcomb himself, with a little, grey eye, full of vivacity, a nose slightly turned up, a pretty mouth, and sylph-like form.

"Ah! charming Adeline," said the Coxcomb, graciously, "you are come to see the poor Countess. She is not well to-day, I am sorry to hear."

"She asked me to drive over, and pass the morning with her, by letter, yesterday. You are going out, I perceive!"

"Yes; but I shall be back again before you go:—adieu, for the present, fairest!"

And the fop lounged away.

"She is looking old," he thought, as he mounted his beautiful mare, and cantered along. "The stage plays the deuce with women! How the poor thing paints!"

That lady who was the subject of the Coxcomb's cogitations had formerly been an actress of some celebrity, and was brought into notice some years before by him; afterwards marrying a relative of Lord St. Clair, the nobleman with whom the fop was staying. She was now a rich widow; and having once married for money, was desirous of marrying for love. There was some scandal that both Lord Wharton and his all-accomplished brother had been more than mere patrons of Lady Rivers, when she was "little Adeline Smith—the actress;" but of course no one believed *that* after she married Lord Rivers,—still less when she was known to have £10,000 a year at her own disposal. She was something of a politician, in the school of an illustrious lady; and wheedled secrets out of her admirers in the Cabinet with much adroitness. She was a good actress, after she had quitted the boards, and though devoid of superior intellect, managed to engage the attention of clever men among the Ministry, pretending to be enchanted with their wit and abilities. What use she made of those secrets she thus acquired was not clearly ascertained: but it was suspected by many she had some stronger motive than mere female curiosity for searching them out. But it is with Travers Wharton the narrative must now jog along.

The air of that brilliant day invigorated the Coxcomb's languid frame; and his spirits rose above their ordinary pitch ere he had proceeded four miles.

"I can almost fancy I have a soul such weather as this," thought Travers Wharton, "with the blue sky above me, and old Nature looking as if she were making holiday, and laughing like a child again! There's an idea! By Jove! I should have been a poet! I must have a soul, though I don't know it, after all. A soul! I wonder what it is? I never found one in the atmosphere of St. James's. A huge deal has been written about it; so it *ought* to be something!"

It was just such a fellow, probably, as the Coxcomb, of whom the story is told, that meeting Ugo Foscolo in society, he asked him if he thought he had a soul? To which Foscolo replied, "I don't pretend to understand whether *you* have one, sir! but, by G—! I *know I* have!"

It is those without the manhood, the fire, and energy which are the life of our spirits, who do not feel, who do not know there is something immortal and divine within them.

Travers Wharton was a man utterly heartless, frivolous, selfish—the most artificial among the gaudy plants of that hot-bed life produced by a feverish civilisation: and yet, if he chose to allow himself to think, he was not without the power of appreciating what is fine. But there are two distinct methods of arriving at ideas of the lofty and the beautiful. The one is by the heart, which echoes all sounds of sweetness; the other by the sense which hears them, and at the same time is really indifferent

to their glory; but yet having fine sight and hearing can distinguish between the coarse and delicate, betwixt harmony and jarring sounds.

And a grating sound here assailed the ears of the fop;—which on raising his eyes from the ground, he discovered, proceeded from a woman of sinister aspect, who offered to tell his fortune. She was on the verge of sixty, and somewhat bent, but appeared to be still vigorous and active. Her long, grey hair streamed over her shoulders, which were covered with a scarlet shawl, once handsome and costly, but now very dirty. She was low of stature, her features were stern, and strongly marked, and her toothless gums yawned horribly at the fine gentleman,—who was passing her with no very polite reply to her salutation, when he bethought him, on looking at her dress—evidently that of a gipsy—that she might tell him something relative to the girl he was in search of.

"You are a gipsy," said the Coxcomb, with ill-concealed disgust. "I do not want you to tell my fortune; but I will give you a crown to give me some intelligence I want."

"I can guess at it," returned the hag, with a hideous grin. "You are seeking one of my tribe, a young, fair creature, who is not like us, but resembles rather your people."

"Ah!" muttered Travers Wharton, "I see the girl has told all!—Well, since you are so wise, mother," he added aloud, "I suppose I need not frame a question?"

The gipsy clutched the coin which was thrown to her, greedily, and replied—

"I admire your taste, my lord—that *shall* be—she is a dainty piece of painted dust! But I would not advise you to set your heart on the wench! She has a great many admirers, and you may have heard we gipsies are a revengeful people."

"I have no time to waste," returned the officer. "What can you tell me of this girl?"

"She is related to me," answered the hag: "but I would sell her. She might be happier with you than with our tribe."

"Of course she would:—what do you want me to give you?"

"She is worth a great deal of money. She can dance and sing, and brings much to our treasury. She is a charming creature, and very accomplished. I never knew one so quick to learn as she is."

It was evident that the old gipsy wanted to enhance the value of Fanny before she named the price for which she was willing to betray her into her admirer's hands. But the fop had no idea of losing his valuable time thus; and said—

"If you do not come to the point, I shall leave you."

"There are plenty to give sums of gold for her," replied the hag. "But if you choose to put a hundred guineas into my pocket, she is yours."

"What an extortionate old devil!" thought the fop. "I shan't give her the money—I have too little myself."

And accordingly, without deigning to add another word, he galloped away.

"Stay!" cried the gipsy, finding she had overshot her mark. But the Coxcomb turned not. "His brother," said the hag, "is not so close-fisted. He thinks to get the wench without my aid; but he's mistaken. He shall have her—for I hate her, and would make her wretched: but I *will* be paid."

And where was she who was the subject of this dialogue? A few minutes before the rencontre of Travers Wharton and the hag, Fanny might have been seen in a place, which I must pause to describe.

It was a valley that slept below a hill in the sunlight, like an infant at its mother's feet. There the trees were scarcely yet stript of their autumn foliage, and were intersected by a stream as clear as crystal that fed a river in the vicinity—just visible in the distance—and which in its turn sought the ocean. Even thus is human life: at first like a brook, calm and unruffled, then "a joyous and abounding river," full of power, strength, and beauty; and last a stormy ocean that finally mingles with eternity. Masses of granite rose to a considerable height from the dell, and many of them assumed forms strange and grotesque, while a little grotto in the centre of the quiet place added to its picturesque effect. This grotto was protected from the winds by tall and lordly trees, and the declining sun tinged its parti-coloured stones and shells with various hues, imparting a lustre to them not their own.

Fanny was standing beside the grotto, and contemplating the scene. Half child, half woman, with fervid, passionate feelings; full of dreams and wayward humours, the gipsy girl seldom remained for an hour in the same mood. Now she was elated, and now depressed, now her spirit filled with vague fancies and superstitious notions; and again she was all wild spirits and exuberant joy: but there was a something strange and most melancholy in her large, piercing eyes, if watched for a minute, even when they danced with pleasure. It seemed as if she could never forget an undefined and mystic image, which was like a dream in a dream, and floated before her memory, even as a metaphor too subtle for the soul to grasp,—a Shelley's abstract thought,—before a poet's mind. It was this very singularity about the girl which invested her with a nameless charm, which imbued her looks and movements with an unearthly grace, and made her appear more spiritually lovely even than she was. There she stood, watching with pensive orbs the changes in the outward world, while her brain was busy in the universe of which it is the organ.

"Ah!" thought the gipsy, "what a wondrous thing is fate! I picture it to myself sometimes, a form of unknown hue and shape pervading all

nature. In every flower that breathes fate is working its inevitable changes. The flower of earth, so full of passion and of odour, is like the human heart. Oh, poor heart! The canker must get into it; it must wither and die! Alas! the spirit is but as a birth of desolation! And here the unsparing hand of fate is busy: in the soul and the sense directing we know not how! What is the heart? Its every throb, its every impulse is fate. Where is not this invisible one? In the eternal stars it exists, ruling all their brightness. We look up into the eyes of Heaven, that troop in solemn glory into silver sheen, with awe and joy, and may know they are fixing our destiny. And yet the great fate guides *them* also, and with a breath obscures or glorifies their splendour."

There was a rich, deep vein of genuine poetry in that child of Nature, to whom the great globe was a perpetual SOUL FORM, which was not the less exquisite, because she was ignorant of the existence of the ore. She was a wild Idealist, continually chasing the shadows of her fancy, and making the actual lovely. Her heart was in the elements, she was *one* with all that is divine and beautiful. In every summer gale, in every autumn blast, her spirit blended with the sounds, and bounded away like a passionate thought of joy. She sought out the ideal, and shaped it into weird grace. And yet, this singular being was in some respects childish in the extreme. Her fancy was so intense it appeared to overpower her reasoning faculties: she was the creature of the external, even when she swept away from the regions of reality to ideality. There is an intermediate faculty between fancy and imagination, participating of the nature of both: and those endowed with it are necessarily in some respects weak and liable to be superstitious. Every thing had tended to increase this bias of nature in this wild young being's mind, and sometimes her dreaminess ran into absurdity. She magnified every object like some Eastern poet; so that to the dull she was extravagant and incomprehensible; but the natural was her guide in all actions. But this dreaminess was not absurdity in her—oh, no! It was full of thrilling pleasure, of awful delight. Something of the sort, though sublimated and more ethereal, may be found in the ebullitions of poor Keats's muse, when he was a visionary boy, hanging on the Spirit of Solitude, watching the pale planet of the Night, and creating every object into "something new and strange!" Only those similarly constituted can comprehend all this. With the Gipsy the universe was wonder, terror, and admiration. She had the true poetic temperament, but without the judgment that controls its powers. In a higher station of life she *would* have been a poetess: but as it was, from want of a medium to convey her swift thoughts away, they returned and fed on their source, like waters which flood their banks. Thus the very principle inherent in her spirit, which is the fountain of so much profound felicity to such beings,

was her bane; it almost drove her mad when she was alone, and infused vitality into every material shape that flitted before her.

"Yes," she said, solemnly, "there is no struggling with fate! It is like God, unseen; but it subdues the mightiest as easily as the weakest. I see the shadowy Being gliding through the world, like thought, and its vast presence is everywhere. It is in, about, around us! Each one that breathes, in motion is part of it! That bright sun now descending so grandly into sleep is fate! The placid, holy moon, so calm, it looks like a spirit, is in harmony with fate. There is a soul in all things which is the life of nature, and each respiration goes forth and blends with the Inscrutable. Awful Being! what art thou?—Life, and death, and eternity! Do not be so stern to me as the stars portend!—And yet what can avert thee? No offering will appease, no sacrifice propitiate thee! Thou art above all pity and love."

And the Gipsy cast herself on the earth, and groaned in bitterness of heart. It were hardly possible to describe the struggle within her; but it was not the less agonizing that it was dim and shadowy.

"What! my divine Fanny?" said a voice, which had haunted the Gipsy ever since she last heard it.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, starting wildly to her feet.

"What ails thee, sweet one? Grief should have no power over such a flower of Paradise as thou." He was proceeding in a strain of florid flattery—that man to whom Fanny felt her destiny was linked, but she cried, with frantic passion,

"Avaunt! you would destroy me."

"Destroy thee, my angel! Never, never."

"And yet," murmured the girl, not noticing the interruption, "what avails it all? Why contend against the inevitable destiny? Oh, God! I know what I must endure,—have counted every pang, numbered every throb of agony; but it must be. Yes," she continued, gazing with her luminous eyes into the face of Travers Wharton; "I have consulted the planets, and they shine—damnation. Yet not now, not this hour must it be. Go! go from me. If you have a heart, oh man, seek me no more! Alas, I knew this would happen—all this scene I beheld last night."

"What a strange creature it is," thought Captain Wharton, "I suppose she is talking some gipsy nonsense! Fanny, my beautiful!" he said aloud, "I swear I adore you! Why bid me leave your presence? It is like the sun to the earth, shining a heaven on me!"

Sobs were bursting from the heart of the Gipsy; but she spoke not, moved not. Travers Wharton in an instant dismounted, and stood by her side.

"Let me wipe away those tears, pearl of the universe?" he cried; "or if you WILL weep on,—weep on my bosom! Those precious tears!" . . .

Fanny should have detected the hollowness of the heart which uttered such sentiments, with her genuine passion and fervour; but the old allegory that Love is blind contains a truth. The mood of the Gipsy changed.

"It must be," she murmured despondently; "I am destined to be yours," she exclaimed, looking piteously into the Coxcomb's face. "I am ordained to be wretched for ever."

"Very complimentary!" thought the fop; saying aloud, "Talk not thus! Such beauteous roses as yourself were not formed to wither unseen—unadored. Sweet one, do not weep. There, now you will come with me?"

"No, no," answered the Gipsy, with a shudder. "There is an awful something that I saw dimly betwixt us. Very soon it will be even as you wish. Poor Fanny! you say you love me! Prove it; begone!"

"If you desire it, my Queen! What would I not sacrifice for thee? Yet send me not away. I droop, I languish, when not in your presence! You are dew, and balm, and fragrance to my soul."

He pressed the form of the Gipsy in his arms. She did not speak, she did not offer resistance, but was muttering inaudibly to herself. Her superstition as well as her inclination had led her to brood on the image of Travers Wharton, till he no longer seemed unfamiliar; and the Coxcomb thought the day was his own, when she suddenly uttered a piercing shriek; then there was the report of a gun; and she fled swiftly from the valley. The fop caught a view of more than one menacing form advancing, and mounting, pursued Fanny, whose speed of foot was nearly superhuman.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FURY OF BLIGHTED LOVE—THE STRUGGLE—JENKINS—TRAVERS WHARTON—FANNY—THE OLD MAN—THE GIRL—A STORY.

THE Gipsy flew with that fawn-like swiftness, scarcely touching the earth. The bullet she had escaped actually passed through her shawl, within an inch of her person;—but she was not yet safe. Three persons had emerged from a clump of trees in the lonely valley, simultaneously, two of them being armed with muskets. One man ran after Fanny impetuously, the others rushed on Travers Wharton, who, however, soon distanced them, mounted as he was on his swift mare, whose father was a great racer.

"We shan't catch him!" exclaimed the man who had fired at Fanny, with a horrid oath.

His companion was a woman, who answered—as she stopped breathless after pursuing the horseman in vain—

"Why did you fire at the girl? I thought you were going to shoot the gentleman!"

"D—n her!" returned the man, "I will blow her brains out yet."

"Don't you know John doats on that wench?"

"I care not—the young traitress!"

More was spoken, which it is unnecessary to specify. It must be mentioned, however, that the third individual, who was pursuing the Gipsy, did not perceive how nearly she escaped with life; but thought the bullet was intended for Captain Wharton.

Fanny, meanwhile, dashed into the copsewood which surrounded the valley, and threaded her way among the trees with singular accuracy, so that both Wharton and her other pursuer lost sight of her. It was impossible, indeed, for the fop to follow her on horseback; but he rode on, thinking she might still rejoin him, and examined the priming of the exquisite pistols he carried with him,—for, contemptible as he was in most respects, he was not deficient in personal courage, which had been tested in battles and duels, and piqued himself on the accuracy of his aim.

Miles were thus left behind. The country that they traversed abounded in wood; and of course afforded great facilities of escape to Fanny: but he who chased her on foot continued to follow through brake, and dell, and dingle, with inveterate resolution, and caught glimpses ever and anon of a flying form, like that of a sylph, redoubling his exertions to overtake her. But he was a man of too large proportions to be very swift of foot, and would never have caught the agile Gipsy but for an accident. The foot of the girl slipped, and her dress caught in some briars. She was thus entangled for two or three minutes, and her pursuer gained considerably on her. She resumed her flight with terrified looks; but unfortunately in her haste took a path with which she was unacquainted for a wonder (for she knew almost every rood of land for miles around), and discovered too late that she was prevented from further progress by a chain of low hills, which were so precipitous in that direction she could not climb them. To the left was the river, broad and rapid, to the right were rocky banks covered with stunted trees, and behind, within a few furlongs her dreaded hunter.

"What shall I do? He will kill me!" thought the panting girl. "I will plunge into the river, and swim across."

Acting on this resolution, and well knowing she was able to carry it out, when once in the water, she hastened to the banks of the river; but she was overcome on a sudden with dizziness, and dared not venture to plunge into the stream until it had passed away. The Gipsy delighted when the weather was warm, to seek some solitary spot, and amuse her-

self like the nymphs of Diana; so that she had acquired no little proficiency in swimming; and it was a singular thing to behold that tiny form, when the moon was shining on some placid stream, disporting in the waters, her long hair flowing over and nearly hiding her symmetrical limbs and body;—but the eyes of Heaven were the only orbs that *did* descry her. It was not so mild at that season of the year, as may be supposed, fine as the weather was, to make the prospect of a cold bath very tempting; but as the Gipsy caught a glance of two red eyeballs, glaring like a wild beast's within gunshot, she was on the point of plunging in, when her pursuer with a few mighty bounds arrived, just as she was flinging herself into the water.

"At last I have you, false one!" said a terrible voice.

"Mercy!" gasped the Gipsy, raising her piteous eyes to a face flashing with wrath and indignation till it almost blasted her.

The man spake not, but his strong grasp tightened, and his fierce orbs were strained and starting from their sockets like a tiger's, when it is pouncing on its prey.

"You have deceived, injured, cajoled me past forgiveness! From this time forth being will seem a hell to my soul; and the last honey-drop turn to gall and poison!—And shall I spare you, vile thing?—Damnation! To be the strumpet of that butterfly!"

As he spoke, the Herculean frame of that ferocious being shook; and he lifted up the slight form of the Gipsy high in air, as if it had been an infant's.

"Hear me!" cried poor Fanny, with blanched cheek, and quivering lip, as she was whirled round by that giant arm. "Hear me, John! O, I have not done you *such* injury——!"

"*Not* done me injury!" exclaimed John, with a hoarse, and awful laugh. "You have torn the fibres of life's life away from me,—left me desolate and desperate, plucked from my very immortal hope all that is divine, and dashed me into the deepest depths of perdition! Not done me *such* injury! Ha, ha!"

There was frenzy in each look, there was madness in each action of Jenkins.

"Do not kill me!" cried Fanny, imploringly, her body still high in the air, "it is very hard to die!"

Jenkins heeded her not.

"I could have forgiven you for saving that villain, whose life I will yet have,—for depriving me of my vengeance, and endangering my existence—mine, and my father's, and mother's—by bringing those dogs upon us. But this last act!—Cursed girl!—O, woman! You gained a heart, gushing with swift waters, whose every thought, dream, passion, was centred in you, and then, and then!—To give yourself to a painted

insect! A reptile not one millionth part as good as the humblest beggar! By Heaven! It makes me like a fiend to think on it!"

"Do not glare on me with those dreadful eyes. Spare me, as you hope for mercy!" sobbed the Gipsy. "I have done wrong, very wrong, injured you past cure, I know, and deserve death. But I cannot meet destruction, now. It is a fearful thing to be cut off so young!—all life's fairest flowers strewing one's path—and grow into corruption and ashes! Death is horrible to one like me! If you have a heart, spare me!"

"I *had* a heart!" said John. "But since it no longer throbs for you, it is all fury and desperation. O, such a heart! I would have coined its blood to buy you a moment's joy! Why should I live to see you fluttering among the gaudy throng, a splendid wanton, and brood on my wrongs until my brain is maddened—thus, thus!"

And while with one hand he still held Fanny aloft, with the other he struck his bare head.

"I never said I loved you. If I did not drive you from my presence——"

"Ah! I was a dolt, an idiot!—true.—Look me in the face now,—the face of an honest man, who, whatever his sins, never told a lie, never cringed, nor bowed, nor played the hypocrite to mortal!—You dare not! What a wretch you seem!—And I made an idol of this foolish puppet, and worshipped it, as I would a Goddess! *I*, that never bent knee to man or God,—*I*, with my fiery nature, my desperate passions, was subdued to your will. Go to!"

What a scene of ruin is that, when the heart of humanity is seared by the lightning of such passion, and the feelings, hopes, and aspirations, all that we have cherished like eternity in our weak fatuity, are scattered, like dust before the wind! Could we behold all the workings of the spirit, we should know that all wrecks are insignificant in comparison with those of a deep, burning soul:—an universe destroyed may be mourned over, but it is dust;—the mind cannot be quiet earth. It is like the fall of Lucifer from the empyrean into darkness, when Love grows into Death—the Death of Faith, Peace, Bliss, for ever!

The Gipsy wept; but Jenkins continued—

"You may rejoice to know you have made me miserable; you may laugh at my tortures, mock at my despair, and I may groan, as it is said, lost spirits do in realms of woe! I was formed to endure, you to torment. It is well.—You weep!—Weep on! It is because you fear I shall put an end to your wretched life!"

"No," said the Gipsy, proudly. "I do not fear death as you conceive I do. It is not the mere bodily anguish of the parting pang I shrink from: but the vast mystery appals me. You may despise me; and I despise myself: but you dare not, cannot destroy me. The great God

is looking down on us from his throne in space, and you that fear not earthly being, quail beneath His eye."

"It may be so!" returned Jenkins: "but I feel a Satan in me that rebels against Omnipotence. I am strongly tempted now to plunge into this deep river with you, after having suffered thus much, and avoid all the pain of future hopelessness!—O, Fanny! False, false Fanny! You have cast away with my love a jewel richer than the stars of Heaven!—Darkness, thick darkness come and swallow me! Thou Eternal Night! descend upon me, close all the avenues of my brain, and shut out the beam of consciousness! Mountains fall! Rocks crush me! I have loved as man never loved before: I could have borne, for this wretched piece of animated clay I hold, agonies unspeakable! Racks should not have wrested from me the denial of my love!—O, God! O, God! Why was I born for this?—Why should I live?—One moment;—but a plunge,—and all is over!"

"Ah!" shrieked the Gipsy, as the colossal man in whose grasp she trembled drew back, as if to take the fatal leap. "Help! help!" she screamed.

"Vain shrieks!" cried John, while Fanny struggled convulsively in his mighty grasp. "I give you one minute more——"

"Villain!" shouted a voice. "On him, my lads!"

"Ah!" said John Jenkins, as a horseman, followed by half a dozen armed men, dashed forward. He hurled Fanny senseless to the earth, and rushed like an avalanche on Travers Wharton, who was hastening down the narrow path to the river.

The gun of Jenkins was loaded; but it seemed in that moment of fury as if he could not stop to fire. He wished to crush the officer at a blow;—but Captain Wharton fired, and wounded him in the arm. With a perfect howl, the strong man threw himself on the slight, graceful form of the Coxcomb, and dragged him from his horse. He raised his gun with the intention of striking him on the head; but the sharp, ringing report of a rifle was heard, and a ball struck his wrist.

"Seize the rascal!" vociferated a very short man, suiting the action to the word.

One hand of Jenkins was rendered useless by the last wound he had received; but brandishing his gun with the other, and placing his foot on the chest of the prostrate officer, he waited the attack, looking like the statue of some fierce Roman gladiator. How the great muscles obey the savage will, when the passions are thus excited—how every nerve is strung and every fibre drawn to its utmost tension! Moveless, with those glaring eyeballs, stood the human statue, an awful calmness on his brow.

The road scarcely admitted of two men walking well abreast where Captain Wharton had been unhorsed, and his charger blocked up the

The Gypsey Fanny rescued by Francis III.

passage effectually, the high banks being on either side, so that the hostile party could not get at John.

"Yield!" said the short man, in whom the reader has recognised Thompson, that person having been indefatigable in his exertions to capture the Jenkins's.

The tall fellow laughed scornfully.

"I am indebted to you for that shot!" he exclaimed, putting his gun to his shoulder, and taking deliberate aim at Thompson; who crouched under the horse,—which, with military training, stood perfectly still.

All Thompson's followers were now within a perch of the spot, and the height of Jenkins, his head and shoulders towering above the mare, rendered him a mark for their guns. He did not wish for life, and retreated not a step.

"Fire!" cried Captain Wharton, who was vainly attempting to rise, and was almost crushed beneath the ponderous foot of that mortal foe.

Thompson darting under the charger, seized the legs of Jenkins, and strove to destroy his centre of gravity; but his feet seemed planted in the earth. Bullets, however, came whizzing close to the head of the redoubtable John, and if his opponents could but once close with him he knew he must be overpowered, greatly disabled as he was. Travers Wharton and Thompson were tugging at his legs, and the gun he could not use against them: but he was determined to be avenged on the man who had stolen from him the affection of Fanny. He stooped, dropped his musket, and first striking the short fellow down with his fist, raised the Coxcomb, hissing from between his teeth the threat he meant to execute. In one hand he raised him, despite his kicks and struggles, seeming to be endowed with a Goliath's power. There was a rock which grew to the height of several feet, close to where the struggle was carried on; and it was the intention of Jenkins to dash his rival against it: and could he have used both arms the brains of the Star of Fashion would soon have bespattered the place. But Travers Wharton, if his elegant frame was not muscular, was active, and rendered desperate by the exigency of the case; so that with a frantic exertion of his strength, he burst from the hand of his antagonist, leapt on his saddle, and charged him,—nearly running over the prostrate body of Thompson. It was horse against man, and the chest of the animal coming violently in contact with the form of Jenkins, he staggered and fell, and Wharton was carried by the impetus he had given to his steed for nearly a hundred yards forwards. The whole party after this had a clear space, and the tall fellow, who would have been glad to resign his life, but was not willing to be taken prisoner, retreated; and plunging into the river, struck out. No one chose to follow him then, and in the course of two or three minutes he was seen to gain the opposite banks; and he disappeared in a thicket.

Meanwhile, Fanny lay, unconscious of what was passing around, on a bank that was situated about a dozen paces from the spot where the contest took place. Pale as marble she lay, her beautiful tresses streaming over her, her lips white, her dress in disorder. Travers Wharton was soon by her side, and dismounting, he knelt down, and placed his hand on the Gipsy's heart, fearful that pulsation had ceased—for he had never seen anything so like death,—so still, so hushed. Presently she drew a long breath, and opening her wild, glorious eyes beheld Wharton. A carnation blush overspread her face in an instant, even as in eastern climes morning extends suddenly over the calm sky.

"You are not hurt, my angel?" cried the officer.

"No," replied Fanny, again closing her eyes, and murmuring, "I dreamed this—ay, all, all! Though it was dim and vague, it returns to me now! Dreams are the foreshadowings of fate:—nay, may not sleep be reality—be the substance, of which waking life is the shadow?"

"What is it she says?" exclaimed Captain Wharton.

The men who had been so long in pursuit of the smith and his wife and son, were gathered curiously round the fop and the Gipsy.

"Perhaps we had better go round by the bridge yonder?" said Thompson to them. "We shall yet catch that dog." His suggestions were agreed to; but he lingered behind. "I think you are the Honourable Captain Wharton?" he asked, with a low bow, of the Guardsman.

"Well! and what of that? There is a guinea for you."

Thompson hesitated a moment, but reading the glance of Captain Wharton aright, and guessing he was impatient to be left alone with the Gipsy, retired.

"Will you not speak to me, Fanny?" said the officer.

The girl's lips moved, but did not articulate.

"Let me carry you to my horse, my treasure!" added Captain Wharton, raising the slight form of the Gipsy in his arms. "That ruffian has terrified you out of your senses!"

Still she uttered not a syllable; and waiting for no farther permission, the fop bore his burthen to his charger, and was soon cantering away with her. The motion of the animal al last awakened Fanny to a consciousness of her situation.

"Where are you going with me?" she inquired. This was a somewhat puzzling question; for the country was not London, and the coxcomb had not yet decided what course to pursue. He could not proceed to the frequented road with the gipsy before him; but he was resolved not to lose one for whom he had taken so much pains.

But we must leave them in this position, and return to John Jenkins. The pain of the injuries he had sustained was excruciating; but they were nothing to those his mind endured. But for the loss of blood, from which he was beginning to feel faint, he would have taken no heed of his

wounds: for it should seem that there are periods in our lives when the physical is almost annihilated by the mental. He endeavoured to staunch the blood that was weltering from his arm and wrist, but could not.—"Let it flow on," he said, still continuing to walk, but growing weaker at every step he took. Presently he distinguished the sounds of pursuit behind him. His foes were hallooing to each other, and, it seemed, had discovered the path he was traversing, from the trail of gore. Jenkins hastened on, for he knew he could not cope with so many enemies in his comparatively feeble condition; but still he left the sanguine track behind him, though he bled less profusely than at first. What was to be done? He had now arrived at the summit of a wooded steep, commanding a view of the country around for miles; and about five furlongs from him was the armed party in pursuit. Accustomed to act with promptitude and subtlety in such emergencies, John had recourse to stratagem. There were two roads, both thickly wooded, descending from the hill he had climbed, which took a slanting direction. He first walked to the left, and then retrod his steps, and took the path to the right, carefully catching the blood that still trickled from him. He then plunged into a copse just as the foremost of the enemy was ascending the steep. Night was fast approaching, and, favoured by it, Jenkins thought he should easily baffle the sagacity of his foes. The loss of the vital fluid by this time had well nigh exhausted even that Hercules, and he looked about him to discover some place where he could procure rest and food. His search was vain; and it was growing so dark and foggy, that he could perceive nothing at the distance of many yards. The shouts of the pursuers, who had torches with them, were still borne to his ear; but they were plainly at fault, and it was not probable they should find his trail again. He staggered on, scarcely conscious of what he did, his eyes swimming, and his brain dizzy. Presently he fancied he saw a light before him, and managed to reel towards the place from which it proceeded. He had not taken many more steps, however, ere sense deserted him, and he fell motionless, and happily unconscious of existence, nearly at the door of a small cottage near the high road. There was a sound of voices within—of voices mingling in prayer; and presently there ascended a hymn, sung by a female with much sweetness and simplicity, in these words:—

THE COTTAGER'S HYMN.

How gently now o'er earth and sea
  The darkness steals sublime!
So time blends with eternity;—
  O tell me *what* is time?

Tell me, ye oceans, and ye skies,
  So beautiful and bright,
What is the thing man deifies—
  'A sorrow and a night?'

Eternity!—and what art *thou*?—
Do hopes in *thee* grow sere?
No! thou art one enduring now—
The angels' atmosphere!

There, the great Power of endless love!—
There, all bright joys' abode!—
O lift me, Hope and Faith! above
Time's dreams, to heav'n and God!

There is something to me inexpressibly affecting and lovely in the simple and earnest ebullition of genuine piety and gratitude in the creature to the Creator, when all around is still and solemn; when the great world appears to sleep, and the vast firmament is dark; and grand and majestic thoughts wrap the spirit from its clay. The matin hymn, when all nature rejoices, and the very birds set an example to man, may be more cheerful and grateful to the sense; but the devotion at that tranquil hour, when the deep soul pants after the immortal, and the pensive heart is filled with sombre, yet not gloomy feelings, comes upon us with an eloquence too profound for description, and the silent tears, rather than the brightening eye and rapt aspect, attest the divinity of the source whence they spring. Tears and smiles! Ever remember, that the tears of the penitent, and the smiles of the grateful believer, are the best and purest offerings we poor worms of an hour can render to the mysterious Being who has placed us in this state of life to exalt us. Night and solitude dispose us to shake off the fleshly fetters—to forget that sense hides from us the Eternal—to wonder, to hope, and to adore. Could that great poet, Young, have composed his chief work, had he not been inspired by the solemnity, the sublimity of night?

"I thank you, dear Rose," said the voice of an old man in the cottage, when the hymn was finished. "How very thankful I ought to be to God for having given me such a prop as you to support me in my old age! Weary and weak and lonely, with the darkness which must soon shut out all this beautiful earth for ever from my sad eyes, creeping over me, I should ask to depart in peace, but for your love and tenderness!"

He who had spoken was on the verge of seventy, with white hair and bending form; his features calm and placid; and a film growing over the eyes, evinced that he must soon resign the inestimable blessing which none of us seem to know the value of until it is lost for ever. He was dressed in plain and homely attire, and was probably one who, though not in the lowest rank of society, was poor and needy. His companion was a girl of not more than fourteen years old, although her form was almost womanly, slight as it was; and there was something extremely pleasing in her face, though she was not strikingly beautiful—for girls of that age have not arrived at the maturity of their charms. Yet you

could not take your eyes from off that countenance even to gaze on one more regularly handsome. She was attired with neatness and simplicity, her long light-brown hair being her only ornament. She strongly resembled the old man, great as was the difference in their time of life; the one sinking into the grave, the other in the early spring "of being's joyous race;" the one feeble and almost blind, with lines of care and thought on the brow; the other full of life and elasticity—not a shadow on her face: the parent-flower drooping slowly into the embrace of death: the offspring gaining life and freshness with every hour. Such is the course of all things here: the wondrous breath of existence is transmitted, and we pass away like shadows, and are no more heard of.

The girl replied:—"Dear father, I wish I were really the blessing to you I *should* be! Your affection for me has been greater than I can deserve."

"No, Rose! that is impossible. In the checquered life of good and evil we must pass through here, nothing can soothe and bless us so much as a child's kindness;—except," added the old man, with a sigh, "except a wife's." There was a silence of several minutes, when the old man spoke again, saying,—"It is now fourteen years, Rose, since your mother died. I have often promised to tell you the history connected with her, which is a singular one; and, if you like, I will do so now. It may cost me a pang to rake up these reminiscences; but the bitterness of grief has departed from me, and I anticipate our re-union above. . . . . Your mother was one of a numerous family, her father being a farmer. He had the singular taste to love a wild gipsy woman, whom he married. She deserted him, after becoming the parent of the numerous offspring, of which your uncle in London was the last, and was never heard of more. Your mother and her sister were brought up, as you have heard, by my family; for their father became dissolute, and his affairs very much embarrassed. I loved your mother in early life, but she was attached to one in a higher rank of society than myself, to whom she was united. She went to America with him, and there remained for many years, and had several children, all of whom, with one exception, died. Meanwhile, I was thrown much together with your mother's sister, who did not resemble her in amiability of disposition. She inherited the temper of her gipsy parent, and would often absent herself from home with the wandering tribe. When she was no longer young, however, she abandoned this mode of life, and became my housekeeper—for I was willing to afford her a house for the love I bore to your dear mother. She was desirous—your aunt—that I should marry her; but this I would not do; and finding I was inexorable, she at length desisted from her solicitations. And thus years rolled on, while I became the master of the village school, with a salary of £30 a year. About eighteen years ago, I received a letter from your mother, informing me of

the death of her husband, and adding she was going to return to England with her only child, then just born. She did so; and in the course of a year consented to become my wife. Her sister was most outrageous when she found I was resolved on uniting myself with her, and would not remain with me, though I offered to keep her under my roof. She vanished; and I have never seen her from that day to this. Two years after my union with your mother, a great misfortune befel her. I have told you she had a child by her former husband—an engaging little being, of wonderful beauty. She was a girl, and entitled to some property from her father's family to a large amount. She had been playing outside this cottage one fine summer's day, when I noticed some gipsies, and knowing the propensity of these people for child-stealing, and that the little creature was one to tempt them, I took her into the house. Soon afterwards, I went out—your mother was engaged in some household occupation for an hour, and supposed her little daughter was at play; but on calling her, she did not answer.—The child was gone; and though diligent search was made for it, could not be found. I mentioned the fact of having seen the gipsies, and constables were sent after them; but they declared they knew nothing of the matter, and we could not prove that they did. Your mother never recovered the shock. She had doated on her little daughter—passionately doated; and her mysterious disappearance was almost more agonizing than if she was certain of her death. You have heard many of the things I now tell you, from me; but I never mentioned to you, or any other, a suspicion that the child was kidnapped by its aunt, in revenge; for I have no proof that it was so. We should be careful how we condemn, without positive proof; for how often are we deceived, even when we think we have good grounds of evidence! So, Rose, whether your aunt be alive or dead, say nothing of this to others. In less than two years after this event, you were born, and I hoped that smiles would once more visit the cheek of your mother; but it pleased Providence to take her from me: He took the wife who gave the child: 'the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!' It was as if two such blessings were not for mortals: perfect happiness is not here; we dream of it, we fancy it, and lo! it is gone. I loved your mother—if not with that romantic ardour and passionate adoration which poets describe,—with an intensity based on esteem and sympathy; and though we were both past the heyday of existence when we married, we were not less happy than if my early love had gained a reciprocal affection from her. Poor thing! poor thing! she was so good, so kind, so gentle! She had a hand to give, and a heart to feel: she was an angel! I wish you resembled her, Rose, in person, as you do in mind. The child who was lost was very like her. See, there is your mother's picture; is she not fair? Look at the serene blue eyes, the fair hair, the tranquil brow! The child, if alive, would grow

darker probably than she was; but when we lost her, she was very like, though her mood was often wayward and unruly—for she was a spoilt creature. You, my Rose, have the same sweet temper as your mother had; I never knew two dispositions more similar."

Rose threw her arms round her father's neck, and kissed him fondly. Her tears mingled with the old man's; but they were not those of gall. The memory of grief is sweet and tempered melancholy. There is a consolation in the voice of the departed!

"It is time now to go to bed," said the old man. "A little while, and I shall never look on your dear face again. You will change; but I shall ever remember you *thus*—blooming like May, and fragrant as her flowers. I shall hear your beloved voice still, however, and be grateful that my hearing remains. I hope in all things I may be submissive to the Divine Will."

Here a faint groan struck on the quick ear of Rose.

"What noise was that?" she said, starting.

"I heard nothing," returned her father, whose duller sense had not detected the sound. But Rose hastily opened the door, and looked out. There lay a large form in a pool of blood. She uttered a scream, and hastened to see if she could be of any assistance to the unfortunate person who had bled so profusely.

The man stirred not; but Rose felt he still respired, and called her father to assist her in dragging him into the cottage. With much difficulty the young girl and the weak old man succeeded in removing that ponderous form, which was a dead weight in their arms, into their humble dwelling, and there applied such remedies as were at hand to restore the sufferer.

"There is not a surgeon within three miles," said Rose. "I fear he will die before help can be procured."

But while she yet spoke the eyes of the stranger opened, and he murmured inaudibly. By the aid of restoratives he was enabled to speak; but his mind wandered, and he exclaimed—

"Is that Fanny? Is she dead? O, why did I kill her?"

Gradually he became conscious of his real situation, and the worm of memory again preyed upon him.

O that Memory! Why cannot we forget? Few bright things can we recal; and even the pleasant things of the past make us sad, while there are corroding thoughts of the gone dreadful to contemplate, even in idea,

> "Memories that make the heart a tomb,
> Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom."

—Visions of horror, of darkness and desolation!

Wretched Jenkins! His naturally desperate character, after he knew

he had nothing to hope, nothing to anticipate, became restless and terrible. His moody spirit vented itself in imprecations, his lacerated heart was wrapt in a gloom that never ceased. It is such reckless men as these to whom we owe so much effusion of blood, so much useless sacrifice of life in popular movements. They cannot go calmly to work in order to create those great moral and political reforms which can alone be permanent.

The physical force is the result of despair, of men goaded to madness by devouring passions, of hatred and revenge, not love of liberty and order: and therefore can effect no substantial good to society:—the heat and fire evaporate, and all is smoke and obscurity. These revolutions are uniformly productive of evil, generating rancour and ill-blood between the people and their rulers; and after the movement is exhausted, the condition of the masses is worse than ever. The patricians look upon the plebeians not only with jealousy and mistrust; but they conceive they are not to be won over by gratitude, to be conciliated by concession, that power cannot be entrusted to them, for they would only use it to annihilate the aristocracy. Thus the march of civilization is impeded, the progress of freedom, science and good government checked; and after a long reign of anarchy and confusion following one of despotism and misrule, the laws become savagely Draconic, the people become more slavish and turbulent by turns; until the growth of luxury among the one, and the deterioration of the moral energies of the other, lay open the nation to foreign aggression, and out of the ruins of civil war, a new order of things spring up.

Men of England! You will not now cherish the animosity and hatred against the rich, fraught with such fatal consequences! You will steadily and temperately advance like good soldiers to that glorious contest of MIND for principles, beneath whose majesty all the achievements of conquerors, nay, all the deeds of heroes, are vile and insignificant. Your wrongs are many, your grievances are great; but freedom will come like some immortal being bright from Heaven, with good tidings, when you are free *yourselves*, and all the blessings of political and social peace and order be diffused through our glorious land. The despots you must hurl from their thrones are the passions which warp your reason and hoodwink your judgment; you must learn to bear and to forbear, to despise the littleness of party, to rise superior to sectarianism, and then you will be the greatest people that ever lived in time. An universal brotherhood may bind all nations indissolubly together, each day must add to the charity and catholicity of the god—opinion. Taking warning by the past, you will avoid the shoals and quicksands which threaten the incautious with destruction;—the demon bigotry shall be buried deep in the earth, and in the same grave we will entomb the recollection of former wrongs. The cry then will be no longer "Chartism," "War,"

"Democracy;" but the banners shall be inscribed with "TRUTH;" the battle cry, "LOVE AND GOOD WILL,"—on earth peace: for friends, affection; for foes, pity; and for God, adoration!

CHAPTER XXVI.

SIR ALGERNON SHARP—STARTLING INTELLIGENCE—THE GIPSY—LADY RIVERS—TRAVERS WHARTON AND FANNY—THE LOVE.

STRETCHED on a sofa, in brocaded dressing-gown and velvet slippers, lay the small form of Sir Algernon Sharp. He had been watching the growth of an incipient moustache for half an hour in a pocket glass, had admired the whiteness of his teeth for some minutes, and was now yawning desperately over an old newspaper, and thinking Providence should be more attentive to the nobility.

It was the scene in which Travers Wharton figured, over again; with this difference, that the Emperor of Coxcombs was accustomed to *ennui*, while the more youthful Neophyte who promised to rival him could not endure it, and as he grumbled inwardly against "the eternal fitness of things," was cogitating languidly in what manner he could dissipate the gloom which hung over him. And this at nineteen—glorious nineteen,—when we are half men, half boys, and pleasure seems eternal to the generality! There was no one to play billiards with him; for he had declined to go out shooting with his cousin Sam, he did not feel inclined to smoke; and he could not summon sufficient courage to endure his tight boots and ride forth. What a state for a young Baronet with £3000 a year to be in! At length, he rang a bell, and a servant in the dress of a groom appeared.

"Where's my valet?" he asked.

"He'll be in directly, sir; he's gone out."

"Isn't the paper come yet?"

How often is that query put by the dull and idle? It is the last refuge of vapid spirits. Perhaps newspapers have prevented many a coroner's inquest, and a verdict of "*felo de se*," or, "temporary insanity!"

"I'll see, sir," returned the groom, who, after an absence of some minutes, returned, with a certain scandalous London publication, similar to one still in being.

"Why wasn't it brought before?" demanded the young Baronet, with some asperity:—for we seem to be as loathe to wait for the newest news as for our dinner.

The man coloured, and stammered something not very intelligible.

"Those d—d servants!" muttered Sir Algernon, as the man withdrew, "always get hold of the paper before they bring it to one. If it were a work worth kingdoms, they wouldn't peep into the leaves. What a pity such people have ever been taught to read!" He glanced over the columns of the journal; but nothing did he find to interest him. "The same stale old jokes!" he said. "Not a crim. con.; not even a seduction. I think I must start something with more spirit,—only it's low to be at all connected with the press!—What's this?—O, something about the Premier and the Orange girl, as usual! Pshaw!" And he was about to throw away the paper with deep disgust, gaping alarmingly,—when something caught his eye, which he had missed. "Ha! What's this?" he cried, rousing himself instantly, as if electrified. 'EXTRAORDINARY PARTICULARS CONNECTED WITH L—D W—T—N'S ALARMING ILLNESS!!!' "The devil!" said the Baronet. He read on. 'We stop the press to insert the following.—Yesterday morning it was announced to the public that L—d W—t—n was seized with a brain fever. We have been at great trouble and expense in collecting the intelligence we now lay before our readers, who will be petrified with astonishment at the strange details. After the brilliant speech which the noble Lord made in the House on the evening of Tuesday, it appears that he proceeded to a well-known place, in the vicinity of —— Square, requiring recreation, doubtless, after the very powerful mental efforts he had put forth. The noble Lord while there partook of a large quantity of wine, and afterwards made his way to a chamber. There are various reports current at the C——'s: but ours may be relied on as the only genuine and authentic statement, and in a second edition we shall devote three columns to the elucidation of the affair. We have bribed to a great amount, and our exertions are still unremitting to get possession of the facts. Our readers are aware that a young girl committed suicide on the night to which we allude; *and it was in that house where the melancholy catastrophe occurred!* Some assert that to escape outrage from L—d W—t—n, she stabbed herself: but this is not true. It seems she was enticed from the country a few hours before, and it was announced to her she was to expect a visitor;—whereupon she solemnly swore she would kill herself, rather than submit to ill-treatment. She produced a knife which she had in her pocket, and Mrs. —— attempted to wrest it from her gripe; but the unfortunate girl struck herself with the blade to the heart. These particulars will, of course, come before a public tribunal, though an attempt may be made to hush up the affair. We have neither time nor space to add more, as we must go to press. Midnight. N.B. A second edition will be published at six o'clock to-morrow morning.' My Jove!" ejaculated Sir Algernon, "this *is* news!" He rang the bell furiously. "Saddle my horse!" he said to the groom—or as he would now be called "tiger"—"and send my valet instantly." In five

minutes he was galloping away, as if for life and death, in pursuit of Travers Wharton. How folks like to be the first to communicate extraordinary intelligence! "I wonder whether I shall find him?" thought Sir Algernon. "He left the St. Clairs yesterday, of course; and they will not know where to search for him."

It is necessary to inform the reader that Sir Algernon was staying at a friend's house, situated about ten miles from that where Captain Wharton had been visiting two days before.

Instead of pursuing the road to the magnificent seat of the St. Clairs, the Baronet proceeded swiftly along a lane that terminated in a common. Before him were the tents of the gipsies: but leaving them behind, Sir Algernon crossed a bridge thrown across a narrow river, and with unabated speed continued to gallop over a level tract of country for about two miles. He then struck away to the left, and the ground became steeper and more wooded, the hills rising to a great height, in the form of an amphitheatre, while every trace of human abode had vanished. He was descending, with more caution than he had before adopted, a winding path at either side of which trees grew abundantly, when a croaking voice exclaimed—

"You will not find him you seek, young gentleman! Both he and the girl left the little cot hid by the elms yonder an hour ago."

"What do *you* know of the matter?" returned Sir Algernon, in much amazement and contempt.

"I am wiser than you, for once," answered the female, who wore a gipsy's dress, and was of very unprepossessing exterior. "But if you like," she added, "you can look for yourself. I tell you they are gone by that road to the right."

"And how can you tell I want any one in particular?"

"I am a witch," replied the hag, grinning. "O, I know the heart of man as well as a book! I can read all secrets——"

"Stuff!" interrupted the Baronet. "But who, do you think, I am in quest of?"

"Who but Captain Travers Wharton?" replied the gipsy. "I can give you no further intelligence: but if you'll cross my hand,—as you see I can divine aright,—you shall have your fortune told."

The Baronet threw a shilling to the female; but without deigning to hold further parley, he hastened away from her.

The hag chuckled.

"I knew it was the same young butterfly I saw meet Captain Wharton yesterday, when I overheard all they said, though they saw me not," she muttered. "What is there we cannot find out, if we take the trouble? By watching a man's actions, I'll be bound to tell his very thoughts. O, the fools and gulls, that we make! Ha, ha!"

The Baronet finding that the Gipsy, however she had procured her

news, was aware of the real state of the case as it concerned himself, quickened his horse's pace in order to overtake Captain Wharton, if possible.

I should like very much to trace the reason of that passionate desire of communicating strange information. If we only were as anxious to impart what could make people better and happier, there might be something in it. I suppose it may in some measure be attributed to the love of displaying intelligence; and were not such an instinct implanted in us, we should never open our lips. In all things probably it is from the wish of being thought clever or sensible, more enlightened, more amusing than other people that we converse, write, and play the fool. Most especially are we anxious to tell something altogether marvellous to a person interested in it, for the first time; and Sharp knew the Coxcomb was not likely to be in possession of the facts respecting his brother, and might be going a hundred, or a thousand miles away with his fair companion. But these gaudy insects that flutter their little day are scarcely worth analysis: they only serve to excite ridicule and contempt—and we know that there is no faculty but should be exercised in moderation. A coxcomb is like some specimen interesting to the Naturalist, but when dissected has neither heart nor substance.

The young exquisite inquired of the first person he met, whether he had seen any one answering to the description of Captain Wharton on that road, and was informed that a vehicle had passed about half an hour before. The Baronet accordingly spurred on, and presently thought he saw a carriage in the distance before him. He was abruptly turning an angle of the road, when he heard the sound of gay laughter and of horses' hoofs, and beheld a brilliant cavalcade following a carriage which he perceived could not be that he wanted to overtake.

"Who is that?" whispered a horseman to a lady equestrian he rode beside, when the coxcombical Sir Algernon came up with them. "I think I have seen him before."

"What!—the dear Algernon!" exclaimed the lady who had been thus questioned, as she turned to look at the Baronet. "O, my dear boy!" she continued, seizing the arm of Sir Algernon, who had been about to pass her without recognition before she saluted him: "Know you what has become of Travers Wharton? He has vanished so suddenly!"

"Not I, charming Adeline!" drawled the Baronet.

"We are all in despair at losing him. The poor Countess will sigh herself into air at his abrupt departure."

"He is immensely the fashion now," responded Sir Algernon, coldly.

"There was some absurd report which I heard before I rode out this morning about Lord Wharton; but they tell such monstrous fibs! Some say he is dead, some that he is mad, others that he has resigned,—and I don't know what else."

"He has got a brain fever, I believe," replied the Baronet, indifferently, desirous of getting away.

"Ah! are you certain? Well, I told him when I last saw him how it would be. He is so fond of pleasure, and works so hard:—if he should die——"

"I must bid you good morning, my lovely cousin," interrupted Sir Algernon. I have an engagement, which must plead my excuse for leaving you thus."

"If you *must* go! But come and dine with us at six!—Naughty boy! you will not? Nay, but you *must:* it is so dull without Travers."

"I will try to do so, sweet Rivers," returned the Baronet, as he rode on.

The landscape spread before Sir Algernon as he proceeded became bolder and more picturesque at every step. Ancient buildings might be seen, some of which were castellated, and towns and villages were discernible from the ground he traversed. But he could hear nothing of the Coxcomb, and thought he must see some trace of him if he was on the right track. He was not a person of much perseverance, and as soon as he had made up his mind he was on a wrong scent, turned back, and made for a large and splendid mansion in the centre of an extensive park at some distance. When he was within about half a league of the place, he casually noticed a rather pretty little cottage upon which the golden light of the descending sun streamed gloriously; and resolved to ask once more after Captain Wharton. He made for the house, and addressed an old man who was standing outside, saying—

"Have you happened, old man, to see two persons in a carriage or on horseback going this way?"

"Alas!" was the reply, "I am almost blind; but perhaps my daughter may have noticed those you ask for. Rose! Come hither, love."

A girl obeyed the summons, and Sir Algernon was struck with her appearance, and delighted with the melody of the voice, in which she answered his questions. He lingered some minutes outside the cottage, though he could hear nothing of Travers Wharton, and after he left it, said to himself, "That girl will grow very pretty! I suppose it will be the thing to keep young mistresses, now:—and from what Wharton told me of the gipsy, she must resemble her in some respects."

And where was the person sought so vainly by the Baronet?—To resume the narrative where it broke off with the question of Fanny to her admirer in the last chapter. The Coxcomb remembered there was a sequestered spot at no very great distance in which there was a cottage belonging to a man he knew, and thought probably it was untenanted. He soon ascertained the fact, obtained the key of the dwelling from the owner, and proceeded thither whispering soft nothings to the girl, who sometimes wept silently, and then would murmur incoherent sentences,

the drift of which her lover could not catch. They were soon housed, and Wharton dispatched a note to the Countess St. Clair, intimating that business prevented him from returning, but that he would call to take leave as soon as he was able.

Night had by this time fallen, and Travers and Fanny sat in a small apartment without lamp or candle, a fire affording the only light, for all without was gloom. It was about the same hour that Lord Wharton rose to make his celebrated speech. The arm of the Coxcomb encircled the taper waist of the Gipsy, who seemed lost in intense reverie.

"Why do you not speak, my beautiful?" said the fop, softly. "Open those coral lips, and let me hear those sounds sweeter to my heart than all the tongues of life!"

When Travers wanted to be poetical he generally borrowed some sentiment he had read or heard, and somehow, coxcomb as he was, he had an insinuating manner that for the most part was extremely successful in winning its way to the susceptibility of those he deigned to make love to. The Gipsy was not one of the same mould as the vain, heartless beauties of Almack's, however. That poor outcast, with all her vain feelings, her weakness, ignorance, and superstition, had a soul full of great Nature's finest impulses: but she had nothing to regulate them; she was Nature's *own*. She smiled sadly at something within the mind, and exclaimed—

"Would that I were a flower, or a fairy to nestle in sweet flowers, and look at what is passing in the world of spirits. I sometimes fancy I *am* a fairy, and believe I fly high in the blue air, bathing my heart in golden dew."*

"What put that conceit into your head, prettiest one?" asked the lover.

Fanny regarded him not.

"Do you like poetry?" she said. "If you do, I will sing you a little ballad, the words and music of which entered into my soul last night."

FANNY'S SONG.

I'd be a passionate soul, and breathe
  Among the woods and in the light!—
I'd live like the winds, and wreathe
  My thoughts into garlands bright!—
For the garlands of Love and Mind
From all of Earth refined—
  Sink into the depths within and grow
  About the spirit with starry glow!

* The Reader may be inclined very often to laugh at Fanny's wild vagaries of imagination. He must remember she is a being *among* us, and not *of* us. The only character she is at all like in fiction is Hugo's exquisite "Esmeralda."

O would that my breath were air!
  O would that my form were fire!
So that all that is pure and fair
  Might cling to my bright desire!—
My desire is not to live
On Earth: but to take and give
  From the wildest essences that be
  Bliss, Beauty, and Immortality!

Incomprehensible was the mysticism of that strange heart to the Coxcomb; but he heard the most impassioned harmony, he saw the intense radiance of the minstrel's eye, and was enraptured with what he did not understand. Never, perhaps, had such a scene as that we are now attempting to place before our readers occurred before. Similar there may be in kind, but hardly in essence.

The fire cast a dim, flickering light on the girl and her lover, her large eyes lit up with the brilliancy which is all the soul's. Her bosom heaved, her hands were clasped together; her ringlets streamed in beautiful disorder over her white neck and bosom, her polished shoulders, and her gracile form.

"Charming! thrice charming!" cried the fop. "That song is worth more than all the strains of the Syrens! Enchanting, lovely Fanny! And did you compose that song? To have such beauty and such genius is, indeed, to be gifted with the brightness of heaven. Pandora's box has been lavished on you, sweet!—You must sing me that song again.—What a thrilling, intense, wild thing it is,—even like yourself!—You sigh away your life, as it were—a portion of being in passion. It is the dying swain, it is the nightingale complaining to night and the stars! You must often sing to me when we are thus alone together, and waft my spirit on the wings of your divine fancy to realms such as high poets dream of!"

He snatched a kiss from the Gipsy as he concluded his high-flown sentences; and she drew back: but well did that heartless scoundrel,—who had not the same palliation for his libertinism as his brother—know the windings of woman's heart. Aware that he had not an ordinary girl to deal with, he pursued a plan different to that he would have chosen with a lady of fashion. He appealed to her imagination, he worked upon her feelings—for he was a fine actor, when he had a motive sufficient to make him animated,—and actually excited by the uncommon beauty and bewitching singularity of the Gipsy, played his part with real passion. The poor Gipsy! She believed, and she fell!

How different a scene were the two brothers performing in then! Lord Wharton was gazing on a corpse with reeling brain, and maddened spirit, and the Captain was soothing and caressing his hapless victim! Behold, votary of pleasure! on one side the object of desire, and on the

other corruption and the charnel. Passion and the Tomb! Alas! even Love doth lose the bodily presence; but the Spirit of Love is incorruptible and unchanging: Passion is for Time, Love for Eternity!

The Gipsy, utterly ignorant of the world, deriving all her knowledge from nature and idle books, with false views of society, with wild ideas of Deity, with fiery impulses which she had never been taught to curb, and no moral principle save such as savages may have, was an easy prey to one like Travers Wharton. Yet had not the ill-fated girl been driven by superstition, and misled by her weak heart, she would not have lost that virtue of which there seems to be an innate idea in every woman's soul. Brief as was her acquaintance with the officer, the passion he had raised in her breast was potent. He had realized the ideal of her visions, she saw not the actual deformity beneath the specious gloss of art, she detected not the vacuity, but imagined him all that he wanted her to believe he was. A longer intimacy must have withdrawn the veil, for Fanny was quick, and a sense of the beautiful was strongly implanted in her heart. With her, too, everything was sudden: she loved, she hated, she smiled, wept, hoped, despaired, in an hour; and though such feelings as caused these emotions were often transient, they were intense for the time, and led her unresistingly along. The beings among whom she had spent her life, are notorious for their want of all moral or religious principle. She had scarcely heard the name of virtue, and her reason was not strong, though her fancy was so vivid. She had fine intuitions, but did not reflect enough to develope them. Indeed she scarcely ever reflected; but yielded herself up to whatever idea or feeling was uppermost; and, consequently, the impulse of the moment was law with her. She will be condemned for her want of modesty: but she had no defined notions of the word.

She was aware that there are such things as right and wrong—and so is a king, who thinks it no crime to murder—for the idea is universal, but the corollary from it uncertain;—but how was she to acquire the systematic morality which we erect into axiomatic ethics?—I feel persuaded that half the derelictions from moral duty we hear of are as much from ignorance as vice. This is especially the case with the weaker sex, who are not taught to think; with whom, for the most part, all science is dogmatical; and, consequently, when they are assailed with temptation, it is a battle of *motives*, and not of *principles*—an important distinction. This is the ground taken by the Necessitarian, namely, that motives are omnipotent: but who ever heard of reason, as such, being influenced by motives? Who ever heard of a person believing in a theory because the intellect had a motive for receiving it? No, in reason, principle is the only agent. Motives actuate those who do not reflect, but reason is as a God—an appeal is made to it by the passions, but the one is a judge, the others pleaders. Obey the reason, and you cannot fall: yield to the

motives, and the poor human heart is frail indeed. Fanny then fell like so many others of her sex from the powers of intellect having been left uncultivated. Of course she knew she was not doing well; but she had not arrived at first principles, without which there is no real morality, because all morals must be highest reason.

I must be forgiven for this slight metaphysical plea for the erring. Even those placed in happier circumstances than Fanny have done likewise. Those who tell us crime is only the effect of evil passion, must show us that ill-regulated passions are not commonly the effect of education being neglected. The Necessitarian's only argument is annihilated by the adoption of the principle that at a superficial glance seems in his favour: the *human* will yield to motives, the active soul has no motives to influence it, but only axioms of truth.

It is not to be imagined, however, that the Gipsy endured no remorse, felt no compunctious visitings of conscience, after she had fallen. Left alone—her seducer having been with her for many hours, incessantly flattering and caressing,—she burst into bitter tears, and paced up and down the room with rapid steps.

"Alas, alas!" she exclaimed, "what have I done? What spell in this man has blinded my reason and my soul?"

She had wakened, like Eve, after eating of the fruit, to knowledge of sin; but yet the star of moral science guided her not. She continued,—"If love is pure, it cannot sting *thus*, surely? Then it must be impure passion which has beguiled me. But a few hours have I known him; and yet now he seems my hope, world, idol! He has done me wrong, I feel; and yet do I worship him the more. Strange!—most strange! Oh, ye wonderful heavens! shall I ever contemplate your glories with the same spirit as I used, again? Shall I ever look on the cold, white moon—chaste as the soul itself,—and feel my being in harmony with her radiance, more?" Then clasping her little hands together, she proceeded,—"Oh, thou mysterious Power, who hast fashioned me out of clay into life and motion! Thou *alone* above destiny—for Thou art Fate itself! Thou whom men call GOD, and know not what they mean,—I fear me that the wild impulses Thou hast given me, have led me into darkest error! Why was I born? why made a creature of dust and passion? why am not I a zephyr, a dream,—aught that is not tied to earth? why cannot I love, and be happy? for I feel that love is as a shadow of the Eternal and the Infinite, and must be Heaven, if good! Ah, me! what am I? whence am I? and whither do I go? We must be pure before we can leave this dust behind, and rejoice in the effulgence of the stars, soaring amid the blue air, a melody, a living splendour! And here am I sorrowful and sinning;—yes, I must have sinned! I should not have yielded to his vows and prayers. Ought we not to live above sense, to be blest? Is virtue in the *soul*, vice in the *heart*? Then why was I given this body,

these feelings? I am ignorant, and lost, and hopeless! My natal star foretells my doom; and that is wretchedness!"

It seems as if—when the immortal, which is within us, rebukes the miserable clay that we prize so highly,—then, and not till then, we know the full divinity of Truth: we tremble at the presence of the spiritual and the abstract. Some minutes elapsed, and the unhappy girl's mind was engaged in a new train of reflections. Is not the fall of man typical of the first great sin of life?

"Would it not be better for me to die?" she thought. "By putting an end to my earthly being, I might appease the stern voice that almost maddens me. If I might be nothing, I almost think I should seek death. I have heard, that to the pure all things are pure: my heart has whispered to me in impassioned accents,—'a thirst for love is a thirst for God!' I have looked up, in the solemn hour, to the firmament, and have imagined Love there, enthroned among the stars, amid rosy clouds, smiling on the universe! My baffled spirit turns upon itself, and wildering, thronging thoughts troop upon me till I can distinguish nothing with my dim brain! A sacrifice—my life? Is it that, O voice? Will that appease thee?" The Gipsy pressed her burning brow with quivering fingers, and seemed to be endeavouring to pursue some image before her. "It is not palpable!" she murmured. "Bright image! say whither would'st thou lead me? Lift me up! If thou *art* an angel, reveal to me what I am, and what I should do? Woe! woe! I am as one that is blind, groping my way through infinite space! The lights before my eyes are meteors, and burn, but do not guide them. My very life is scorched with frenzy and pain—the mysterious life—the bright and the invisible! Doubt and dismay, dark shapes! why press ye on me, who seek not to injure others; who would love, and be beloved? Come, death, if thou art able to release me from this burthen that lies so heavily on my poor soul! Pale shadow! that we shrink from, we know not wherefore, take me to thy embrace. If I have erred, if I have sinned, some kindly spirit tell me how I may efface the misdeed. Is the past irrevocable? I wish to loathe the vile; but how can I do it? how can I find the holy?"

"Chaos of thought and passion, all confused!" Sad child of ignorance, what a divine heart was lost when thine went astray! It is incomprehensible, why Providence has given us ideas of good and evil, which are not universal in their application. Human philosophy cannot clearly define what they are (as every student of ancient ethics knows); how, then, could poor Fanny accomplish what Plato left undone? No, there is but one system of ethics in the universe; and the author of that system was the Divine Philosopher himself. The morality of sages was not based on eternal and immutable principles; there was much that is lofty, much that is sublime, in the genius of those immortal writings,

which, having outlived the desolation of ages, seem more divine than ever: but when we compare them with the certain, clear, and heavenly rules for happiness we are privileged to possess, what is their glory? It seems as if some portion of the one philosophy floated adown the stream of time; that the voice of the Creator still finds an echo in the minds of the human race, however blind and ignorant; but the first becomes obscure by tradition, the last can afford but the *natural* conscience, the *notion* of virtue's entity. We must be able to separate the gold from the baser metal, ere we can have any ethics at all. How, then, could Fanny grasp the high and ethereal truths which even Solomon had no intimation of? A Christian is wiser than that wisest of men, when he but reads a single sentence that dropped from the lips of his Master. *Our* faith controls the very thoughts; the Jewish dispensation was but for time—was but a preparation, and referred only to the actions. Fanny had never heard one sentence from the Book: she had never thought *why* man was placed in this state of probation; or, if she had, poor thing! she could not assign a cause for the effect, in any way satisfactory to herself. The reduction of being into mind is the secret of the reason for creation. He that knows not this, and acts not accordingly, aspires but to despair. . . . . Meanwhile, Travers Wharton had gone forth, and remained out for some time. On his return to the cottage, he accidentally encountered Sir Algernon Sharp—like himself, on horseback. They had a long conversation together, and parted about half a mile from the place which the Coxcomb had hired for his vile purposes. Before he descended the hill which rose above the cottage, the fop happened to cast his eyes in the direction of a cross-road, and thought he recognised a person with whom he was acquainted. Nor was he deceived; and received from him intelligence which induced him to resolve on hastening to London the following morning. Then, after an absence of some hours, he presented himself before the being who had fallen so facile a prey to his insidious arts. That woman should ever fall! It is as mysterious, that a fine soul should stoop to earth, as that an angel should quit heaven! She was sitting at a window, and the traces of tears and much mental suffering were visible on her face.

"You will go with me to town, fairest, to-morrow?" said the Captain to Fanny, who regarded him with mingled passion, tenderness, and reproach. Her April humour had again changed, and she exclaimed—

"Why have you left me thus? Many fearful thoughts have been preying on me during your absence." He threw his arm around her, and his embrace assured her of his love. "Ah!" said the Gipsy, passionately, "I had dreamed of you for days, weeks, months, and years, ere I beheld you in bodily form! I knew, when I first heard the sound of that voice, which thrilled my being with strange rapture, that the idol of my girlhood's dreams was before me."

"Indeed!" returned Captain Wharton. "How different you are, Fanny, from those who have loved me hitherto! How great the dissimilitude between your love and that of the gay and the brilliant who have courted my notice!"

"There is but one love," was the rejoinder of the wild girl; "that love, who can mistake? It was, before it saw the light, like the child in its mother's womb—like the plant ere it has sprung out of the earth: but an instant brings it into being; and each hour after that, it grows more bright and lovely, until it withers. Ah! it *must* wither—for ever!"

"Say not so, sweetest!—I shall ever love you."

"Yes!" continued Fanny, without noticing what her lover said; "a moment brings love forth from the darkness in which it was concealed: the fire springs from the flint—not by degrees. Nothing is gradual to me, nor, in fact, I imagine, to *aught*. There must be a point where the transition takes place. Yes! all things are sudden, both for good and evil;—sudden in their birth, and equally so in their destruction! You love me now; and you will loathe me, perhaps, ere the spring renews its verdure, and the birds renew their youngest melody to the year. I shall love *you* till the last throb leaves this quick heart, and my poor brain ceases to work so wildly. You may tell me passion is eternal: but not so. There is something, which is *not* passion, intenser far, though it burns together with it: but the one is *here*, and the other *there!*" She pointed to the blazing heavens, which seemed bathed in the liquid fire of the imperial day; and murmured, "The sun will rise after sleep: but THE SLEEP OF LOVE IS DEATH!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHARP'S CHARACTER AND MOTIVES—STEPHEN AND NELL—PURE LOVE—THE MANIAC—TRAVERS—THINGS AND PRINCIPLES.

THE scene returns to the neighbourhood of Travers House. The conduct of Sharp, the lawyer, towards Harriet, whom he had found so strangely after many years, may seem unnatural; but before we proceed, that must be explained. He had accidentally overheard, from the postboy who drove Mr. Travers and his son home, on the night of the storm—having just arrived by the stage from London,—that they had conveyed home a maniac; and when he met the once-adored idol of his soul, he concluded instantly it was she the philanthropist had protected. He ascertained, however, ere he returned to town, that she was safe, and would be watched more narrowly than she had been. He was not one to postpone the most important business of his existence, from any con-

sideration but of policy; and he felt that his presence in London at that juncture was of most vital consequence. The lawyer's nature was a singular mixture of feeling and coldness. His heart was outworn, though it had still a throb for the past; and he mingled with the herd of men, stern, astute, impenetrable. The memory of the gone, and the anticipation of revenge, locked up his passions and his thoughts; yet the old disposition would return on him sometimes, despite himself, and he mourned that the social affections and warm ties of life were torn from him. The necessary concerns of a man like Sharp—in immense practice among the greatest rogues in the world,—must tend to deaden the generous feelings, and to impart a deep conviction to the soul, of the rottenness of human nature. We all, more or less, gain false and distorted views of man; and especially those who see him in the dark phases of avarice, deceit, and fraud. Few persons will believe in the true medium, until they have exhausted faith and despair, until they perceive the best can err, and the worst retain some touch of humanity: "the beam pours in at last," and then optimism and misanthropy vanish for ever.

It was strange that the lawyer should foster that intense desire of revenge which stimulated him to such exertions, when he was persuaded that Lord Wharton was no worse than the generality of the world. But when the passions are concerned, reason remains in abeyance; the heart will not listen to its voice. Sharp took a one-sided view of humanity, and made up his mind that all are essentially the same; that virtue and vice are "names without a cause," and it is only interested motives which can restrain us from evil actions. Assuredly he erred. There is much depravity in man: but there are kindly, liberal, noble spirits even among the erring and the weak. Men of the world are apt to conceive that all aims and ends are *for* the world: but it appears to me that they are frequently for the satisfaction of ourselves;—the glow of peace and contentment produced by generous sentiments assuming shape and actuality create a happiness which is human and beneficial in its operation. Years and discretion having tamed our eager spirits, though we do not delude ourselves with the idea of finding perfection, neither do we wrap ourselves up in cynicism and apathy, unless some gross injury, some wrong that cannot be redressed, is brooded upon until the universe is beheld through a false medium; and God's work looks wretched and gloomy.

The lawyer had outlived the poetry of being; but the radiance of the past with him lived like a nympholepsy in the dreamer's fancy, incapable of realization, but fraught with passion: he continually contemplated the gone,—breathed in the air of the departed; and then, stung to madness by the thought of the felicity he had lost, like the Prince of darkness, while the glories of heaven were present to his memory, concentrated every hope and desire in perfecting a glorious revenge.

O, how the poor wretch clung to that last miserable device of cheating aspiration, making a hope of despair, how he hugged the dark phantom of the future to his heart, dressing it up with beauty and sublimity! Revenge! Revenge! It haunted him when he was occupied in the dry details of business, it beaconed him from every shape, it spoke to him from every sound of earth! It was to him his heaven, his eternity.—Revenge, the creature of time and the minion of hell!

Thus, greatness was pursuing its high and dangerous career with Lord Wharton, madness was breathing wild melodies, and creating unreal things in the brain of poor Harriet, and revenge was actuating every step, thought, sensation, of Sharp. Meanwhile, Stephen and Nell were lodged in a neat cottage belonging to Mr. Travers, and found in each other's society their only consolation. Nothing had been heard of the Blacksmith, but every exertion was being made to capture him and his family: for had they not attempted the life of the great Cabinet Minister? The cousins dreaded to hear their relations were taken; and almost repented they had acted as they had. John Jenkins was really loved by his sister and Stephen, who detected under the rough, fierce exterior a heart naturally kind and noble: and when the vision of the gallows presented itself to their minds in connection with him they were in despair. Even Jenkins and his wife, though they had not been kind parents, the bright spirit of Nell—wishing to love all, and full of the gushing spring of affection towards kindred—clung to with tenderness: and while she abhorred the crimes they would have perpetrated, she tried to invent some sort of palliation for them. They were poor and needy, they were desperate, and had endured much wrong, and she hoped they would repent; she would have died to save and to reform those who had given her existence.

Stephen tried every expedient his ingenuity could suggest to beguile his cousin's grief; and, somehow, in his presence her brow was not so gloomy as when he was absent, though she would still weep—and he dried the tears,—with his lips,—and a sad smile overspread her intelligent face, as he put his arm round her waist, and gazed fondly on her. Unconscious were they that a deeper feeling than fraternal and sisterly attachment bound them to each other:—for when a lad and a girl have grown up together, and have not been parted for a day, passion is not sudden; but is evoked by some great occasion, and breaks forth even to their own surprise. Perhaps, Stephen was not one to love easily, as most very young men do: he had something deep and almost stern in *his* love,—was accustomed to search his soul ere he yielded to a feeling; and neglected as had been his moral culture, the upright nature he was endowed with, the honest, fervent heart, the strong, manly sense, and vigorous understanding, elevated him above the boy he really was. There are some who are men, before others are youths, and he was of the num-

ber: the secret of the difference lies in the profundity of the passions and the depth of the soul. And Nell was a woman more than a girl; her sensibility was deep, her intellect clear, and her imagination pure: and such beings, though much may have run to seed from defective education, do not throw away their feelings in the frivolity of childish romance; their poetry is fresh and beautiful, their love is clinging, and is the growth of time.

Far superior to those of their class in the day in which they lived, they found but little congeniality, save in intercourse with themselves, and had not made comparisons to their mutual advantage. How delightful it is to healthy, uncorrupted taste, to real feeling of beauty, which the morbid trash of the sentimentalist has not touched, to contemplate such an attachment! It seems like looking upon Nature's face after gazing on daubs of pictures, which seem like what a divine of the day would call, "the last drivel of an exhausted brain." Pure love is almost ever thus, it is *one*, eternal and indestructible; *not* the Platonic idea, which is an abstraction: but all truth and soul, lovely and excellent. It is not sensual, but passionate and fiery, unsullied and intense. I have hardly made up my mind whether Shakspeare intended in *Romeo* and *Juliet* to represent the passion in its perfection: it is *too* puerile, perhaps; all froth and fume on the lover's side; and it is childish on hers. It was not so with those two humble peasants. With the few who roll in riches, who are ambitious and powerful, this sentiment is distracted by a variety of objects; but in those like Stephen and Nell, it is the whole of being.

They were together at the same hour and on the same night when Fanny yielded to the arts of her seducer. What a different scene it was! While the insidious Travers Wharton was using all the eloquence he was master of to attain his object, Stephen was breathing the true, deep feelings of his heart to his beloved cousin. They stood beneath the starry vault, hand clasped in hand, and the youth exclaimed—

"Do you not love this tranquil hour, dearest!—which seems formed for love and peace? I know you do! It is delicious joy to look up there and see the heavens so gently bright, and then to gaze into your sweet face, and see a heavenlier radiance in it! My own cousin! my friend! my sister!"

Eye meeting eye, and heart beating to heart, they stood, thinking not of their sorrows, and dreaming not of future grief,—innocent and happy. Why is it man should ever utter false words and woman believe? The only perfect bliss in passion is sincerity. Nell returned the pressure of Stephen's fingers. A slight blush was on her fair cheek, but she looked as confidingly into that open, glowing face that bent over her, as if she had gazed on a fond and virtuous parent.

"Yes, you are my brother, Stephen," she said. "We are joined by

sympathy and sentiment, as well as by the ties of blood. Relationship is nothing without these, kindred is a blank unless cemented by affection."

"Ay; but we must deplore our kindred's crimes and errors," returned Stephen, a shade passing over his broad, clear brow. "My mother! my poor mother! She is at rest now! I wish I knew more of the circumstances relative to her: but my uncle either could not, or would not make them known to me. If I had not *you*, Nelly, I should mourn that I am an orphan."

The girl looked up fondly into her cousin's countenance; a tear was in her large, bright eye, that seemed made to mirror every emotion within. Stephen was lost in thought, and a deep sorrow was on the candid face, so dear to her. She put her arm round his neck and kissed him tenderly. There was more passion in the fervour with which the embrace was returned, the lip lingered longer and thrilled more deeply than it was wont.

O, those exquisite moments when a sincere and enduring love first asserts its supremacy, and young hearts burn with the first pure flame of that light of earth, which is more radiant than light itself,—the starriest and divinest;—when the brain feels naught, when the eye sees naught, when all the senses, the aspirations, the hopes and thoughts that ever flashed the immortal and the intense upon the spirit, are commingled and centred in the dear bliss of reciprocal affection, the first and the everlasting!—When no prudery restrains, when no false delicacy withholds the endearments Nature makes so lavish!

But ere the caress was over, a sweet, sad voice was heard, saying—

"You are lovers, fair ones!—Nay, start not! *I* have loved! Ah, me! Is it well to trust? You look good and true, but truth and goodness, do you not know, are for the angels! I'm always thinking of *that!* O, I have loved like you, and so have fallen to be what I am! I remember a scene thus—something,—yes—something——!"

A tall, shadowy form was before the cousins,—a woman still retaining traces of strange beauty, but worn and wasted. She pressed her forehead with her thin hand, as she ended what she had been saying. Nell coloured deeply, and Stephen's face flushed, when the female revealed to them so abruptly the real state of their hearts. What an era in existence it must be when that discovery is first made! The woman continued in a rambling manner—

"There are no tears in Heaven—so they say: but smiles and music, and I have seen and heard them:—for I was a spirit of the stars once, until earth drew me down, and I lost my high privilege. I used to fly from sphere to sphere, I used to drive my airy chariot over space, and the sunny air was above and around, and Eden was in me. You may doubt what I say: but if you are pure you can feel this! I sometimes

think the real Eden was not a garden of clay, but was of the mind;—and indeed I have been permitted to understand the great mystery of evil. Why did God let man fall? I will tell you. Man left the love of the soul, and worshipped an idol of dust: and then he went mad like me!"

"Poor thing! She *is* mad," said Stephen.

"I have never met with any one," pursued the female, "who could understand me when I said what you have heard. God to man is the *form* of *truth*. There is a God beyond the form; but of Him we know nothing. Now, the form of truth is plainly not material; it must dwell in the mind alone. Then my philosophy explains that if you desert what is spiritual, you adore what is mortal: and all that dies is evil. So do not love the body—which must perish; but cling to the beautiful soul, and grow to joy!"

"Who can she be?" cried Nell, wonderingly.

"You want to know who I am?" returned the maniac, fixing her bright, wild eyes on the girl's face; "I am called Azrael. I have told you I *was* a spirit of the stars; and the whole earth worshipped me until I worshipped earth. I used to move along with a train of all divine shapes, planets, and worlds, and spirits of light attending on me. There was Youth with its glory, its flush, and pride, there was Hope with its sunlight, there was Genius with its magic, there was Truth and Wisdom with their beams of holiness! But now, alas! I am followed by pale Despair and Night, I am haunted by Madness and Terror! Do you not see them there? I make friends of them now, they have grown so familiar! I am the sister of all sorrow, and the mother of all woe: so come not near me, lest you be infected. That the angel who used to pour down the happiness which the good God gave from the eternal fount to her for herself, and which she bestowed nearly all in charity, should become the fiend, scattering agonies and pestilence! Ah, woe! Must I ever be a demon because I have once sinned? Is there no forgiveness? O, pity!"

The maniac wept bitterly, and Stephen and Nell drawing closer to her with wonder and sympathy, strove to soothe her grief.

"I have nothing to give you, sweet ones, for your kindness!" said the afflicted being, tenderly regarding them. "I used to resemble *him* once," she added, taking Stephen's hand.

There was, indeed, a strong likeness still between the youth and the maniac: and when she was young and happy, the resemblance must have been singular. The surprise of the cousins deepened when they perceived it was as she said. She proceeded—

"Yet I have something still left of the divine gifts of God. There is a warm drop flowing in my heart—a human love I will give you. I will protect you from danger, and be ever near you;—so that I may be again

a guardian spirit, after all. We shall all die and be happy, I hope. Life, sweet ones! that we guard with such jealous care, is not real: but the MIND'S BEING *is!* I have seen the naked loveliness of our ethereal part, and it is all as God in miniature. It sees all, it hears all, it knows, loves, cherishes all that is pure and gentle. I will take you up with me when I go home again, when the prodigal is pardoned for having lavished away the riches of immortality; and we will adore, we will fly upward and never let our pinions droop, for fear—for fear—— !"

Stephen and Nell stood as if entranced during the incoherent, and yet half wise, and altogether poetical sentences of the maniac. And there was a melody in that voice, a strange and tender lustre in those large orbs, a grace in every motion, a melancholy sweetness in the faded face, perfectly irresistible.

"Is this, can this be madness?" cried Nell, with tearful eyes.

"All that is not of the world above the skies dies, droops, and passes into oblivion!" continued the forlorn one. "Amid the sear leaves of my being you will find one green leaf, fresh as Spring, and glorious as Summer. I will bestow on you that last treasure, for I know you are worthy of it; and then I shall die, like Autumn, and Winter will wrap my existence, until it is renewed for ever. I will communicate the gift to you in a song—for it is too spiritual to be otherwise imparted.—Music is God's breath, and therefore to be loved and worshipped."

She then burst into a wild strain. She did not sing as others do; but seemed to pour out melody, because the soul demanded vent. Madness alone has such music.

THE GEM.

Far away, far away in the islands that render
  Their homage to yonder pale Queen of the Night,
There's a magical gem, there's a life-giving splendor,
  That dims, while it gladdens the Seraphim's sight.

'Tis a drop in the heart of some flower's pure bell,
  That glitters immortal,—its essence none know;
But 'twas whisper'd to me from God's eye it once fell
  When the blood of the Saviour for mortals did flow.

Can it be that God wept? Can *He* sorrow? Ah, no!
  But He saw such divinity blazing from clay,
That His spirit itself into wonder did grow,
  And melted a jewel from Heaven away!*

* This wild effusion must be supposed to have emanated from the Muse of the maniac herself; and may have been suggested by some fine mental madness that floated before her fancy. It would seem most absurd if not composed by a mad person, or an Eastern poet;—whose imaginations differ but little.

The air which accompanied this song was now solemn, now thrilling, now wild, now faint,—passing sweet, but not like anything we can conceive of melody,—all dreamy, abstract—scarcely to be called a tune. It came from the depths of deepest spirit—the sleeping spirit apart from its immortal reason, mystic, ethereal, and even sublime. She alone could have made, or sung it,—for there are peculiarities among the insane as among the rational, and she was not an ordinary maniac. As the last notes died away, even like those we may imagine a swan's as it expires, a servant was seen hurrying after the madwoman; who suffering her eyes to drop, became perfectly silent. The servant came up, and Stephen eagerly inquired of him who the female was.

"Why," was the reply, "master has taken care of her; but we know nothing of her, save that she's the very old one for slipping through our fingers! It's quite impossible to watch her so that she can't escape."

Here Mr. Travers became visible, and advancing to the maniac, said—

"Why do you thus elude us, my good Harriet. I have been very anxious about you."

Harriet took the hand of her benefactor, and pressed it to her lips, looking earnestly at him; but she did not answer his question.

"How happy you must be!" she said. "You are *so* good, you *must* be good!"

"Have you known this afflicted creature long, sir?" asked Stephen.

Mr. Travers explained how he met with the maniac; and she was consigned to the care of the servant, with orders to be more vigilant for the future; and Travers conversed with Stephen and Nell.

There was a simplicity and a kindness about that noble being which irresistibly won on every heart. There was wisdom in every sentence, however trite the subject-matter, that fell from his lips, and his heart spoke so earnestly with his intellect, that the effect of what he said was doubly powerful. Wise words avail but little, if they are not conveyed both to the heart and the understanding, and Travers mingled imagination with reason, and adorned his phrases with all that captivates as well as convinces, with a classical taste and cultivated rhetoric. And yet he was simple, he was *true*. Speaking about virtue, he said to Stephen—

"The happiness we derive from doing well is external in its effects, and internal in its cause. Virtue goes forth, like the dove from the ark, into remote regions, its abstract consequences reaching we know not how remotely; and the troubled waters of the world touch not its wings. It is a light all of the mind within: but its beams direct the wanderer to a haven of rest and safety."

"May I ask you, sir," returned Stephen, pleased with the metaphor, and willing to pursue the subject, "what *is* virtue? Is it vice's opposite; or is it but a name denoting the absence of vice?"

"That," replied Travers, "is one of the hardest problems in what may

be called the metaphysics of ethics. Yet I am inclined to believe vice is the absence of virtue rather than the converse. I am glad to find you think on these subjects; for thought generates action, and all reflection on high and holy themes is good in itself.—What is darkness? The absence of light. Even so with vice. It is quite evident that light is not the absence of darkness."

"Why not, sir? At all events we know not what light is!"

"True: but the mystery is a fact. You see there is mystery and anomaly. If we say that virtue is the absence of vice, logicians would tell you that you confuse a negative and a positive. For virtue implies superiority to others, it signifies something loftier than what we commonly see. You may answer it is the same with vice, with a difference: but there is a clear though subtle distinction. There *may* be vice without action,—sloth may be vice:—but virtue cannot be passive. It is like motion, and can know no pause, no interval. You cannot conceive virtue anything but active."

"I am much obliged to you for the definition," said Stephen, who had begun to be enamoured of the study of the abstract, as clever youths generally are:—but who had not mastered such difficult propositions as those he had been discussing with the philosopher. How much intense thought is necessary ere we can arrive at any definite conclusions on principles! But such thought has an influence on the moral as well as the intellectual; every hard struggle sublimating the entire being. How wonderful it seems that the simplest moral axiom has been the result of immense reflection, if it be the axiom of man! Morality is reason, all reason, and without it, what a chaos would intellect be! The existence of morality is the best argument for the immateriality of the soul, because it implies something not in matter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

STEPHEN AND THE HORSEMAN—THEIR CONVERSATION—A NEW AND ECCENTRIC CHARACTER—VOLITION—WILLIAMSON AND QUICK.

THERE was a strong resemblance between the characters of Stephen and Nell. He had taught her to love the books he loved, they had walked together, thought together,—done almost everything together, until they had imbibed each other's idiosyncrasy. There was hardly a feeling—a thought—they would have concealed from the eye that glanced affection and sympathy into that which brightened at the look, and however willing they might be to do so, they had learned to look into one another's soul,—in fact, they almost realized that strange idea of the

French novelist, of the perfect unity that subsisted between two sisters who were joined together like the Siamese twins. It is not always that love is like this; there may be perfect sympathy, and yet there may be a great difference betwixt a man and a woman, but in the cousins' case there was no dissimilarity. They had been children together, shared the same bed in infancy, their sports, their studies, and their wishes were nearly all identical. But Nell was perfectly feminine, and Stephen equally manly; they were in the same mould of Nature; but he, as one of the lords of the creation, was of "sterner stuff."

Early on the following morning Stephen rose with the purpose of going to see the little orphan grandson of Mrs. Thompson, whom he had put under the care of a neighbour. The weather was still fine and autumnal, although winter had begun, and the air, if rather sharp, was bracing and invigorating. Stephen walked briskly along, sometimes thinking of his cousin, and sometimes of his future prospects in life. A new turn had been given to his thoughts by the events of the preceding day, and he no longer regarded Nell merely as his sister. Still he hardly knew it was love that he felt for her; he had been so long in the habit of fostering what he imagined a brotherly regard, that he fancied he might mistake himself after all. The question puzzled him almost as much as the problem of human destiny, or the doctrine of infinite space, on which he had been puzzling himself much of late. Then he hoped he should soon be able to give Nell much that had been beyond his reach;—when he was secretary to Lord Wharton he might afford her pleasures,—to see her in the station she ought to fill in his estimation, her mind cultivated, and her intellect enlarged. He walked onwards with the elastic step of youth, forgetful that there are such things as sorrow and disappointment in the world.

How often does this blessed oblivion steal over us, and how grateful we should be that Lethe steeps the memory in its pleasant waters, and we see all things full of light and glory! We must despair, if we had not some radiant imagination to deck the real, and to imbue the actual with beauty!

He was leaping over a stile with a deer-like bound, when he noticed a horseman a few yards to his left, who had just emerged from a lane, and with the politeness natural to him, took off his hat and bowed. The stranger was a man of somewhat remarkable exterior, and mounted on a strong, active horse, of no particular beauty, but with great fire in his eye and muscle in his legs. The horseman was hard upon forty, with a brown skin, a compact, powerful frame, below the middle height, a dark keen eye, and hair nearly black. There was thought and power in his face, there was boldness, passion, confidence, in the searching orbs that lit it: he was a man evidently not to be led, but to lead.

"It is a fine day," he said, frankly returning the salutation of Stephen.

"Yes, we do not often have such weather at this time of year."

"Ah! old, foggy England! Upon my word I love to smell even her smoke after I have been absent from her long."

"You have been lately abroad, sir?" inquired the youth, who found his new acquaintance was walking his horse in the same direction as he was proceeding.

The stranger answered in the affirmative.

"I should like to see some of those glorious countries beyond the sea," said Stephen, with some enthusiasm—"to climb the Alps, and hear the music of the dread cataracts!"

"You are clean-limbed, and I dare be sworn a bold fellow; but there are steeps you would not dare to mount, and precipices you would hardly try to leap, which the mountaineers think nothing of. I have myself turned dizzy, and almost sick, when standing on some enormous Alp, and watching the avalanche rushing and roaring, and carrying destruction with it, seeming as if hurled by an avenging God's almighty arm. That is the sublime of awe and terror!"

"Yes; but it was not fear you felt when gazing?"

"Fear! No. I believe, we sometimes grow dizzy with a species of wild pleasure amid majestic and stupendous scenes. We get an idea of our own utter insignificance in the universe, when we survey what seems to be immensity:—but *that* is the wonder of sense; the soul can hardly wonder, but is fixed in serene glory:—there is that in man which cannot dread. I have been in the battle-field, and when the great cannons bellowed, and vomited flames; and groans, and shrieks, and curses have made my brain reel, the immaterial thought was rushing through infinity; death seemed imbued with life and splendour. We know not what we are, until we have felt the lofty of the terrible!—I am inclined to think even in the universal deluge I should not have *feared;* but I should have been awe-stricken at the sublimity of ruin and desolation. Awe is not fear."

"Exactly," answered Stephen. "A brave man cannot comprehend fear as a *passion;* it is but a *sentiment* with him."

The stranger looked at Stephen more narrowly than he had hitherto done after the youth had thus spoken. His manly and intelligent face, his erect bearing, his firmly-knit and symmetrical frame attracted that man's notice. When we hear anything heroic or great, we usually associate it with a superior physical organization, and can hardly believe a high thought, any more than a gallant action, can proceed from a weak, small person. And Stephen looked made for a hero:—he was like one of the ancient statues, full of grace, life, energy.

"That five-feet ten of clay should compass a great spirit," thought the stranger—"a spirit of indomitable strength, which needs but culture to fire a world."

They were mutually pleased with each other,—for there was a congenial daring, a fine rugged power in both of them, that evinced they were of congenial hearts in some respects; and there are some circumstances under which we seem to know more of a person in minutes than we otherwise could in hours. There are certain humours that seem to demand vent, and the stranger was in a mood to be communicative, and to sympathise with the sentiments of Stephen more than he commonly would. He was one by nature frank and fearless, and who expressed his sentiments without disguise, one who had thought and felt much, and been an actor in great scenes; and though, probably, a man of the world, was by no means devoid of enthusiasm and romance. He had travelled over half the globe, and gave animated descriptions of man and nature, both of whose wonders he had evidently studied deeply.

"You would like to visit some of the vast continents I have trod," he said. "America, for instance, is a splendid and marvellous country—a world within a world! I fought in America, when I was about your age, and I almost think there is something in the air of the Giant that inspires the heart, more than the comparatively dwarfish civilization of Europe can: for civilization is dwarfed before the majesty of thought, and the savage grandeur whence thought derives its power. There is freedom in every gale that blows from the huge forests and the mighty deserts."

"And yet you are an Englishman, and, I suppose, fought for England?"

"Did I?" returned the stranger, a deep light in his eye, and a calm fervour in his thrilling voice, which then had eloquence and passion the artificial cannot give. "There is a patriotism beyond that of country: we should be men before we call ourselves Englishmen, cosmopolites, not Britons, or Americans. These nominal distinctions those who think below the surface laugh to scorn. After I quitted school, I took a fancy to go to sea, and entered myself as a seaman in a sloop bound for America. Once I fought for my country; but I soon learned to hate the injustice of her policy with regard to the Colonists, and I quitted the service of England, and fought the good fight of freedom in the last successful struggle for independence. I hate war, but detest tyranny more."

"I suppose you fought under Washington? He was a great man."

"No; but I wish I had done so. He was one of the noblest spirits that ever lived upon this tide of time." He was a patriot, and better still, a *man*. There are some who abuse human nature; but for my own part, when it is not perverted, I esteem it a noble thing, a glorious thing. I cannot believe God ever made aught amiss, as priests will tell you. The heart of man is as divine a heart as the mind can conceive (and beyond it is the infinite only), though out of it issue such awful crimes."

"Do you think, then, all *might* be good?"

"Assuredly, in their degree. We compare men with others, and it is not their actual virtues we admire, but their superiority to the mass."

While this conversation was going on, a queer-looking little man met the eyes of Stephen. He was getting over a gate close to the ground they were traversing, and muttering to himself, "What a nuisance the country is! There are no such things as gates in town!" The grumbler was one of the least individuals that ever went on two legs without being exhibited as a dwarf. He was considerably less than five feet high, and extremely thin. He was of middle age, and his scanty hair, of the same colour as old gentlemen seem to prefer for wigs, was screwed up at the back into a pig-tail—that extraordinary taste of our fathers, only paralleled by the "bustles" of preposterous size patronized by the ladies of the present day—and contrasted with his black coat. His breeches were green, his waistcoat brown, and his gaiters grey. For his person, he had a sharp turned-up nose of the *genus* Brougham, little green eyes, rather quick and piercing, a somewhat narrow forehead, of more than usual height, a large mouth, and a parchment-hued skin. Altogether, his appearance was ludicrous in the extreme, insomuch that the horseman and the pedestrian at his side could hardly restrain their laughter.

"Ah! good morning, gentlemen," said the little personage, having with difficulty surmounted the obstacle of the gate. He stood at the elbow of Stephen, just reaching up to his shoulder, though the youth had not arrived at his full stature. "If you please," continued the small man, "I will remain in your company for half a mile along this road; for I received information that Lord Wharton was attacked about here by robbers, a day or two ago, and narrowly escaped with his life."

The horseman smiled. "And how do you know, sir, you have fallen into honest hands with us?" he said.

"D'ye think I don't know who is to be trusted, and who isn't?" responded the little individual. "Lord bless you, I can tell what a man is in three seconds. I'm a lawyer's clerk."

"I think I have seen you in London," returned the horseman.

"Very likely. I'm in the office of the great solicitor, Mr. Sharp. Wonderfully clever man, Mr. Sharp. Deep as the ocean, keen as a razor! I've been with Sharp, man and boy, for nearly thirty years—and the sun must cast some of its light on its satellites, you know. He was a clerk once in the same office as myself. When he became a principal, he made me his head man."

"It is not often one meets with such communicative persons, out of a lawyer's office, as yourself," remarked the horseman, not a little amused with the original.

"I always tell what I am—never ashamed of myself. I'm called little Quick—little Peter Quick—every one knows me. I've got nothing to conceal about myself."

"But, if you tell your own secrets like this, can you keep your master's?"

"To be sure I can—that's a very different thing! Besides, Mr. Sharp never lets me into any of his secrets. 'Quick,' says he, 'that's for you to copy out. Do it directly, and forget all about it.' And I do the job."

"And pray, may I ask, are you in this part of the country on business or pleasure?"

"Come to see a relation. Mr. Sharp said to me yesterday, 'Quick, you want country air—you look ill.' 'Not I, sir,' said I: 'never was ill in my life; I'm not big enough to be ill, never shall be, unless I should gorge myself.' But he insisted on my taking a trip—and so, you see, I'm here."

"I suspect, then, you have not come merely on your own pleasure, after all?"

"Don't try to cross-question me. I'm up to snuff. You won't catch little Quick napping, I've a notion. Sharp says of me, I'm both the greatest fool and the subtlest knave in all the world."

"I must say you are a very extraordinary person."

"To be sure I am—always was! The smallest child, the smallest boy, and the smallest man almost, I know, or have known!—Tell you my history in a few words. I was born almost a beggar—sent to a charity school, and afterwards bound apprentice. Got a little money, thought it would be a good plan to learn a little law,—got put up to legal flams, and steadily worked my way up. Well, Sharp and I were always good friends, and he would have taken me into partnership a few years ago. 'No,' said I, 'much obliged to you all the same. You give me £150 a-year, and I've a few hundreds in the Bank—more would only give me trouble—don't spend half my income.' Up to snuff, sir! What's the good of more money than you want? Your friends and relations only wish you to die; enough 's as good as a feast. Here I am, at your service, fresh as a daisy! If you've any business, I'll do it for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha! you are the most original lawyer's clerk! I wonder Mr. Sharp never told me what a treasure he possessed in you."

"Ah, you know him, of course,—every one does. He's as well known as the Monument, both to rogues and honest men. Never was such a wonderful fellow as Mr. Sharp,—I never knew him out. Fellow tried t'other day—every one but Sharp said he'd be hanged; but Sharp said, 'I'll be hanged if he will.' Flaw in the indictment—guessed how it would be.'

The volubility of the little man exceeded all description; his words flowed into each other with a swiftness that prevented the listener from pausing a second: yet, so clear was his articulation, nothing was lost. Stephen would have been in convulsions of laughter, but that his amazement was too great to admit of the risible organs acting; and the

horseman, though he had been in the society of many eccentric people, thought little Quick surpassed them all. And the best of it was, that the tiny man's manner never varied, his face never expressed an emotion, his green eyes seemed always fixed in the same fashion, and his tongue ever wagging with the same astonishing celerity.

"Glad to talk," he proceeded: "very dull in the office—can't talk; but think the more. Pleasant world, if you make the best of it; cursed world, if you don't. An attorney's office seems like purgatory to those not accustomed to it; but, if you *were* in purgatory, you'd get to like it in time. *That's* my philosophy. I never was unhappy in my life. Why should I be unhappy? Stupid nonsense! People fancy something will afford them pleasure, and are disappointed. Never seek pleasure; but catch it fast, if it comes in your way, and when it has run its round, give it a smile at parting, and say, 'I'm much obliged to you, my fickle dame, for your passing favours!' That's the plan—like to put you up to snuff."

And while he rattled on in this astounding way, not taking a minute to get through his longest harangue, little Quick trotted along, seeming as if he could never get out of breath, nor in any degree exhaust the stock of ideas which came rushing from his brain, like a torrent from a mountain-top.

"Do you always talk thus?" asked Stephen of the lawyer's clerk.

"Of course I do—why not? Keeps the lungs in play! Capital plan never to let aught rust for want of use. You may go slap through life, like a ball from a pistol, if you'll follow my advice. Won't charge you for it, though I'm in the law. You are young yet, and mayn't have learned wisdom;—tell you what it is. Always think of what's pleasant, and when you get tired of it, think what a fool you'd be if you let yourself think on what's *un*pleasant. We've all got enough troubles, all got enough to do, without bothering our brains with matters which don't concern us: that's my system!"

"What an odd compound of sense and nonsense," thought Stephen, saying, "Do you find, sir, you can always do as you like with the mind? Because it is an unruly subject often."

"Of course I can! What was the Will given for, but to do as you choose? Almost believe that you needn't die, if you hadn't a mind for't. We don't, I allow, exercise *Will* in coming into life, because, of course, the principle implies activity, and there is no motion but in life. If you can originate motion, that's Will: if you can remain inert, that's Will also. But what constrains you to the two states? Motives? How can *they* exist without the mind? Mind, sir, is nothing at all without action,—life without body, truth without fact; must be two principles to make one. Then what's the good of saying you can't do as you choose? Mind and action are not two, but *one*—that's my maxim. So, if you

can't act without mind, mind is in every thing—in eating, drinking, sleeping, and walking—made that argument for the Will myself, at our Debating Club in the City—talked a Necessitarian down—left him not a leg to stand on. Bad system—necessity—very! It destroys all motive to exertion, knocks up the strength of the soul, and leaves us the slaves of sense."

The horseman and the youth were surprised at the shrewdness and intelligence of little Quick, who got out more ideas in five minutes than others do in an hour, and expressed himself so clearly in his odd way that it was impossible to misconceive him. The thoughts came tumbling over one another like boys sliding on the ice—if the comparison may be allowed, but he gabbled away, running from one subject to another, as if the destiny of the universe depended on his tongue; and yet he would listen to argument, though he cut it short when he could do so.

"I suspect," said the horseman, who might be something of a Necessitarian in the philosophical sense, "you cannot prove the existence of Volition, even if you had ten times the wonderful powers of speech you have. Did any one ever form his own mind!"

"To be sure! He can't help it—he must form his own mind! What makes circumstances? Mind. Did you ever hear of abstract circumstances? All stuff! The mind builds itself up, as soon as it has got strength to use its legs, just as a child walks. There it goes, quick as a racer now—can't stop—motion its being. Must have self-motion, or else be matter: can't be matter and mind at once—motion and no motion. A friend of mine—follower of Priestley, as I suppose you are—said to me, 'Quick! Can you will to walk and not to walk, at once?' 'Yes,' said I, 'to be sure. I can't *do* it: but I can *will* it!' Couldn't answer me—can *you*?"

"You say we cannot *help* forming our own minds. Then you can't help willing?"

"Yes, I can: but can't destroy myself. No power can do what implies self-annihilation. Annihilate Will, and what becomes of motion? So I must become matter without will—a mass of lifeless clay in life. Look here, here's the earth, here am I. Can't get away from the earth, because of the law of gravitation; can't make a law, because matter can't be created. No one can do a contradiction, surely, not even Omnipotence. No such thing as absolute power; it would destroy all law and being. I've got all power in the Will; I can conceive what I choose—any absurdity I like; but body's subject to law—mind only to itself. If there were no law, there could be no existence; so I conform to law, *not* to necessity—an important distinction. . . . . Now I must wish you a good morning—that's my path. Shall be happy to have my argument out with you another time; but am in haste now."

"I see you are going the same road as myself," said the horseman, as

little Quick stopped at a narrow path which diverged from the high road. Stephen's way was in a parallel direction, and the horseman shook him by the hand, saying,

"I dare say we shall soon meet again. My name is Taylor," and so they parted. . . . When Stephen was out of sight, Quick cried,

"You must be Mr. Williamson!—often heard of you from Mr. Sharp: but mum's the word. I suppose you've got something to do for Sharp?"

"At present I am going to the house of one John Richards——"

"Ah, indeed! so am I. Old Richards is a relation of mine. I've not seen him for many years; but have heard he's not well off in the world, and going blind—so I must lend him a helping hand. In my opinion, a man's worth nothing who won't take a little trouble for his relations. Know little Rose?—I never saw her since she was a baby." The horseman coloured, and answered in the affirmative. "I'm uncle to Rose, for her mother was my sister. Got a good many relations, but don't know where to find them. There was one Mrs. Thompson, a poor widow, that lived in these parts, who was my first cousin. D'ye happen to know aught of her?"

"No, I do not: but I think I once knew a son of hers—"

"Poor fellow! you mean the lad that was hanged? Wish Mr. Sharp had been his lawyer, he'd have got off. I've lost sight of Mrs. Thompson for years. My mother was her aunt (my mother was a gipsy, but she married respectably, and her sister went into keeping with some rich man, by whom she had children), and my father was her relation, also, by blood. You've heard of Lady Rivers—Adeline Smith, the actress? My sister's child! She's up to snuff. Made her way in the world famously. You have heard of Sir Algernon Sharp? He's related to Lady Rivers: so you see I am connected with the Sharps. Lady Rivers is as heartless as a nutshell. Heard she was applied to by poor old Richards, who befriended her when she was a child, and who wanted her to do something for Rose; but she wouldn't:—so I'm here to see if I can be of use."

"By Jove! you are a noble fellow, sir," said the horseman, with animation. "You will find Rose as beautiful as spring, budding into womanhood with every grace that nature can bestow—she is as sweet a—"

"Ah ha!" interrupted Quick, "you've put me up to snuff—that's my favourite expression, but there's salt in it, eh? In love with Rose—um! But she's too young for you. You must be well nigh forty, and she's but fourteen or so. Seldom see happiness where there's such disparity of age between man and wife."

"And what is age, Mr. Quick? Is it not in the mind, rather than the body? The mind is immortal, and the heart lives in the mind. I am no longer young; but I have a heart, an imagination: and the study of

my life will be Rose's happiness. Those poor slaves of convention who measure all things by the standard which applies but to themselves, the high of soul and the great of passion heed not."

"Mr. Williamson," replied Quick, shaking his head, "I've known such terrible infelicity from a cause like this—that of a man loving one much younger than himself—that I would warn you, if possible, to forget the girl, lest evil ensue. You know, perhaps, that Mr. Sharp——" Quick stopped short, and looked into his companion's face.

"Yes, he has made me acquainted with all that unfortunate affair," was the rejoinder. "But I apprehend it was not the mere disparity of age between Mr. Sharp and his cousin that produced all the misery that followed. There could have been no such congenial tastes——"

"Beg pardon for interrupting you; but what you are now, *he* was, twenty years ago. You can't put a young head on an old pair of shoulders any more than the contrary. I'm convinced there can be no similarity of tastes between the middle-aged and the young, and that is the link of sympathy and affection. Besides, Mr. Williamson, may I ask what you are doing now? I fear your avocations are dishonest—pardon me for speaking my mind, but it's my way to do so."

"I think," replied Williamson, haughtily, "*my* avocations are at least as honest as those of your employer. The world is composed for the most part of knaves and fools. I never would wrong one that I considered wronged not others; but when I look around me, I see all are preying on one another. The lawyer lives on rascality, the priest gulls the weak, and makes a pure religion subservient to his dogmas and worldly interests; the physician lives by letting disease linger, as a watchmaker does not put a watch thoroughly in order, that he may soon have another job. All trades and professions are alike. The soldier sells himself for gold to butcher his fellow-creatures, and *must* fight, whether the cause be good or bad. Then what do *I* worse than these men? Let us have a better state of society, and I will reform, for then I can earn my bread honestly. Laws are made by men, and not by God; and if I break them, so do those who frame them, covertly. Pardon me in my turn, Mr. Quick, if I have spoken too freely."

"Like you all the better for it. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I will put you in the way of making a subsistence as you ought, without drudging and slaving as *I* do. I know of something in the commercial way, which requires an active man to travel, and I think it will suit you. For although I acknowledge there is a great deal of humbug and rascality in the world, depend upon it, sir, morality is Heaven's essence. Oh, Mr. Williamson, that is a wretched sophistry of only doing like others, in excuse of vice! But here we are at Richards's abode. We'll talk more of this matter."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE COXCOMB AND THE GIPSY—THE INN—A FIGHT—ATTEMPTED MURDER—STEPHEN AND NELL.

Travers Wharton and Fanny had left the cottage where Love had betrayed itself to heartlessness, and were rolling on towards London in a post-chaise. They were silent, and unobservant of the outward world, with all its radiance and beauty. I will not attempt to lay open their souls, for they were both in that listless state when the thoughts which pour upon the brain assume no definite shape, but are tinctured with the mood of the moment, whether it be bright or dark. And neither imagined themselves happy. The Gipsy sometimes contemplated the handsome, but now vacant face of her lover with a tearful eye; but, for the most part, her glance was fixed downwards, and silent drops trickled down her face. The Coxcomb occasionally yawned, and dozed for a few minutes, but addressed no syllable to Fanny. In about an hour he roused himself from his lethargy, and bethought himself that he had not prepared a place in London for the reception of the girl.

"I don't like to consign her to the care of mother Taylor," he inwardly ejaculated, "and besides, I want her to flash on the town as a novelty, and she would be seen at Taylor's."

The vehicle was now proceeding through a rocky and thickly wooded district, and it was with some difficulty the almost jaded horses dragged them along, stumbling frequently, to the great peril of Fanny's and the Coxcomb's necks. Travers proposed to the Gipsy to get out and walk, a wish she readily complied with, and her lover asked of the post-boy how far it was to the place where they were to change horses. He was assured the town was within two or three miles, and as he found the road so execrable for a chaise, and was told it continued the same for a league, he bade the post-boy to make what speed he might, and that he and his companion would walk the distance.

"It's a d—d bore there should be such roads as these!" remarked the Captain to Fanny, who made no answer. In those days, indeed, travelling was slow and wretched in comparison with that of the present time. Not only were railroads unknown, but eight miles an hour was the *maximum* of the speed four horses could usually make, huge ruts in the highways being as plentiful as blackberries. Scarcely was the post-chaise out of sight, when a cloud came over the sky, and a heavy shower menaced the pedestrians, who were not prepared with cloaks to brave the weather. To Fanny, the most drenching rain would have mattered

little, but her lover did not care to be wet to the skin, and looked about him for some place of shelter, in case of the worst. No dwelling was visible, far or near, and he repented that he had so precipitately dismissed the chaise, and hoped the post-boy would return for them. But he was disappointed.

"These trees," he said to Fanny, "are too much stript of their foliage to afford us real shelter. What had we better do?"

"I don't know this part of the country," was the reply; "but I think there must be some dwelling near at hand. Do you care about the rain?"

"What nonsense you talk, my love! We are not brutes, to be regardless of it. There is a dense fog rising now, and it is growing cold, damp, miserable. What stupidity in me to think of walking!"

The rain was now falling fast, and it had become on a sudden so dark that it was hardly possible to see the way so as to avoid the ruts. They were in fact pursuing a path at no great distance from that where Lord Wharton was overtaken by the storm. One of the densest fogs to which our variable climate is liable had arisen, and altogether, the predicament of the officer was most disagreeable.

"I can't see the way," he grumbled; "we must wait here till the fog clears off."

"Trust to me," answered the Gipsy, taking his hand, and with a stick she had broken off a tree, groping the way through the gloom, and warning Travers where there was any inequality in the road. With unerring accuracy she picked her way, while the fog grew suffocating, and almost blinding.

"This is horrible," cried the Coxcomb, with an oath. "Surely, Fanny, there must be some cottage or inn."

"Yes, we are nearly there. Don't you hear laughing and singing?"

As she spoke, a din became audible to the ear of the fop, which was obtuser than the Gipsy's, and he heard some words of a song in which he recognised a favourite poaching ballad of the day. Presently they arrived before an ale-house, and entering, the Captain asked to be shown into a private room, if such there were; and was ushered into a dingy apartment of very small dimensions, in which there was a tallow candle burning, an apology for a fire, and as for furniture, a table and a bench. He was glad, however, to get even *such* accommodation, and ordered some brandy and water, while he attempted to dry himself, his dress being saturated.

"My Fanny," he said, "I fear you will take cold. This has been a cursed nuisance."

"I never take cold," replied the Gipsy.

"The deuce you don't! I take all the care of myself in the world, and am sneezing half the winter."

"You have not been used to what I have," answered Fanny. "I have slept in the open air, or under a tent, from my infancy."

While the fop and the girl were thus conversing, the mirth and merriment below waxed more and more boisterous. It was not above three o'clock in the day, an hour when places like the ale-house in the country are usually pretty quiet; but the frequenters of this place were not of the common character of villagers remote from London. There were about a dozen individuals in the tap-room, smoking and drinking. Here might be seen a brawny fellow with swarthy face and matted hair, his gun in one hand, and his flagon in the other. At his side might be distinguished a rollicking blade, bouncing and swaggering, now laughing at some indecent joke of his own, now bursting into snatches of "flash" song. Most of those present were notorious poachers; but there were a few others whose profession was probably yet more desperate. There were two or three ragged females present, with luring eyes and coarse faces, whose occupation was unmistakeable. But away from these last sat a woman of masculine appearance, her face half buried in her hands, apparently waiting for some person, who was later than she expected; for she would mutter impatiently, and look at the entrance to the tap-room opposite to her. At length the low door opened, and a dark form advanced.

"Any news of John?" she whispered to this person, a burly fellow, of seemingly vast strength.

"None," was the reply; "but he knows how to take care of himself."

"I have got something to say to you," returned the woman, drawing him aside, and whispering a few words in a low tone.

"Give us a song, Black Bill!" here exclaimed one of the topers to the first person particularised in the tap-room.

"Sartainly, I'm well primed," was the reply. "So here goes for a new song, in which you must all of you join chorus."

The fellow then roared in a stentorian voice the following words to the well-known tune of 'It's my delight on a shiny night'—

THE POACHER'S SONG.

Come, fill your glasses now, boys,
  Good Poachers bold are we!
Not one of us follows the plough, boys,
  Nor tills the ground, I see.
We know to fire a gun well,
  And how to catch a deer,—
And it's our delight on a shiny night,
  In the season of the year!

There's never a one I know, boys,
  But loves the venison fine,
And who but would not go, boys,
  To the devil himself to dine?
We feed on the fat of the land, like
  The princes we do not fear—
For it's our delight on a shiny night,
  In the season of the year.

This choice lyric,—probably an effusion of the singer's own muse,—appeared to give infinite satisfaction to those present, and a variety of slang compliments and vociferous cheers were passed on the hero of the minute. It was observed, however, that the person who had last entered was still conversing with the woman, and did not heed what was going on. This seemed to excite the indignation of several semi-fuddled personages who had been enraptured with the specimen of "Black Bill's" genius, and asked—

"Who's that there chap as has just entered?"

The individual alluded to frowned darkly, and advanced to the table round which the topers were sitting.

"What d'ye want with me?" he said in a deep, hoarse voice.

"Who are you?" inquired a blustering fellow at the elbow of the gentleman who had been vocalizing, and who was plainly a great bully.

"What is that to you, puppy?" was the response.

"I'll smash your bones, you ——, if you call *me* puppy?" cried the insulted person.

"Don't be a fool, Jim!" exclaimed the vocalist, "that's the father of Jenkins. You blockhead! he'll kill you in a single round."

"Will he?" said the pugnacious Jim, fiercely, and squaring at the formidable man who confronted him.

"I'll fight any two of you, at once," said the smith—for it was no other than Jenkins—looking with utter disdain at his blustering assailant.

"Well, if you say that," returned 'Black Bill.' "I've been in the ring, and I'll stand up with Jim for the honour of the purfession!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the topers, much delighted at the prospect of such a 'set-to:' "to it, lads!"

Have you ever seen a fight, reader? It is the national amusement—a recreation both to the parties concerned, and the lookers on. Perhaps no Englishman ever passed through life without once doubling his fists, and to the vulgar and uneducated there is rapturous excitement in such a scene. The barbarism that exists in civilization is not less than among savages: strength and ferocious courage are the sublime of the physical; they are to such natures what fortitude and moral heroism are to the

intellectual. And there *is* something wonderful in that display of bones and muscles, those terrible eyes and flashing brow, every sinew looking like steel, every faculty of the body strained to the uttermost! A lion may be awful when enraged and his eyes flash lightning, his mane shaking, his tail lashing, his voice of loud thunder roaring: but for the face, what can compare with that of man?—And then the form! We do not see the muscles in brutes as in men, when they are stripped, as Jenkins and his antagonists speedily were, showing their hairy chests, their powerful throats, their iron arms and huge bodies. My Jove! What blows they gave, and received, how the blood flowed from those terrific strokes of the fist, what sounds were returned from the chest and face! Jenkins, though he was opposed to two strong men at once, was equal to them both, and struck like one of his own ponderous hammers on the anvil, sending the breath out of his antagonists whenever he hit them. His prodigious bones appeared almost as if they could not be hurt by anything less adamantine, and he defended himself against the odds opposed to him without giving way an inch. We associate something loftier in the contests of the Roman gladiators; but such scenes must have been very similar, the same "*magna ossa, lacertosque*" must have astonished the spectators, and the same brute ferocity inspired the combatants.

At last Jenkins struck the fellow who had so rashly sought the encounter, so desperately, that he beat down the guard which he raised, and felled him, insensible, to the earth. The other man, though he had not been the first to seek the contest, would have maintained it, evident as it was that he was no match for that modern Samson: but the bystanders interfered, and the son of Vulcan donned his coat and waistcoat, and returned to the side of his wife, who had been looking on perfectly indifferent, as if certain of the result of the fight.

"Have a pot of beer?" said the man, who had *not* been so signally worsted as the other, to Jenkins, seeming to entertain a great respect for him, after having felt the weight of his arm. "That chap Jim,—who don't seem likely to come to,—is the biggest ass in the world; I knowed how it would be:—you're a regular smasher——!"

Jenkins smiled grimly and accepted the propitiation of his late opponent in the spirit with which it was proffered.

"Ever been in the ring?" asked the *ci-devant* prize-fighter of the smith.

"No; I'm not such a fool as that—to be knocked about for other people's nonsense!"

"Finest purfession in the world!" returned the other, stoutly. "What was man given this here strength for? It's more than enough for use:—such arms as yours weren't made for the anvil only."

This was intended for a high compliment, and Jenkins, who like all

men without superior mind or education, prided himself more on his body than his understanding, growled something in return about the former prize-fighter's "pluck."

An hour, and upwards, was consumed in carousing; and as the liquor mounted to the fellows' heads, they recounted their exploits, some acknowledging to many robberies, others boasting of clever thefts, and even of murder, in what they called "a fair way." Such was the highly delectable society of the ale-house. They planned poaching expeditions, they proposed new burglaries, they plotted arson, in the same fashion as generals lay out plans of battle.

What human hature will sink to! These ruffians thought it very fine to commit the dark deeds of violence that were yet in embryo, and the demon of drink excited them to the instant commission of such crimes.

Meantime, Travers Wharton and Fanny had been talking, though sometimes they could hardly hear each other speak for the noise which proceeded from the tap-room. They could not quit the place, for the fog had but little diminished; but they overheard expressions which convinced them that the characters of their neighbours were not very respectable.

"A set of thievish poachers!" muttered the Guardsman. "If I had my will, I'd hang every poacher in England—they spoil one's shooting so!"

The Captain had no suspicion, however, that there were many among the topers who would not in the least have scrupled to cut his throat, or knock his brains out. Something at length caught the quick ear of Fanny, who understood the slang that those ruffians used (but which I cannot repeat with the consummate accuracy of the author of "Jack Sheppard,") which caused her to start and change colour. She opened the door of the room, and stole to listen to what the rascals below were saying. Travers Wharton saw that something was amiss, and cocking a pistol, was about to follow Fanny, when she rushed back, crying—

"Fly! fly! They are coming to murder you!".... As she spoke there was a sound of footsteps. "Quick! the window!" exclaimed the Gipsy.

"It would be too late," returned Travers Wharton, retreating and closing the door, Fanny clinging to him with horror in her looks.

"I knew there was some awful danger at hand!" she murmured. "O, God of Heaven! What is to be done!"

Scarcely had she spoken, when a heavy form dashing against the frail door, it fell, and a man and a woman, followed by half a dozen half-drunken fellows of ruffianly aspect, met the view of the officer.

"Keep back, or I fire!" ejaculated Travers Wharton, turning very pale, but not moving a step. But ere he was prepared, he was seized, and knocked down. The pistol went off, and the ball grazed the cheek of his first assailant. With an effort of despair he threw off a foe who

clung to him, and sprang to his feet. One, two, three fierce forms pressed on him. He seized a poker; but what availed resistance against those numbers?

"Spare him!" shrieked the Gipsy, throwing herself before her lover, and raising her hands imploringly.

"Get out of the way, or I'll kill you!" exclaimed Jenkins, the smith, with a horrid curse.

"You shall take my life!" said Fanny: "but spare him, O spare him! O, God! Help! help! Is there no help?"

A bludgeon was descending on the head of the officer. He raised the poker to ward off the blow; but another weapon was aimed at him.

"Hold!" here shouted a voice; and a boyish figure, followed by one more manly, rushed into the room. The first of the new comers, a lad of about fifteen, ranged himself by the side of the Coxcomb, and the second, a youth some two years older, placed himself between the contending parties.

"Stephen!" said the smith, fiercely, to the last mentioned person, "if you interfere, your blood be on your own head!"

"I fear you not," returned the young man, drawing himself up to the full height of his stature, and confronting the ruffians, his calm and commanding countenance for a moment awing those desperate hearts. Unarmed he stood, and lifting one hand, he spoke—"Men! Are ye men? I see those here who have borne them nobly when fearful odds have been opposed to them! Is it like yourselves to thus attack a solitary individual?—Englishmen! Will ye act like foreign assassins——"

"Hold your cursed jaw!" here interrupted the smith, lifting his clubbed gun against the young orator.

"You dare not strike me," cried Stephen, firmly; and it was a glorious sight to behold his dauntless visage among those savage faces. How very, very different is the expression of heroism, and ferocity!—"You dare not strike me, uncle," he proceeded. "It were a coward's act to attack one defenceless, and you are not a coward. Men, countrymen! shall it be said that merry England has changed, and that her noble spirits have become like dastardly Italian bravoes, who stab in the dark, and fear to show their faces to a brave enemy? No, oh, no! Strike, if you will—to *my* heart: but if you have a spark of manhood in your breasts, refrain from what must stamp your names with everlasting infamy. I speak not of the laws—I speak not of humanity—but I appeal to you as having courage to dare——"

"Down with him!" again interrupted Jenkins, "a d——d young traitor!" For he saw his nephew's eloquence was not without its effect, and that he understood the fierce and desperate nature of those fiercest of ruffians, but not bloodiest of robbers.

There was another brief struggle—but ere it terminated a shout was

heard:—then there came hasty steps, and several men with guns and pikes attacked the assailants of the Captain. Some of them fled: but a few stood their ground, and when they were forced to retreat at the point of the pike, they did so with their faces to the foe. The fog enabled them to escape, and the victors did not attempt to pursue them in that thick darkness.

"It was a lucky chance that brought me to your aid," said the lad who had first arrayed himself on the side of the Coxcomb. "I had been out all the day shooting, and was overtaken by the fog, and lost my way. This young man offered to guide me to a cottage, and we were attracted hither by the report of a pistol."

"Ah! this is the very person who was instrumental in saving my brother's life!" said the Coxcomb, turning his eyes to Stephen. "What a strange coincidence!"

"Yes, sir," said the voice of Thompson, "and here am I again! We have been in pursuit of the rascal who escaped us yesterday nearly ever since, and fancied we might recover the scent we had lost by repairing hither. The most of these rogues are rank cowards, or they would not have turned tail thus: but it's vain to follow them."

"Oh," said Fanny, throwing herself into the arms of Travers Wharton, "what a dreadful scene this has been! You are not hurt—thank heaven!"

"We must catch the scoundrels, and have them all transported," said Captain Wharton. "We seem to be left alone by them now." The villains had one and all vanished, though the numbers opposed to them in all were inferior to their strength. "I'm much obliged to you, Sharp," said the Guardsman to the lawyer's son, after a brief pause, "for the help you have rendered me. I must remain a debtor to our friends here, for the present, my purse being empty."

In the course of half an hour the fog began to clear away, and Travers Wharton and Fanny, with half-a-dozen men for their body-guard, set forth for the post-town. Thompson lived at the same house as young Sharp was staying at, being gamekeeper on the estate, and as Stephen's homeward way was in the same direction, they proceeded in each other's company. But no attack was made on them; and they parted at the lodge-gate of a substantial mansion, about an hour's walk from Travers House.

It was night when Stephen reached the cottage where he had left Nell, and where she had been anxiously waiting his return. She had just heard of the alarming illness of Lord Wharton; and when she communicated it to her cousin, he said, "I know not how it is, Nell—for this man has been one of the oppressors of the people, sternly hostile to all liberty, and just representation,—but I feel a most unaccountable interest in him. How different he is from his brother—that contemptible

coxcomb! . . . . Surely, he might have been a noble being, if he had not been born to power!"

He then briefly narrated to Nell the adventures which had befallen him, dwelling as little as possible on the guilt of her parents in the recent attempt at murder. But Nell was agonized at finding her father and mother were pursuing their career of crime; and Stephen had but little to say to comfort her. He could only embrace her fondly, and vow eternal constancy. Tacitly they had become lovers; but they needed no formal avowal of affection.

Before this chapter closes, it is requisite simply to state that Jenkins had proposed to the desperate characters at the alehouse to rob Captain Wharton, whom his wife had recognised when he entered with Fanny. They caught at the proposition, expecting great booty, and the Gipsy overheard what they were saying only a minute ere they repaired in a body to the apartment where she had left her lover. After this second daring attempt of Jenkins at murder, every engine was set at work to take him. Bow-street officers were sent from London, and parties scoured the country in search of him, but in vain. It was supposed he had fled to a sea-port town after the affair at the alehouse, and had probably sought a foreign shore; but this was merely conjecture. Several persons were arrested on suspicion of having been concerned in the deed, but from want of sufficient evidence were discharged, or sent to prison for a few weeks as vagabonds.—So ended the matter.

The foregoing chapters must be considered as forming one great natural division of our history. As you read on,—look back and trace the course of motives into actions;—for although the entire time occupied by the narrative is only a few days, yet there are epochs of existence when hours comprise more spiritual life than months of ordinary being. How few there are, who will either in their own mental history, or in that of another, study the philosophy of events! But of all uses to which the Science of Thought can be applied, this branch of Ethics is the most useful,—and most neglected. Life teems with truth, Death with lessons, the Universe with wisdom, if we but choose to open the soul's eyes. But I have said this work is not a philosophical one; it is the poetry of action, rather than the anatomy of the heart, which must chiefly occupy the Novelist—not for want of materials, but for want of a Public. And there is wisdom to be drawn from works of imagination, deductions which force themselves on the mind, corollaries which cannot be controverted. Alas! much do we need to look into the mirror which holds up ourselves unto us; and it is a great thing if Fiction can accomplish this. Let not science boast it has anything more proud and sublime. There is many a Lord Wharton among the hereditary Rulers of the People, many a Travers Wharton among the butterflies of the Court, many a Jenkins among the lower orders: and their examples we

must learn to shun, to despise, and to avoid. We see them unhappy; we feel that such men cannot know the supreme felicities of existence; their crimes, their vices and their follies pass before us, and are more fully developed than they can be to us in the actual world. Verily, the Drama and the Romance have a mighty influence on human destiny—mighty for Evil—mightier for Good!

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PRINCE'S VISIT—THE CONVERSATION—CHARACTERISTICS—LORD WHARTON AND SHARP—SHARP'S COGITATIONS—THE MARQUESS.

"Is Lord Wharton at home?" inquired a remarkably fine-looking man of a servant, at the house of the Peer.

"Yes, your royal highness!" returned the domestic, with a profound bow; and the Prince was ushered into the drawing-room, where several persons were collected, who all rose and stood, as the royal visitor entered.

"Ah! Wharton, I'm glad to see you up again. But you look pale;—pray be seated. Travers, I am glad to see you!—Mr. Sharp, I think?—And you, fair lady, I hope you are well?"

The sentences which were addressed by the new comer to those in the apartment, were delivered with a suavity and a condescension such as none but that individual could call to his command. Who could he be but the Prince of Wales, the most accomplished gentleman of Europe, whose bow, whose smile, whose looks, were the very ideal of courtly perfection. He was then in the prime of manhood, being about the same age as Lord Wharton, and portlier than he was, and as they stood side by side, they presented two as fine specimens of the human race as can well be conceived. But there was a power, a grandeur, a passion, and a command, in the haughty brow of the Minister, which made the face of the future Monarch appear insignificant in comparison.

"I am much indebted to your royal highness for this condescending notice," said Lord Wharton, seating himself again on a sofa, while the Prince took a chair by his side. The Peer spoke languidly, but still proudly, and there was something so majestic in his voice, faint as it was, something so regal in the pale intellectual countenance, that the Prince felt his disadvantage.

Captain Wharton, Mr. Sharp, and the unfortunate lady who had been so assiduous in tending the statesman during his dangerous illness, were bowed into their seats by the Prince, and the former drew his chair to his side with easy familiarity, while the lawyer and the mistress remained aloof. Those four men were about as opposite in character to

each other as ever existed. They were all men of the world, and had all their vices, their crimes, or their bad passions. Lord Wharton should have lived in the middle ages, when he would have been one of those warrior statesmen—perhaps, an Earl of Warwick,—who awed kings themselves, and whose high intellect and valour were so necessary to those sovereigns in the field and cabinet, that they were obliged to suffer the arrogant vassals to rival themselves in splendour. Captain Wharton was eminently of the age and court of Louis Quatorze, with all its heartlessness, its vanity and conceit. The Prince of Wales resembled his favourite companion in no respect but his taste for brilliancy: he was a man of pleasure, and his coxcombry was of a very opposite nature to that of the Guardsman. He was less contemptible in some respects than Travers Wharton, had more understanding, when he chose to exert it, was better informed, and had stronger passions to palliate his excesses. His pursuits were those of Charles the Second, but there was a refinement in his sensuality which the Stuart did not affect. *They* were similar to each other in some particulars; but the one was less of a prince than a man, the other was a prince, a gentleman (in one sense of the word), and a puppy, not of nature, but of art. A prince, a gentleman, and a puppy can only make a George the Fourth.

Sharp never was, and never could be, a voluptuary like George the Fourth, or an ambitious sensualist like Lord Wharton. He was of cast-iron mould, stern of purpose, keen of mind, astute of sense; eminently a man of his age, practical, vigorous, and profound in his knowledge of the vulgar and vile in humanity. And there they were,—the greatest statesman, the greatest coxcomb of princes, and the greatest prince of coxcombs, with the rich, sagacious attorney, and the weak, passionate, adoring woman—a heterogeneous party. When Virtue looked upon them she must have sighed, and when Vice gazed into their hearts, she must have smiled, but above all, Passion must have delighted in her votaries.

"I hope, my lord," said the Prince of Wales, after the pause of a minute, "that you have not allowed any disagreeable reminiscences to prey on your mind? Such things *will* happen, and every one exonerates you from the most remote shadow of blame in what has taken place."

It must be mentioned that the affair of the suicide in the brothel had been the matter of a public trial but a day or two before, and the infamous woman who had entrapped the poor victim was sentenced to fine and imprisonment. But the Prince spoke in a low voice to Lord Wharton, in order that the lady might not hear.

The white cheek of the statesman flushed for an instant, and his lip writhed, as with some spasm of pain; but he mastered the emotion, and replied—

"Your royal highness is too good, to interest yourself in me thus. My private concerns have become matter of notoriety; and as such is the case——"

"Forgive me, my Lord Wharton;—I have offended you. Let us change the subject. Travers, what have you been doing with yourself lately? I have not seen you at the palace for a week."

"My dear Prince," returned the fop, "I have been so busy!"

"O, of course!" returned the heir to the throne, smiling.

"No one will ever believe I am occupied," said the Captain; "but I assure you,—what with that cursed parade, and giving orders to tailors, and dressing, and playing the fool at St. James's, I haven't a moment to spare. There is that Masquerade the St. Clairs are going to give next month—that Masquerade and Fancy Dress Ball, which I have been rashly induced to patronize—costs me an immensity of trouble. Your royal highness will be there?"

"Assuredly I shall. I am going as Apollo, I believe!"

"That's deucedly low—excuse me for saying so. Might I suggest to you the character of Sardanapalus? It will exactly suit you."

"I am much obliged to you, Travers; but in my opinion the god is preferable."

"You don't like the monarch? He was a devilish fine fellow in his way; only he bored himself with pleasure!"

"Travers," remarked Lord Wharton, with a sneer, "has a notion, that it is beneath rational beings to look out for what is pleasant; idleness is his Elysium. Your royal highness and I are more active worshippers at the shrine of Psyche."

"Yes, our good Travers adores Vacuna," returned the Prince.

"Don't you think that old Heathen mythology is atrocious stuff?" asked the Captain, who probably did not remember enough of what had been birched into him at Eton, to comprehend the classical allusions. "It's getting most horridly pedantic to talk of those fabulous beings, and I don't wish to have any of them at the St. Clairs—who wish me to superintend the entire arrangements."

"My dear fellow," rejoined the Prince of Wales, laughing, "these mythological personages typify some of the finest poetry of the mind and passions. I shall never be ridiculed out of my love for the ancient literature even by Travers Wharton!"

"Nay, I never ridicule *you*, my Prince. You are above satire."

"Many thanks for the compliment, at all events. I will wear whatever dress you assign me at the Masquerade. Mr. Sharp, pray draw your chair nearer. I read your speech the other night, and was much pleased with its moderation and logical reasoning. If I ever become a Whig, it will be such a Whig as Mr. Sharp is."

"Your royal highness," returned the lawyer, without the least embarrassment, "does me infinite honour. Moderation but seldom finds friends, because it does not address the passions of men, and appeals not to prejudice but to principles."

"Very good!" cried the Prince. "I shall be happy to see you at the next levee, Mr. Sharp—and (I suppose I must stretch a point," thought the heir to the throne, "since he is so clever, and our party wants him,) I shall be equally gratified if you will dine with me next week, when I hope Lord Wharton will be sufficiently recovered to favour me with his presence." He then turned to the lady—for he was remarkable for his universal politeness, and made many warm friends by it. "You have lost the roses of your cheek, fair one!" he said. "England should vie in homage to her whom I hear has been so unremitting in her attention to its great minister."

"Poor Anna!" murmured Lord Wharton, while she blushed, and stammered something not very intelligible. But the Prince could put any person at his ease; and willing to talk to a beautiful woman, continued—

"My Lord Wharton has robbed us of one of the highest ornaments of a profession I admire, and were sickness to take away that flower of sweetness and of grace, Beauty would mourn for ever!"

"Yes, she must take care of herself, indeed," said the statesman; "I owe my life to her care and tenderness."

"Ah! when we are ill," observed the Prince, "what should we do without women to nurse us? In joy and woe alike they are our greatest bliss, solace, and support."

"Your royal highness is poetical this morning," cried Travers Wharton; "you would have been an Ovid, if you had not been a king's son."

"And what would you have been yourself, if you had been born poor and ignorant, Travers?"

"Poor and ignorant! Why, I *am* so. Poverty and ignorance are great blessings to those like your highness and myself."

"Ah! you think they bring forth the qualities of the mind; but I doubt it."

"Suppose I had been the son of his grace of Devonshire, I should never have risen, have soared, have aspired; with the prospect of a dukedom, and two hundred thousand a year! But as I had nothing but my own genius and my handsome face, behold me!"

"Incomparable Travers Wharton! What an air was that delivered with!"

"And as for yourself, my Prince, if you had not a father alive what would *you* be? a king! But you are greater than a king; for he is honoured, and you are adored."

"You overwhelm me with compliments to-day! What post do you want me to solicit for you?"

"Your highness is too good. Sir Charles —— is dead."

"I thought how it would be, my dear fellow;—we shall see about it. Sir Charles has left a handsome widow behind him."

"Lady ——! Yes; she is fat, fair, and thirty; and I don't like her face. She is too *material* for me—the most material woman I know. So I leave her to your kindness, who have a taste that way."

"Nay, I am not so exclusive in my taste, but that I can like the spiritual. If I ever said to the contrary, my lovely neighbour here would reform my predilection. And now, as I have an engagement with the Colonel—your Colonel, Travers,—who won a hundred pounds from me last night,—I must wish you all good morning, unless my dear Horse Guard will protect me to the next street."

"Yes; I should like to bet a few pounds on your play. The Colonel is a horrid bungler in comparison with you. . . . . By the by, Thomas, I have forgotten my purse, will you lend me yours?"

"Excuse me, I have no purse to *give*," returned Lord Wharton, emphasizing the last word, while he shook hands with his royal visitor.

"Poor Travers!" laughed the Prince, "my purse must serve us both. Good morning, Wharton, be punctual at six, when you come to dine. Mr. Sharp, your hand! I delight in talent of every species, and do not the less admire it because it may be directed against the views I entertain myself. You will not forget your engagement! And you—" turning to the lady, "fairest lily, when I see you again, let me once more behold the rose blending with those matchless graces; I kiss your hand." And leaning on the arm of the officer, the Prince took his departure.

"How could you be so civil to that horrid attorney?" asked Travers Wharton of his royal companion, when they reached the street.

"He's a monstrously clever dog, my worthy Travers, and is the right hand of the Moderationists as a man of business. In the event of a Coalition—which is not, I think, improbable—he would be very likely to get into the Cabinet."

"How can you concern yourself about those vulgar affairs? Well, I'm glad Fate has not destined me for a throne; I only wish I were you, and you what I am."

"Ha, ha! If you were not Alexander you would be Diogenes,—*that* is the truth, confess!"

"No; I would exchange with you, dear Prince, and only with you, of all that exist." . . . . .

"His royal highness was exceedingly gracious to you this morning, Sharp," remarked Lord Wharton to the lawyer, when they were left together.

"They talk of a Coalition," responded Sharp, "but I hardly think it is practicable; and of course *I* should not be in it! Should *you?*"

"I cannot say, indeed. Anna, will you give me some jelly? Perhaps, Mr. Sharp will take a little."

"No, I thank your lordship. I am rejoiced to find you so much bet-

ter, and trust that a few days will entirely restore you." And immediately afterwards Sharp rose and left the room.

"He suspects me," thought the lawyer; "he has an eye like the very devil. Yes, he will be soon well again now; and then 'I'll plague him, I'll torture him.' I feel towards that man very much as the Jew did to the Merchant; but my vengeance shall be more deadly. The battle will soon be fought; and fortunate for me has this illness of his been,—for I have prepared all, and he will find it impossible to undo what has been done. I have him now,—his star shall grow dim before mine."

The lawyer walked onwards with downcast eyes, without noticing the many bows and salutations of those whom he passed. He had grown greatly in the estimation of the public during the last few weeks, and some of the highest of the aristocracy had invited him to their houses. "Yet," he continued to himself, "I almost fear that man. How he looked at me just now—as if with scorn and triumph! I must be cautious! Ha, Marquess! Good morning, I did not see you."

An elderly man of distinguished appearance had touched the arm of the lawyer, and taking it, said, "I wanted to see you very particularly, Mr. Sharp. Will you accompany me home. I expect several of the leading members, and we need your good counsel and assistance. How is Lord Wharton?"

"He is rather weak at present; but he will soon be about again, I think. I shall be happy to attend your lordship."

"I wish his illness had continued for a few more days. But, however, I think we shall be too strong for him now. His day is over!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

POLITICS — SHARP AND HIS OBJECTS — LONDON AT NIGHT — THE STRANGER—FRENZY AND REVENGE.

SCARCELY had the nobleman and the lawyer reached the house of the former, when two or three carriages rolled up to the door, and several grave-looking personages alighted. They all proceeded to a room, of moderate dimensions, and seated themselves round a table on which were refreshments: and the majority of those expected having arrived, the Marquess rose, and said,

"My lords and gentlemen—You are all well aware of the nature of the business which has assembled us here together; and are prepared, I hope, to co-operate with me in the measures I am about to propose. I see before me the greatest wealth, rank, and influence in England; and

am persuaded that it will not be long before we are banded together with one common interest—the conservation of the present state of things, and the interests of our order. Division has sprung up in the Cabinet, and it is evident that the present Ministry cannot endure,—indeed, some of the chief members of it have tendered their resignation. Under these circumstances, I ask if you are prepared to carry out the propositions which have been laid before you; and if so, to deliver your sentiments on the best means for effecting 'a consummation so devoutly to be wished!'"

"What an old fool that Marquess is!" thought Sharp, as the address, which had evidently been learned by heart, ended, "but he will do for the Lord Lieutenancy."

"We are all perfectly agreed, Marquess," said a grey-headed man of some weight in the House of Commons, and whom it was proposed to make Premier in the new administration. "But we shall have some difficulty in forming the Coalition. In the first place, who is to be placed at the helm of state? Lord Wharton, we have resolved, shall not be Premier."

"Nay, we are not desirous he should remain in office at all," returned the Marquess; "he is a dangerous man."

"Has Mr. Wharton Travers returned any answer to the proposal which was made to him?" inquired one present.

"I am authorized to state," answered Sharp, "that Mr. Travers will not accept any place in the administration; but that he will countenance us, and uphold us with his pen, if possible."

"Our friend, the Marquess, will accept the Viceroyalty, Mr. Sharp will be one of the under Secretaries of State, Lord —— will become Chancellor of the Exchequer: and it only remains to decide on a first Lord of the Treasury," said the Premier in expectancy. "This done, we will commence operations,—some of the minor offices, at present held by Tory members, being filled up by those whose fidelity can be answered for, and who will not oppose our measures in *any* respect."

"Who but yourself," returned the Marquess, "should be Prime Minister? Well do we know your ability, trustworthiness, and steadfast spirit!"

"My lord, you honour me too highly! If, however, all who are here present conceive me worthy to fill the responsible office of First Lord of the Treasury, I am willing to do so; and will endeavour to make up, by devotion to my duties, by integrity, and firmness, for the absence of those splendid talents which I could wish were mine."

"Thus much is settled then," said Sharp. "We shall have to contend with a few scattered forces attached to Lord Wharton, but from no others need we expect opposition. We have secured a fair majority in the Commons, the weight of the noble Marquess will turn the scale in

our favour in the Lords; and all the ability, wealth, and influence of the country we may expect will be united with us. I have only to urge the necessity for strict unanimity among us; for if disunion creep in among us, the Coalition is vain."

It were tedious and useless to enter into the minute details of the political meeting which had been hatched into life by the laborious and unremitting exertions of Sharp, who foresaw that while he had collected together the richest and noblest of the land, and united them, in spite of much previous hostility and variance of opinion, they could not make head against the enemy without one of master-mind to aid and direct them. He intended to show them their weakness, when the proper time arrived; to involve them in difficulties, out of which they could not extricate themselves; and, in this complicated game, he doubted not he should ultimately have the thread in his own hand, to guide as he chose. But for the present he was anxious as far as possible to disguise the very active part he took in the control of the cabal, and to appear but a secondary agent throughout. The Marquess was a convenient tool to cover his designs, and he had no difficulty in moulding him to his will.

"How think you the Prince will affect us?" asked one of the noblemen present of the lawyer. "Doesn't he like Wharton?"

"Not he," returned Sharp. "In my humble opinion, his royal highness will be very glad to get rid of Lord Wharton. He is not one to brook the imperious will of the haughty minister; and were it not for his coxcombical brother, he would not tolerate him as he does."

The conference soon after this was broken up, all being ripe for the change of ministry, which was daily expected. Hours had been consumed in these important deliberations; and as Sharp once more gained the street, night was falling. It is a grand and a wonderful sight—a thing to contemplate for an indefinite time with solemn and hushed spirit;—when the mighty Babylon lies corpse-like and still, after the noise and tumult of the day, and sleep and death and silence seem spread before us in illimitable majesty! The lawyer contemplated the city with its myriad lights, from a rising ground in the vicinity of St. James's Park. The radiant stars of a fine and frosty night were slowly bursting into life, and, as Sharp raised his eyes to the ethereal vault, so dark, so grand, so stupendous, he involuntarily exclaimed, "Sublime!" He stood with folded arms at a short distance from the house of the Marquess—his features calm, his figure motionless. "How serene it is!" he murmured. "All heaven and earth seem blended with each other, and the great spirit of solitude is brooding over the universe. Ah! there is *that* within us which we know not of, in the hurry and bustle of existence!" Men, like the lawyer, but seldom experience these high feelings, which, to the poet and the dreamer, are of every-day occurrence; and in proportion to their rarity is the strength of their influence for the time

being. When age creeps on apace, and the infinite and eternal assume a deeper and more potent interest than in the flush of youth, the sombre hues, the solemnity, and the breathless peace, have voices to touch the profoundest depths of thought and soul. "Ah! what a dream it is!" thought the rich man. "I am sick of all the disquietude and the turmoil of being! Where is that rest to cure the wounds which time has made? where the sweet slumber of forgetfulness that we want, and cannot find? Oh, the sickness, the heart-ache, the solicitude we endure,—and all for nothing—for nothing!" His reverie was interrupted by a deep sigh close to his ear, and turning round, he beheld a figure leaning against a high railing but a few feet from him. A pale and melancholy face—a form of power and manhood, although weakened apparently by recent illness,—met his view. Under ordinary circumstances, the lawyer would have passed on with that stony apathy we acquire towards our fellow-creatures in great towns; but there was something in the calmness of the hour, the beauty of the heavens, the stillness which seemed suddenly to have fallen over creation, which disposed the scheming heart of the attorney to unusual softness; and when he looked upon the countenance of the stranger, an expression in it beyond desolation—of blank, dead, torpid despair, which crossed it for a minute,—drew forth his sympathy. Indeed there was a nameless look about him which created an unaccountable interest in Sharp; for though he was certain he had not seen him before, he was persuaded he knew one to whom he bore a certain resemblance, and perceiving that he looked poor as well as ill, he accosted him with—

"Good morning, friend; are you not well?"

The man did not start, did not move, but fixed his large, wild eyes on the person who thus addressed him.

"Well!" he muttered. "Yes, I am well. Who are you that ask me such a question?"

What a voice was that! It sounded like one from the tombs, hollow, dreary, and unearthly.

"Nay, I but asked—" began Sharp; but the unknown proceeded without noticing him.

"If you were to ask the million hearts that crowd the bosom of this great city to bursting, if they were *well*, what answer do you think they would return?—They would say for the most part 'we are sick, we are weary, and we are desperate!'—Fie, fie! Out upon it, I say! Whence is this misery? From Hell?—The fever, the madness, the crime, the frenzy? What demon made them?—The universe is silent!"

There was a dark, strange fire in the orbs of the gloomy stranger, which Sharp almost fancied was that of insanity: but while he was yet undecided on this point, the man added—

"Look around you! Death laughs, Disease exults, Iniquity rejoices!

Tyrants and slaves pollute the wholesome atmosphere with their damned breath, and the sleek rogues that fatten on the woes of which we are all units—each one adding something to the huge heap—smile, and smirk, and say, 'What a fine world it is!'"

"There is some truth in that," muttered Sharp. "What is this dungeon existence, that we should prize it?"

"Hark, you!" cried the stranger; "I am young, you see,—limbed like a giant, with all the vast energies of early manhood undiminished. I have capacities for pleasure; I have senses not palled with vice, as yours may be. The blood does not creep through my veins, but rushes and bounds like the waves of the ocean. And here am I. It may be, I might drink to repletion of pleasure; that the delicate arms of beauty might wind around me, and the soft limbs of wantonness wrap me in sensual heaven; but what is *my* Elysium? Shall the eternal Heaven answer? No: but the depths of darkness shall! I'll whisper it to you, that the fiends may take up the echo. Revenge!—ha, ha!—glorious revenge! I'll trample the enslavers under foot; I'll stir up *such* a flame as has expired now in France. By G—d, I'll do it! Ere ten years have expired, England shall blaze with fury; man shall be armed against man, and the battle-cry be, 'Destruction!' No pity, no pity; we'll burn and slay, and the fires shall go up to the starry vault as if they were sent up from perdition! This is better than indulging sense—revelling among false, silken harlots, with their painted faces and their black hearts.—Revenge! revenge!"

"By Heaven! that man *has* a soul!" exclaimed Sharp, almost savagely, a chord in his heart thrilling to those wild words and awful looks. "It *is* a glorious thing—that revenge!—If I were Satan I would rejoice in it. Better to drag on interminable years of agony, than not have vengeance! The world is sick of the vile cant of forgiveness. Slaves may forgive—dastards may pardon, that human devils may triumph; but *I*—before *I* do it—will be damned to fellest damnation!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

SHARP AND HIS CLERK—QUICK AND LOVE—SHARP AND JULIA—QUICK, ON HUMBUG AND OTHER MATTERS.

LIKE the whirlwind did that being of terrific passions rush from the side of the lawyer, with a fierce, exulting laugh, that rang through the still air fearfully distinct; and as its last echo died away in the distance, and the keen eye of the lawyer could no more discern the towering form

that dwarfed him when he stood beside it, a gay party emerged from a house, which Sharp shrewdly guessed from its appearance was one of ill fame—*laughing also!* He drew aside to allow the revellers to pass, and recognised among them the Prince of Wales and Travers Wharton, elevated with wine, arm locked in arm, and walking rather unsteadily.

"That's a devilish fine woman, Prince," remarked the fop, as he crossed Sharp, "but I shall astonish you soon with loveliness——"

The lawyer heard no more, but turned into a narrow street leading to the Haymarket, with throbbing brain, thinking, "Ay, the time will come, as that strange man said, if these insects flutter thus; and then, what a conflagration it will be! The world will reel and shake like a drunken man, when the spirit of the age rises up like a Titan from its sleep, and the 'dogs of war' are let loose. Revenge! I shudder when I think of it: and yet, *my* revenge will be sublimer than mere physical power could effect. It will be a spectacle of august ruin—when that dark spirit is humbled! Yes, it is coming speedily. But now—I want a cool brain; for I must think: and so I will dismiss these feelings. As a sentiment, revenge may stimulate the intellect; as a passion, it warps the judgment."

Sharp was passing a coach-office as these thoughts passed through his mind, but did not lift his eyes to look at the motley assemblage round the door, when he was touched on the arm by a little individual who had but just alighted from the top of a coach, and who exclaimed—

"Here I am, at last, sir. Glad to see you looking well. Let's get out of this crowd, and then we can talk. What a nuisance these porters are! —haven't *them* in the country."

"I hope you come back safe and sound, Quick?" said the lawyer.

"All right—wind and limb;—never met with an accident in my life. Long time away; but you had my letter?"

"Yes; and the poor woman, Harriet——"

"She's lodged safely; was quite well this morning, when I started. I pity the unhappy creature!"

"Poor thing!" murmured the lawyer, in a tremulous voice. There was a drop—a glistening drop in the hard eye of Sharp; and the little man at his side looked away, and brushed something away from his own organ of sight, saying, in a husky tone—

"Sweet creature, sir!"

"She was an angel!" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Can't help thinking, Mr. Sharp, she may one day recover her wits."

"Ah!" said the lawyer, starting,—"strange thing, madness! But when a person is very forlorn, it is a mercy to forget grief."

"Still, sir, if she *should* become sane——"

"Do you really think it probable?"

"I'm no doctor; but I've a head, though it's of the smallest. Talked

with her a good deal; and she answered me sometimes quite rationally. She did, indeed. Don't you think one might put her under the care of some clever mad physician?"

"I will do it, Quick. Oh, it would be a comfort to see her sweet reason restored! You may guess what she was, when her very insanity is so beautiful. But she would mourn over the past—deeply: I hardly know if it would be kindness to her."

"Divine thing, reason, sir! If we would search deeply, we should find our greatest happiness is reason. But, then, by this faculty we know wretchedness also. That's true. Brutes are never wretched, except when they're ill: shows that man is alone accountable for his actions. Still the mad are unhappy, you know, frequently; and they have no mind, poor things, to comfort and direct them!"

"You are right, Quick," returned the lawyer, musingly. "I will write to Dr. M——. . . . And how did you find your friends?"

"Old Richard's nearly blind; Rose, very pretty and blooming. Much obliged to you for sending that ten-pound note;—but I had money with me. So I shall return that, with many thanks."

"Nonsense, Quick! You do more work for me than any two of my clerks together: this is the first holiday you have had for years, and your salary is much too small. I insist on your keeping the note. You must also take £200 a-year."

"Can't, indeed;—hundred and fifty all I want. Money a great bore;—so say no more about it."

"And yet I hear you have been making a speculation, by which you have converted hundreds into thousands."

"Quite a different thing. Man comes to me, and says, 'Mr. Quick, I'm a young beginner in business, and three hundred pounds would set me up.' Very well; he tells me about himself—I find him intelligent and open—wife and large family—and having some cash laying by, agree to his terms. He is lucky, and I share the profits with him. No trouble to me: there is the money still—the trade is thriving: I a sleeping partner. Never spent more than half my salary in my life."

"Of all the oddities that ever existed, you are the greatest!"

"Up to snuff—that's all. Here we are at home. Glad to get back to the office; though I think it's troublesome now and then. Nothing like business. Lord bless you, Mr. Sharp, I couldn't exist in the country!—All very well for boys in love, and children in petticoats. Kiss and play—no one to see them kiss: but never was in love myself, except once—hem!"

"*You* in love, Quick?—*you!*—ha, ha, ha!"

"*Was* once;—only sixteen at the time. Poor little Kitty!—did love *her!*"

"Is it possible? You never told me this."

"Saw her grave, sir, yesterday. Tell you about it, some day. There was the little mound just as I saw it thirty years ago, when they laid her there—in the cold earth! Poor Kitty!—said I should never love another; and am a man of my word. She is dust now—quite dust; and the worms crawl no more in her pure heart; for *that* has mingled with its parent earth. Think I see her now, with her sweet smile—so pretty! —Ah me!"

"My poor friend!" cried Sharp, with feeling; "you, who are so communicative—how is it you never told me this? I thought it impossible you could have loved."

"*All* can love, sir. The very animals can love in their way—and, you'd hardly believe it, but when I was a lad, I used to dream of the joys of passion, like a crazy poet. I never told you of Kitty. No; because I attach something sacred to her memory now she's dead—always did, in fact; and so don't rattle on about her, as I do of others, in my odd way. But no more of this."

Sharp pressed the small hand of Quick, and a warm drop actually fell upon it—the purest and kindliest that had left the eye of the lawyer for many a long year. Those two men understood each other then, better than they had ever done; and something human seemed to grow up in the withered heart of Sharp, when he found that the being he considered the coldest and most abstract in point of passion, could feel as he had felt. We misjudge of others, assuredly. There is something beautiful and holy even in the humble flowers of the human creation: humanity *must* have fragrance, or cease to be such. Many an one that we are apt to pass with scorn—many an one, without the gifts of mind and the stores of knowledge we, in our little vanity, pride ourselves upon, have a well-spring in their bosoms that would do us good, if we could draw some of the fresh waters into our own being. The best policy we can adopt is to have faith in the indestructibility of good—even in the erring: if we have not, what is life? . . . . .

"Truly," thought Sharp to himself, "it seems as though the bright and glowing feelings of our youth cast on us a portion of their verdure, even through memory and tears! Do we underrate the good that is in man, while we exaggerate the evil? I know not: this poor little fellow is one of the best specimens of humanity I know."

"And, after all," cogitated Quick, "he has a heart. Fine thing, a human heart sometimes! though it's often crooked—very!"

But the lawyer had no time to waste, and conceived he had already displayed too much of his better nature. Oh! that men should be ashamed of the lofty that is in them, and glory in the low! Accordingly he proceeded to his study, and was soon busily occupied in writing. The study of the solicitor was a small square room, in which there were about a hundred volumes arranged in shelves for a library, some of them

being legal works, and the others comprising the works of Shakspeare, Fielding, Locke, and Pope, with a few scientific books—Sharp being a reader of men rather than of speculations, and delighting but little in the abstract and imaginative. Yet he was by no means an ignorant man, though not a student of philosophy: and a large folio volume, in manuscript, to which he occasionally referred, contained the cream of all he had perused, heard, and thought—on matters political, historical, and legal. The book particularised was, indeed, crammed with world-wisdom; it was, to the practical of the commencement of the nineteenth century, what, to the ethical, the morals of Solomon were to the Hebrews. It embraced nearly every topic which was mooted in the political world; and the clear, keen-sighted views which were taken, evinced he was no ordinary statesman, and fully competent to the office that was his *in prospectu*. Little Quick used to say of his employer—"All his methods are good—capital plan, to put down everything in a logical way—to arrange your ideas, to collect your information, to classify your principles and opinions." And undoubtedly it is so. If we put on paper our thoughts from day to day, how we might assist the memory and strengthen the intellect, selecting all that is true and good for ourselves! How much of beauty, how many treasures of wisdom, are lost or squandered, for want of a little trouble and precision!"

"That letter," muttered Sharp, as he folded a sheet of paper he had been writing on, "will, I think, do something. Now, Wharton, we stand on equal ground. If I chose, I could venture to throw the gauntlet in your teeth, and dare you to the contest. I have wealth; I have realized a hundred thousand pounds, and you have nothing. Wealth! what a magical power it gives, if well employed! Strange, that this yellow dust should raise us to be gods in the eyes of men! I do despise the glittering glory, though I use it for my purposes. And people think I am drudging on, and hope one day to be chief magistrate of this overgrown metropolis! Ha, ha! Any fat old vulgar alderman, who has risen by industry from the ranks of his fellow-citizens, would make as good a Lord Mayor as I should: but there are few men in England—perhaps not a dozen—who could play the deep and dangerous game I have commenced. But I cannot gull Wharton longer: I see that. I conceived my visit might throw dust into his eyes; but his sight is keen and far. Oh, he is worthy to be my enemy! He has genius, by Jove! I never heard a more splendid burst of intellect and eloquence combined, than that speech of his: but I cut it to pieces. We stand on a mighty isthmus together: isolated do we stand—the Cæsar and the Pompey of the political world. Which of us shall be the Cæsar?—that is the question. When in his presence, I feel his superiority sometimes, though I do not quail before it.—But this letter; it will do bravely!"

The lawyer paced up and down the room, plotting deeply. How many

turnings and shiftings of intricate policy—how many subtle machinations—how much *finesse* and skill he devised, to outwit the great Lord Wharton! He anticipated every difficulty, met every argument, saw every obstacle. Oh, the infinite pains he took to circumvent the powerful enemy! One half the trouble taken for worldly affairs would secure heaven to all. It struck eight o'clock: the chimes were still vibrating, when the door of the lawyer's study was opened, and a childish form appeared. It was that of a young girl, about nine years old, with a beautiful, intelligent face, and a form which promised to grow into perfect symmetry; and it was nearly concealed by a profusion of light brown ringlets, that reached below her waist.

"Come in, my dear Julia," said Sharp, as the little creature stood hesitating whether to enter, seeing the lawyer was so deeply engaged in business. It was a peculiarity in that man, perhaps hardly ever paralleled in one of similar character, that he loved children. The heart which has a throb for the young, can hardly be cold and callous to humanity; for there is something so endearing, so innocent about them, when they would win us to love them, that it seems as if we could not believe anything so gentle and pure and tender could become rotten, depraved, and selfish. One of our best modern poets, in some lines which he wrote a short time ago, on "his new sweetheart," tells us—

> "With heavenly looks they make us sure
> The Heaven that made them must be pure;"

and, oh! there is something in the clear, calm brow, which has never been ruffled by stormy passions—in the serene, bright eyes—in the dimpled cheek, the smiles, the laughter, and the animated gestures, eloquent beyond all philosophy of the fact that they were created good!—that the soul, elate and joyous, would spring up, and love and know: for love and knowledge are what children ever seek. Dogmatists may tell us of the innate depravity of the human heart; but surely they err: frailty and weakness there may be in the best and noblest, but sin is *not* implanted as a necessary entity in our being: it may come; but earth—not Heaven—creates.

The lawyer kissed the child, and drew from his pocket a plaything, which he gave her. "You see I have not forgotten my little Julia," said he. "Poor thing!" he murmured; "she is an orphan, and I ought to be a father to her!"

"Oh, thank you, my dear, dear papa! Shall I call you so?" said the child; and she threw her little arms round Sharp's neck, and kissed him. How differently do we feel when kissed by a child, and a person of mature age! They seem—those little ones—to ask our protection and kindness: they have no fear, no distrust; all is perfect confidence and love. We are angry at ourselves, oftentimes, for having kissed a

woman, who seems like ice that will not melt; but the embrace of a child—the true, pure embrace—satisfies our affections, and, for the time, we feel towards them as our own offspring. The lawyer placed his little ward—of whom he had made allusion to Williamson, when he confided his history to him,—on his knee.

"And what have you been doing with yourself all day, love?" asked Sharp.

"I have been at Mrs. Vernon's, whose daughter, you know, is my schoolfellow. I only came in, a minute ago."

"When I look on her," said the lawyer to himself, "I think how much I wish I had a daughter! As for my son, he has not a spark of human feeling.—Well, then, you are going to bed now, my Julia?"

"Yes. Why don't you go to bed earlier? Don't you love sweet dreams, and soft sleep, that seems to fall like an angel down upon you?"

"Dearest! I have not such sleep as you have;—oh, that I had! I often lie for hours awake, and rise unrefreshed and feverish. Long may you enjoy the rest of innocence."

"I am sorry you don't sleep. But you *have* dreams? Sometimes I see such lovely things, when I am in dream-land! Flowers, more sweet than I can express to you; and music, more soft, more full of pleasant sound, than I can tell. Do *you* see them—hear them? You shake your head. What *do* you see, when dreaming?"

"The ghosts of the departed," muttered Sharp, lapsing into abstraction; "and one image—*one* eternal image,—Revenge!"

"Ah! there *are* dreams of fear; but they vanish so quickly! A smile seems to come on the soul—*not* on the eyes; for *they* see not, when some dark shape pursues us; and the dear smile is like the light of the sun dispersing the mists of morning. If we could always have such smiles, who would wake, if he could help it?"

"My sweet Julia!—happy, happy girl!—you have known no sorrow. The fester, the mildew, have not eaten into your gentle breast: you are a spring-flower; *I* am a withered leaf of autumn."

"Do not say so, my good, kind friend. Are you unhappy? I wish I were a fairy, that I could make the old young again."

"Your gift," said Sharp, smiling sadly, "would hardly be a boon, my child. There are so many things of darkness—so many evil passions—such useless striving and vain heart-burning in youth, that those who estimate life aright would hardly live twice."

"I think *I* should like to live over again and again;—I wish I had a hundred lives!"

Sharp sighed deeply.

"May you always wish it," he said. "This—this is to feel as spirits do."

"Yes;—sometimes we fancy we could fill a dozen, a hundred beings, with our joy. But, good night!—you are tired of me."

"Not I, sweet prattler!—but I am very busy. Good night!"

The child vanished, and again her guardian applied his mind to professional or political affairs; and did not rise before ten o'clock, when he descended to his office.

"You here, Quick?" he said, as his clerk got up from his desk.

"Yes; I've been settling the accounts, as it is Saturday night. Like to have everything off my mind on Sunday. Then I can enjoy Hampstead, or the Park, without thinking what I've to do on the Monday."

"You are an indefatigable fellow! Did you see my son, when you were in the country?"

"Yes. Master Samuel was staying at Mrs. Smyth's, I think. Acute lad;—he'll make his way in the world. Bar, a good profession for him. You'll be able to give him a quantity of briefs, eh?"

"I hope I shall;—my business has become very great."

"Best in London, no doubt. Made inquiries t'other day of Gammon's clerk, and found he has less to do, though he was once the first attorney in London. Saw Williamson while I was away. D'ye know much of him, sir?"

"Yes, a good deal. He was the natural son of a gentleman of large fortune; and his mother I knew when I was a boy. Williamson is a man of strong, vigorous mind, and much talent."

"Bit of a swindler, eh?"

"I don't know: *I* employ him."

"You said that drily. What's your definition of swindling, sir?"

"A lawyer's clerk can't want an analysis of swindling."

"Ah! you see we know only the practical part. Like to do a rogue; like to serve an honest man. Plenty of rogues to deal with, sir."

"But we don't exactly swindle."

"No; we cheat and humbug—that's the plan. Swindling's a name that smells of the pillory and the prison: humbug is redolent of St. Stephen's and attorneyship. Beg pardon for being so free."

"I am quite of your opinion, Quick; but what would the world do without humbug?"

"I suppose it would lie down and grunt, like a pig that has been refused victuals. Often think the world's like an old hog: how greedy it is—how surly it is—how very *hoggish*, in short! Precious old world; but it's a capital place for rascality! Bad one for honesty."

"You are full of your apopthegms. But don't you think the world is more like a wolf than a pig?"

"That isn't bad, sir; but prefer the comparison of the hog. Swinish multitude, you know: wolf's too fierce, too hungry—not idle enough; but wolves, foxes, hogs, and asses, eh?—that's it!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LORD WHARTON AND ANNA—THE CONVERSATION—POETS—LOVE—THE VISION OF TRAVERS—THE PHANTOM—WHARTON'S IDEAS.

LORD WHARTON, when he was left alone with his mistress, took her hand in his, and said—

"I wish yours were a better lot, Anna."

"Do not say so, dearest! Have I not *you*?"

"My dear girl; it is impossible for me to be much with you. I ought to be up and doing now!"

"But you are getting well. O, it is such joy to watch the hues of health returning to your cheek! When I used to sit through the long, dreary nights, and your breath was obstructed, and you raved so fearfully——"

"Ah! I raved? What nonsense did I utter?"

"I cannot tell you half; it was wild and dreadful. The very recollection makes me shudder!"

"Hark you, Anna! Breathe not a word of what I am about to tell you to living soul,—for they would laugh me to scorn for ever! I have seen the dead."

"You wander, dearest! You have not yet recovered."

"Nay, it is true; I am as coldly rational as I ever was. My brow is cool, my senses perfect. I repeat, I have seen the dead. No doubt spirits exist; but they take bodily form only for peculiar purposes, and by the permission of Heaven. Yet I fear not; it shall not divert my course. I have risen from a bed of sickness to find my enemies have been active. But which of them need I dread? I will have them under my feet before the winter is over."

"There is but one Wharton in the world. My great one! *What* cannot you do?"

"There is nothing I dare not *attempt*, Anna: but success in all things is hardly possible.—But you do not believe I have seen a ghost, eh? I *could* satisfy your mind—but it is no matter. Incredulity and superstition laugh at each other, and yet they are not so much divided."

"You raved of that ghost—calling her Harriet a hundred times. Was she what *I* am to you?" And the mistress blushed deeply.

"She was the first I ever loved—alas!—She has been dead for many years,—but I saw her as she was on earth."

"Are you certain it was not an illusion? Many strange things occur to us—our senses are ever cheating us."

"Look you! She came and stood by my bedside while I was at Travers House, breathless, hushed as a statue. Her eyes were fixed on me, not as they would have been if she had lived,—not reproachfully, not sadly:—but with a deep, bright calmness, like the stars. And then her voice—it was like nothing earthly. You have heard the wild harp swept by the night-breeze? It was something like that—but more melodious.—Once I rejected the evidence of my senses—but she came again; I swear I saw her as plainly as I see you now. It is true I had just awakened from sleep; but after that—after she had vanished, I heard her voice, though she was nowhere to be seen. It thrills my spirits now! When she was alive, it was a plaintive voice, full of melody; but *now!*——I see I have shaken your scepticism!"

"It is very strange! Does Heaven send a messenger to tear you away from me—to break off our guilty intercourse? O God! take not *him* from me. I have sacrificed eternity for his sake; and now I am to be torn from his arms!"

"This is weakness, my Anna! Do not sob thus; you are always in extremes. At first, you would have smiled at my hallucination."

"Yes, yes, it might be such: we do not live in the age of miracles. It must have been an optical illusion—the fever was gathering force. Do not believe in this dreadful phantom."

"I try to disbelieve; but I cannot. Come, give me a book—or read to me. You read very well—your voice is music."

"Flatterer, no! What shall I read to you?"

"Is there any new book good for anything?"

"You don't like that poet Wordsworth, who published a volume of poems a few months ago?"

"I don't enjoy poetry now; or, if I do, it must be something stirring and fine. Some of that poetry was good; but much of it maudlin."

"What poet do you read most, my Wharton?"

"I used to delight in old Spenser when I was a boy. He *was* a poet. But here is Pope. He reads better than Spenser, aloud."

"O, I adore that beautiful Eloisa! What passion, what mad, doating passion it contains! But it is not exaggerated. Pope is for the most part cold; but in *that* he touches the soul as deeply as Shakspeare himself. The most passionate, the most tender of poets, though, is Burns: his fame is rising fast, and I think his lyrics will be considered the best we have."

"Ah! sing to me one of the Scottish ballads.—Yet, no! I cannot bear songs now."

"My poor love! you turn pale. Are you suffering pain?"

"Not in the body. But there is something here, within the brain's life, that should not be. There are serpents to sting——"

"What do you mutter thus?"

"Nothing!"

The Peer rose from his seat, and strode to the window. Brilliant equipages were passing to and fro, and all was bright, as the sun slowly sunk down, and the long shadows were cast across the street.

"I am a weak, drivelling wretch!" said the statesman to himself. "These are idle thoughts, and shall not conquer me."

He returned to the sofa on which he had been reclining, and Anna came and nestled to him. He was grateful to her for all the anxious care she had shown him during his protracted illness; but he thought all that caressing a bore, and was in no mood to like it, even if he had still retained a keen relish for her society. Man's love is almost always selfish; he thinks more of his own enjoyment than that of his mistress; while with woman it is the reverse. Wharton, therefore, commenced a theme of conversation which he knew must end that for which he was not "i' th' vein."

"That fellow, Sharp," he said, "is trying to cajole me: but, cunning knave as he is, he will not succeed."

"In what respect do you mistrust him?" asked Anna, sighing and drawing away from the statesman.

"In many respects:—but I watched him when he thought I saw him not this morning. I am a physiognomist, you know. The science has been the most valuable to me, practically, of any I have acquired. There is not a line in the human face, there is not a hue, an expression, which may not be exactly interpreted by a little trouble."

"Do you think so?—Then I'll study Lavater."

"I don't think you would find much use for it."

"I should, my Wharton; for I should read your soul—my *only* book! But I trouble you."

"No, no. Only, I don't want to be read."

"Then I will not try to do so. Love is selfish, when most unselfish, I suspect. It is a greater pleasure to do as we are desired, than as we desire ourselves to do. We get a kind of external will, if I may use the expression. But it is not slavery—I wish I could see you looking happy and well together, Wharton."

"Happy! That poor dream of fools and madmen—happiness! Bah! I never was really happy, though I fancied I was so!"

"Then you have not——"

"Loved; you were going to say. Have I not? But there is misery in the very sentiment, to say nothing of the passion! Happiness must be in the mind, as philosophers have shown; and it is impossible we can find a being to sympathise with us so perfectly that we could wish

nothing altered. Suppose each sentiment in unison, suppose each pursuit identical, each desire indivisible, suppose all that is impossible, and I maintain still it would be better not to love. But we must do it, I believe, at some time of our lives."

"Why do you think it creates misery?"

"Because, in its highest perfection, it is not the fruition of, but the aspiration *to*, the perfect. That is all romance, of course;—nonsensical Platonics. We love more rationally."

"But passion and sentiment united, make love."

"I don't know: I *used* to think so. But what is sentiment? Do we ever realise aught by sentiment? It is in the mind; and therefore should be kept for nympholepsy; while honest passion is the only thing fit for those who do not dream away existence. Solomon was a wise man, not only in mind-wisdom, but in action also."

"And he did not love."

"He did not restrict himself to a few, and therefore had the greater zest for each one by turns. We sicken of a single object."

Anna turned away her head, and tears trickled down her face,—worn with care and watching. "Cruel Wharton!" she thought; "and is this the return made me for my sacrifices—for my guilt, my shame?"

"Do not heed what I say, Anna," suddenly exclaimed the Peer, kissing his mistress. "There, my queen, be happy! I am sick at heart, love;—peevish, vexed with myself. I am an idiot, to be cowed by that shadow: but it follows me always. Good girl! you are too good for me."

The face of Anna was immediately radiant with smiles. How she loved him! She exclaimed, with animation—"Anna Seymour too good to be the companion of Thomas Wharton? No: she is not worthy to be his slave! But you won't talk *so* again."

"I will not."

"Thank you: it is better to believe all things, than to doubt."

"Happy it is for the many," thought Wharton, "they *can* be blind." It was at this juncture that a carriage drove up to the door, and the Peer exclaimed, "What! is that my brother-in-law?"

"I will leave you," said Anna, colouring deeply, and making for the door. She could endure that such men as Captain Wharton, and even Mr. Sharp, should see her in her degrading position; but the character of Travers was so pure and sublime, that she felt she could not be present with him without acute pain.

"Nay, do not go!" cried Lord Wharton; but the lady persisted in her original intention.

Travers was ushered up stairs, and caught a glance of the retreating figure of the mistress ere he entered the apartment of the statesman.

"My dear brother!" he said, shaking Lord Wharton cordially by the hand, "I hope you have not thought me unkind in not coming to see

you before; but I have been ill myself—and Reginald had a cough too; so that I must have left him——"

"Make no excuses, Travers. You see I am on my legs again. I am glad to see you in London. Sit down."

"I wrote to your physician—who is a personal friend of my own—when I heard of your attack; and he kindly promised to let me know how you were from day to day. You are looking better than I thought you *could*."

"I shall hold the devil a hard tug yet."

"You *were* in danger, I heard."

"I suppose I was. But I have been pronounced out of it for some weeks. I rose weak as a child; but a fortnight has set me up, and the day after to-morrow I shall to business. Do you still remain steadfast in refusing all office? You might have almost anything you chose."

"You know I seldom change my resolves. I hope you will not overwork yourself too soon."

"The hours are rife with fate, and each day I remain inactive I lose some golden opportunity. That the soul should be chained down to this damned clay!"

"Can this man," mused the philosopher, "have so recently escaped from the jaws of death!" And added, aloud—"May I ask who that lady is whom I saw as I entered the room?"

"O, you have heard of Anna Seymour, the actress? She took the parts which were once played by Adeline Smith."

"I had heard something of this matter," said Travers, gravely.

"A man can't do without a mistress, you know. It's a great bore, but a necessary one.—But I forgot;—you have none of the fierce blood they have drained me of! *Moral* Travers! and you would have me marry, I suppose. But to what end? If you take a wife, it will not change your nature."

"Love might change it, Wharton!"

"I'm too old for that game, now, my good brother! I suspect a man can no more fall into that old vanity at six-and-thirty, than a boy of sixteen can devote his mind to philosophy. No, as we advance in life we grow into the conviction that love as a passion may be all very well, but as a sentiment it is sheer absurdity. I have just been arguing to that effect with Anna."

The thinker gazed sadly into the sensualist's fine face.

"You worship the philosophy of the Garden more even than you did in youth, I perceive," said Travers.

"And those who adopted the sterner morals of the Porch, in *practice* were Epicureans! Bah, man! It is all very fine to talk; but purity was never meant for man.—How is Reginald?"

"He is well now, and I have brought him to town.—With regard to

that Stoicism which you imagine I follow, it is in my opinion a miserable delusion. I am no Stoic.—Are you happy, Wharton?"

"What is happiness?"

"If you do not feel it, without requiring a definition, you are *un*happy."

"You contemplative beings measure men of the world by the same standard as you apply to yourselves. But since you are desirous of knowing whether I am happy, I reply, no. *Who* is happy? You think yourself so! And yet, for the most part, men similarly situated would be wretched. With my temperament I could never be content with what satisfies you. Metaphysical ethics are all humbug! Will you take a glass of wine? I have some choice Claret."

"None, I thank you. Wharton! You have confessed yourself dissatisfied with yourself. I must not constitute myself your Mentor; but let me ask you——"

"For Heaven's sake, my dear fellow, don't entertain me with a conventicle lecture. I want to talk to you on several matters.—How are that boy and girl?"

"Stephen and Helen? I left them in perfect health. Perhaps you would rather see me another day——"

"Don't go yet. I feel rather restless; but I am not ill.—Travers, I know you are a good man. Tell me, have you always been content with virtue? Have you never panted for forbidden pleasure? Answer me sincerely."

"Once I might have done so: but now I have not the merit of resisting temptation. I grant we are not organized morally alike——"

"We are the antipodes of each other. Content! Who can be content —'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd' thus?"

Travers was not one to be ridiculed out of a principle, or to be intimidated from expressing his opinions, when he thought he might benefit a fellow-creature, from any dread of being thought a fanatic.

"The first step in virtue, Wharton, is the attainment of felicity, and that taken, there is so much peace and joy, that all the rest follows easily. I grant that you would experience a greater degree of difficulty than I should in refraining from illicit pleasure; but if you did so, you would acknowledge there is no freedom like that we ourselves make. When we follow principle there is no bondage."

"Out on that cold dogma!" exclaimed Wharton, impetuously. "*He* is a slave who dares not act as the free heart prompts! I esteem that man greatest who despises opinion the most."

"And does not the moral hero brave opinion? Are not the sarcasms of the votaries of pleasure, the sneers of the herd, the inuendos of the crowd of men lavished on him? You are a Tory, and yet affect to contemn those sound sentiments which have been the adoration of the wise and just from the beginning of Time!"

"We must pretend to think them good, or society would go to pieces. They are good, and they are impracticable."

"Nothing is good which cannot be practised. The useful and the moral are *one*."

"Now would you have me give up my mistress, resign my vicious ways, go to church with a long face, drivel about what I do not understand,—be a good, tender-hearted fellow, who if struck down would not return the blow—and live a coward in mine own esteem, letting I dare not wait upon I would? Oh, this cant, this folly men call wisdom!"

"You look feverish: perhaps we had better not pursue the theme any farther!"

"Nay, let us have it out, my dear philosopher!—I am feverish—but I have a thought—a damned thought I would get rid of!—Confound the doctors! They will not let me touch wine."

"No, you look flushed,—and your eyes are too bright. Good bye!"

"As you will;—it is getting dark. When you write home send a message for me to that boy Stephen, that I shall be glad to have him here:—though I don't know!—He is like—wonderfully like sometimes! But the substance is better than the shadow!"

"What do you mean by these words?"

"What did I say?—Nothing!—Good evening."

Travers went, and Lord Wharton was left alone. He remained, his eyes riveted on vacancy, his lips moving.—But he did not speak. The minutes passed away, and twilight with them. It was quite dark.

"It grows upon me every minute,—this horrid phantasy!" he murmured, at length. "What! shall I sink to be a madman, an idiot—frightened at the dark? *I! I*, that might be, if not the foremost man in England, second to none! I that should blaze, a meteor, the wonder and the fear of the multitude! Never! It shall not appal me. My strength shall be derived from desperation.—Ha! Do you still pursue me?—Why is it that the more remote the reality, the more terrible the incubus upon my brain?—I cannot bear it!—What ho! lights! lights I say!—Dastard that I am! Now they will come, and find me thus. Shame, shame!"

"What is amiss, Wharton?" cried Anna Seymour, flying down stairs, when she heard the shouts of the excited statesman. He had regained his composure by a strong effort of his mighty mind, and pressing her hand, he said—

"Fear not—all is well! Those servants are here."

And the terrified domestics, imagining their master's delirium had returned on him, made their appearance. They were dismissed with some lame excuse, and the Peer and his mistress were left alone.

"You will despise me, Anna," he said, "for this baby weakness; but I could not help it. I have been striving with it for hours, and attempted

to drive it away by vehemence: but to no purpose. You do not see it there?"

"What? There is nothing but the wall."

"It must be so: but *I* see it.—Let it glare on for ever!"

"You must not permit this fantasy to prey upon you. You will go raving mad, if you work up your imagination thus."

"I wish I *were* mad.—But you say true; it is unworthy of me. I suppose these nerves of mine are weak. What is it to me if one from the grave walk with me, side by side? It is not customary, we know, for spectres to visit us; but a ghost is nothing more than a man. What is the substance of which we are made? What is this matter that looks so palpable and real? None know its essence. Then, spirits may be but of earth more refined."

"Dear Wharton! be calm."

"I *am* calm. Look at me! Does a hand shake, does a limb tremble? I shall get accustomed to these sights soon. There was a man whom I knew who fancied he saw, or really did see, a devil continually before him,—and this is not a devil!"

"These are wild words! I hoped you had grown composed."

"*You* do not hear—*you* do not see! These beings of the mind, or whatever they are, appear only to one, they say. You look at me incredulously. You think now that the whole from beginning to end has been a disease of the brain, or optic nerve! But tell me what is it I say that sounds in any measure incoherent?"

"You do not talk as you are wont—or as others do. The strongest minds are subject to such visions."

"Well, it is over now! But as for what we are wont to say being rational; that is a wretched standard of reason! We walk betwixt Eternity and Time, and when some wondrous thing causes reason to start,—when something occurs to unfix the seated soul,—then fools call out 'that man is mad!' But I shall not become a lunatic, in the common acceptation of the word. My brain is too strong, my nature too worldly, to become the minions of the invisible beings that throng the abyss of space."

And Wharton kept muttering to himself for several minutes, while Anna looked on in awe and fear: but at length he lifted up his face, and it was as serene as ever it was.

That was a great soul, a giant soul, and had it been applied to good, would have been another Prometheus in its power of endurance;—as it was, he more resembled Satan! I suppose that even bad natures may have fortitude, but that is not heroism. The three sublimest examples in fiction and truth of high courage, moral and intellectual, are the two glorious creations of Æschylus and Milton, and the diviner one before

whose greatness even the Titan shrinks into insignificance. And yet both Satan and Prometheus could *bear* like the Messiah!

Lord Wharton stood perfectly composed, his pale face very white, but not a trace of emotion left upon it.

"I should like to hear you sing, Anna, now," he said. "I remember a pretty little song that was never published, to an old air."

"I think I know what you mean," returned Anna, going to one of those old-fashioned pianos which were *then* of modern invention, and singing the following words with fine, pure, taste.

A SPRING CAROL.

'Tis the Spring time, the Spring time, and Nature looks gay!
The heart of the bird is instinct with delight:
And the air is delicious with clover and May,
And the verdure is glorious in beautiful light.

Not a sound, not a sight but has splendour and love!
On the stream all is sparkling with jewels;—alas!
Those bright ones depart, and the waters still move;—
Thus life doth continue while sweet raptures pass.

They glow—those blest moments—in passion; we say
"How divine is existence!"—And e'en as the breath
Leaves our lips, we deplore the past bliss of the ray—
And we weep!—For the rest—ask the Angel of Death!

"It is very sad, Wharton: but you like plaintive songs!"

"Yes: it is pleasant to feel mournful, occasionally."

"There is a joy too deep for tears—for smiles: and our silence is the only tribute we can give,—it has a voice."

"True, most true. I feel sometimes almost a poet, when I am alone, and the heavens are hymning to my spirit. I fancy I hear the solemn sounds of the ethereal worlds that look an everlasting brightness down upon us;—see, there they are, unchanged, unchangeable!—There is a continual succession of music throughout the universe."

"What is the sublimest poetry in Nature, do you think?"

"I hardly know. Each throb of the human heart, every sound of the voice of man, may have something lofty and exalting in them."

"I love to hear you talk thus! O, what a gift of immortality is genius! But every one has his idea of the highest and divinest thing we can see or hear."

"The roll of the ocean is a stupendous sound! It is like the perpetual flowing on of the universal mind, knowing no pause, exulting, wailing, and shouting. The ocean is, perhaps, the grandest object we can contemplate. Rocks are around, leviathans are within it, the winds sing

and scream to the great and awful being, whose booming voice appears to come from eternity!"

"It is, it is! But I love peace and stillness."

"There are no such things. When the earth is calmest, it is but gathering strength for the devastating tempest. We stand in the hush of a summer evening, when the drowsy insects hum ere they go to sleep, when the nightingale sends forth her wild, thrilling notes, and we ask ourselves 'is this peace?' And the low winds whisper the echoes of our bosoms to the trees, and the trees sigh, but answer not. Peace! Each whisper, echo, sigh prevents it. There is none."

"Talk thus for ever. Methinks there is no eloquence like thine!"

"I have exhausted my romance for to-night, love! I shall to sleep soon,—to sleep—not to rest,—to dream!"

"I will be by your side, and pray for you—if *my* prayers may be heard. I will breathe sweet things into your ear, and the black forms shall vanish—and Love-spirits come!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LONDON AND THE OCEAN—THE MECHANICS' MEETING—MORAL FORCE *v.* PHYSICAL FORCE—THE BROIL—JOHN—THE BOXER AND THE SPORTING "KEN"—THE CARRIAGE AND JOHN.

The ocean!—it is, indeed, a glorious and majestic thing, with its billows, its terror, and its beauty: but the statesman might have contemplated a more wonderful spectacle, in the ocean of human life that flowed beneath him in the great city! Onward, onward, without pause, without cessation; it sways, it heaves, it is convulsed; and in that convulsion, what wrecks are made, what divine hopes are lost, what radiance and loveliness are thrown into the abyss of destruction! He himself—what a goodly ruin was he! And the doating woman, who, without his lofty intellect, had so much that is sublime and beautiful in humanity! The one, a tower of strength, crumbling slowly to dust; the other, a once exquisite edifice, falling into nothingness! And here he might have seen the starving operative, stalking like a ghost in the darkness, with his gaunt, skeleton form, and wan and haggard cheek; his eye ghastly and fixed, in the deep despair which leads to crime and murder. The poor operative, oppressed by inhuman monopoly, unable to obtain work, unable to take home food for his wife and starving children,—too proud to solicit charity, but gazing with a stony gaze of misery into the faces of the plump, gorged citizens, who notice him not, or turn away from his squalor and rags;—and the beggar, who lies and cheats, makes a good livelihood! He might have seen the stately aristocrat meditating some

intrigue as his gorgeous carriage, rolling on with him, the famishing artizans curse with a bitter curse, wrung from the depths of the soul—the pomp and arrogance lifted up so high by the sweat of their brows! And he might have seen the toasted beauty, with her emptiness and vanity, her jewels, and her vapid smiles; the fool, the knave, the sycophant dressed out for the court. Here is the magnificent saloon, filled with music and light and beauty! Listen to the soft breathings and courtly love-making; regard the studied grace, the affability, and the adulation. What a scene is this!—harmony, love, fragrance: all that art can create, all that taste can supply, all that wealth can procure—pictures, vases, gems, statues, cabinets, viands the most tempting, crowds of lacqueys and obsequious servants—stars, garters, and gold: behold all this—admire the princes and the nobles; and then turn your eyes to the wretched mechanic's garret! It is but in the next street. There kingly Death keeps festival, and Famine stares you in the face. There is some straw, on which are huddled together some emaciated little ones, their sobs having subsided, and dozing from pure exhaustion; and there the pale, feeble mother, lifting up her sunken eyes to heaven, and murmuring, in hopeless agony, "My God! my God! why hast thou deserted us?" This is no exaggerated picture—it is in existence now; for the rank weeds of civilization grow in dark profusion among the painted tulips, and superb flowers the vulgar adore. This is sublime light and shadow, soul-sickening though it be; for the student of the abstract perceives how the wings of the gigantic tempests of *this* ocean gather might irresistible: he sees the progress of things: he feels the majesty of mind! The shackles of ignorance and error are burst, through suffering and death; the spirit of the ethereal science spreads each hour; and Prometheus at length starts up—he lifts his head up to heaven—he shouts, he exults! Human destiny is evolved through universal progress; principles are promulged by the masses, who, having borne, and having erred, at last grow wise and temperate. Yes, the Titan dashes away the fetters which chained him to the rock of ages; and the foul demons, who tormented him, flee.

And why has not Providence guided the immense machine without all this confusion, injustice, and iniquity? There is a mystery on the surface: but we gain some shadowy intimations, from the Infinite that is in us, of the divine economy: we see wisdom in folly, we behold truth in error. Man must work out his own fate: Heaven directs—no more. God may be likened to an architect—mankind to the workmen. The building proceeds, and the operatives commit errors and blunders innumerable; but those who succeed, gain wisdom and light from their ignorance, and the vast plan is consummated. But the Architect *might* have given directions—and He has *done* so: further than this would be compulsion. . . . .

But it is not to the brilliant *fête*, it is not to the foul garret, that the scene now shifts. Mechanics' institutions were not in existence at the time I write of; but some of the operative classes would assemble together, and discuss the leading topics of the day in their own rough style: for the march of intellect had begun; the French Revolution had excited the hearts and minds of England; and there were many burning spirits, fierce, dangerous men, who, without taking warning by that awful era, would have plunged into civil war, and endeavoured to redress their grievances, and to revenge their injuries by the effusion of the oppressors' blood. Tom Paine had popularized the doctrines of the philosophers; religion was at a discount; for when the passions are inflamed, the unthinking would destroy even what is friendly to themselves; and the wiser even are apt to confuse abuses with uses. Priests and kings had enslaved the human race; and therefore priestcraft and kingcraft were denounced, although religion and government have nothing to do either with the one or the other. If lies are foisted on philosophy, is the philosopher answerable for them? If men abuse the power entrusted to them, is the principle of confiding power, evil? Much truth and falsehood are to be eliminated still, ere the reign of reason begins. Eclecticism can alone enable us to be mild, tolerant, charitable—*free*.

It was in a room, lit by two or three tallow candles, that some twenty individuals were assembled on the night in question, at about six o'clock. It was about Christmas time, and of course had been long perfectly dark. The persons alluded to, were all of the working or lower classes; and some were drinking and smoking, some were conversing in low tones together, and the rest gathered into a little knot, listening to the eloquence of a man who was the Danton, probably, of the scene. Physical power is generally of much avail with the ignorant, and the demagogue was a dark, brawny man, apparently of immense strength, though he was not tall, and was talking in a gruff voice—his black eye wandering from one to another. There was more brutality than sense in his face, but it was not altogether devoid of intellect, though he owed the attention of his auditors more perhaps to his colossal strength of body than the weight and solidity of his logic. He was not one to fire and to command the hearts, even of those he addressed; but he was one who had travelled—one who was deeply discontented, and dared to talk treason boldly. There was sedition in his every word; there was rebellion in each look; and he did not appear one to propose what he would not execute.

"Yes, my friends," he cried, in answer to one of the group, "what Tom Brown tells you, is true. In that part of the country I come from, there are hundreds and thousands who would rise if we set them the example. But I was asked, 'If we *did* rise, would it be of any use?' Why, what can be done by sitting still, and sticking to work? We may starve and rot, as we *have* done, for the benefit of the cursed nobles and rich

manufacturers, who are the burdens of the people. France was revolutionized in the first instance by a few; and I think we have stouter hearts and stronger limbs in England than they have across the Channel. Let us but fire the building, and I'll be bound the conflagration will spread. Each move, each stir we make, must loosen some of our chains."

"May it not bind them faster, rather?"

"You are afraid to try the experiment. Come, I'm willing to talk to you: I like fair argument, though I'm no scholar. I don't want book-learning; I can use my eyes and my ears."

"You are a sensible man. But I think we might do more by cunning than by force."

"You are the fox; I the wolf. But what can cunning do? Are not these precious rulers of ours a d—d sight more cunning than the subtlest of us?"

"But we are many, and they are few. The voice of the people once raised——"

"That's just the question. How are you to raise it?"

"How? by showing them their power. What, if we were to kill a few of these drones in our hive—some of the ministers, to begin with?"

"Don't you think that others would start up directly?"

"Maybe they would; but the people would begin to think that a king is mortal, and they might do without one; that they might manage to govern themselves as well as they are governed—cheaper; for you see a daring act stirs up emulation. If I, for instance, shot Lord ——, or Lord Wharton, as they went to the House—and, by Heaven! I'd do it, though I swung for it;—if, I say, something of this sort were done, the torch would be lit, and the fire begin to spread. At least one-half of the population of England are of our way of thinking; and show them, that to *dare* is the only way to *do*, and we shall soon have an army, I warrant you."

"Big words, Master Kerridge."

"Do you mean to say I bluster, and have not a soul to act? I have a pistol here—a good pistol,—and if the majority of these here present think it expedient, there is not a head within a hundred miles I'll not lay low. As for *you*, who tremble to speak your mind out—who would devise some paltry trick, which would be discovered and frustrated, and there an end on't,—we want no such chicken-hearted slaves!"

"Chicken-hearted, to your teeth! Have I not been imprisoned for riot?"

"Wonderful! I suppose you permitted yourself to be imprisoned, because you could not help it?"

"You may sneer; but I would sooner work what we all want, by undermining, than run with a thick-headed, fool-hardy frenzy into peril."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the dark man, shaking his fist in the other's face. There was every prospect of a fight ensuing, for both men had been drinking freely, when the door of the apartment opened, and a tall form entered.

"If you are for blows, I am your man," said the "moral force" individual. But the new-comer strode into the centre of the room, and placed himself between the disputants.

"Peace, peace!" he cried; "what boy's folly is this?"

"What, Jack Kerridge!" exclaimed several persons at once, as the tall man, who had just made his appearance, thrust back the would-be combatants. What a splendid figure that looked among the ruffians and the desperadoes present!—towering by the half head over the generality—erect, and even majestic—the hair streaming over the broad shoulders, he looked like some ancient statue of Hercules, though his cheek was very pale, and the sharp angles of his form were visible from loss of flesh. There was a world of passion in the large, fiery eye—around the mouth, and on the large brow: yet he looked calm—very calm; perhaps too much so, to possess the serenity of the spirit. But there was a stern, deep determination—a quiet, stedfast, and severe resolve in his thrilling voice, that carried almost irresistible weight with it. It was as if passion had given weight to sentiment: it was not thought, it was not animal power, that elevated that man. He was young, too—not more than three-and-twenty; but he looked as if he had exhausted every joy, and lived the death in life.

"You are too forward," began the dark man, "in thus interfering between your father——"

"Man!" interrupted he who was thus addressed, not a muscle of his face moving,—"I know no father now. I bid you cease from quarrelling."

A few weeks before, the father would have rebelled against the authority of the son; but as it was, he submitted sullenly and silently. Grief seemed to have elevated, despair seemed to have exalted the desperado who subdued others by his ferocity once—but who now swayed by his strange calmness; the reader has perhaps concluded it was John Jenkins who stood before his savage father.—Misery has a great moral force in it. Yes, the mere shadow of what he was, but full of desperate courage and terrible purpose, stood the son of the smith. He raised his arm sternly aloft, and articulated slowly and distinctly, "He that joins the ranks of freedom must abstain from idle broils. The despots of the earth are powerful, and each man of consequence to our cause."

"You would lord it over us finely," said the person who had quarrelled with the smith, still fuming.

"*I* want not to lord it over you," returned the young man, contemptuously stalking to the side of the malcontent, who reached but little

above his shoulder. "I lord it over none: but shall I see dissension arise, and look coldly on, when the very existence of the great breath of liberty depends on our unanimity and concord? My friends! this night I promised to address you. My father, it may be, has told you that I have but lately risen from the bed of sickness; and I wrote to intimate—"

Ere he could conclude the sentence, a lad, looking very pale and terrified, rushed into the room, exclaiming, "The constables are coming to take you!"

"Let us escape through the window!" cried several of the more timorous of the assemblage.

"Dastards!" exclaimed John Jenkins—or, as he was called, Kerridge. "We have met here to discuss the eternal rights of man,—not as assassins, not as cut-throats: and let them dare to seize us! If they do, such a flame will arise as will burn through the heart of England! They dare not, I say. Remain."

"Their law is the law of the bayonet," answered one fellow.

"We will not be taken unawares," returned the young man—who stood fronting the door, his hand in his breast. "If they WILL attempt to take us, their blood be on their own heads!"

There was absolute dignity in what John said and looked. It was not the being of fearless daring, but of magnanimous resolution that spoke. And as he ended, the constables actually appeared. Then he drew forth a pistol, and cocked it.

"Surrender yourselves," said one of the legal functionaries advancing. And he entered the room, all preserving a dead silence.

"What do you want?" asked John coldly, as the constable confronted him.

"You are assembled here for an illegal purpose, and we have a warrant to take you all into custody."

"For what purpose?" demanded he who assumed the spokemanship in behalf of the meeting.

"That you know better than me; but you must come before a magistrate now."

"And what if I refuse?"

"Why then here are my men. Come, boys, this fellow's refractory."

"Back!" cried John, levelling his pistol, and the constables paused, irresolute. "I deny your right to take me. We despise your laws, we throw defiance into the teeth of the oppressor, and we say, 'We *will* meet, we *will* have justice, and nothing less.' Scoundrels! do you come to throw us into the dungeon, that our free thoughts may not go abroad and conquer? Shame on you! Do you call yourselves Englishmen—"

"Dog!" here interrupted the chief constable, dashing at the orator, who looked so pale and ill that he thought he should easily overpower him: but one blow of that awful fist laid him senseless on the earth.

The constables retreated, not being prepared for such a resistance, and having no fire-arms. They were greatly out-numbered by the assemblage, and in addition, a crowd of fierce *sans culottes* had collected outside, evidently with no amicable feelings towards the peace-officers. The fallen constable recovered, and would have risen, bursting with rage and fury, but John placed his foot upon him, and wrenching his truncheon from his grasp, exclaimed,

"If you do not all of you retire, you may share a similar or a worse fate. Give way at once. Come, my friends!" And he led on through the midst of the constables, who permitted all to escape.

From that hour the individual who had thus defied the authorities, and displayed his prowess and coolness, became one of the favourites of the people. If his character had but been unblemished and his motives pure, he might have risen high—for was he not *of* the people? That is a great secret—the power a man of his class exercises over it! He that is not of the multitude is generally suspected by those who compose it.

The two Jenkins's having escaped (and the malcontents dispersed), found themselves in a solitary street, and paced down it in silence.

"I have not heard the particulars of your late adventures," said the smith, at last.

"I will tell them to you presently,—you are going to my mother?"

"Yes, she is not very well. You would hardly believe how she fretted about you, fearing you had met with some mishap. I really think it was that which made her ill."

"The old woman loves me, I am certain.—We must be cautious now, lest we are recognised and taken."

"It is a cursed life to lead, John."

"But the hunted shall become hunters," returned the younger Jenkins, in a low, deep voice.

By this time the two men were proceeding down an alley in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, and who should issue out of a low public-house, but the fellow who made friends with the blacksmith after standing up to fight him a few weeks before.

"Ah!" he said, "I'm glad to see ye! Won't you come in and take a pot with us? There's flash Jim Banting, and slashing Joe Timmins, the boy who fought the champion t'other day,—and lots more."

"No, thank you. To tell the truth, I believe I've no money. Have you, John?"

"Not a stiver! Has mother?"

"I think she changed our last shilling this morning."

"Ha! And we are not in the country now to shoot a buck."

"Never mind that," said the ex-prize-fighter. "Such fellows as you are need never want for money. My eyes! what limbs that young 'un has! so long and sinewy!"

"Yes," returned Jenkins, regarding his son with some pride. "He's a chip of the old block."

"Ever been in the ring, sir?"

"No."

"I think I've seen you once or twice—once when we had a set-to with some game-keepers.—Lots of pluck!"

"Had we not better go to my mother now?" said John.

"We must get some money first."

"I'll put you up to the way of clawing some blunt," interposed the *ci-devant* boxer. "You have a capital idea of pugilism for an *un*-perfessional, and I can see milling written on your son's face."

"Well, what rascal business is it you want done?" said John. "We must have money, indeed."

"No rascal business, my pal. Fighting's the way to grab the dust. I'm a-thinking of returning to the ring, there's such encouragement given to the lovely science! You can handle your mawleys?"

"What's that?—I'm not up to your London slang," returned the smith, his son remaining silent.

"Using your fisteses," was the response. "Come along in—you may make your fortin in no time, both of you—specially the young 'un."

"Well, I am hungry, and thirsty too; so have with you."

Jenkins took the arm of John, and, accompanied by their "milling" acquaintance, entered the public-house—one of those low, sporting dens which the intelligence of the age now, for the most part, leaves but little patronage for. That place is still in existence, and was once, it is said, the resort of a celebrated Marquis, and the haunt of all the blackguards and fighting men in town. As the pugilist and his friends opened the door of the public-house, they heard some person singing, in a gruff voice, these words:—

"Oh! the little flash ken that we visit at night—
So snug and so cheery—to drink and to quaff;
It makes the heart glad, and the old ogles bright,
When we sit here and sing, smoke like devils, and laugh!
Ha, ha, ha!—puff away, blow the clouds high.
Come, a chorus!—Ha, ha, ha, ha! in crowds cry."

"What a precious trumpet you've got, Dick Knockwell!" exclaimed the person who conducted Jenkins and his son into the public-house, and led the way into an apartment crowded with pugilists, sporting men, and low "flash" characters.

"Why, my cove! who are these you've brought us? That's a strapping boy, by Jingo!" exclaimed the chairman—a boxer.

"Yes; you'll do well to welcome them to your ken. Look at this arm—there's not a better in England. I'll take any bet, that, with six

months' training, this lad here would drub slashing Joe, and the flash one, all to nothing. Some lush!"

"What'll you bet on the long 'un?"

"Two to one against Joe."

"What does Joe say to it?"

"Why, yer see, my cock," returned a sturdy fellow, who was an eminent pugilist of the day, "that there six feet one is so precious long in the arms, that, if he could use his mawleys, he'd hammer me up now; for since that there last mill, when I broke my wrist, I'm not the man as I was: but I'm game still, and am willing to have a set-to with either of the coves."

"Bravo, Joey! He's a plucky one. The gemman, I see, has lost a lot of blood lately; but he'll soon pick up."

Much more conversation of a similar sort ensued; and the ruffians, who crowded the sporting house, pushed to the side of the two strong men, and requested to see their muscles. Jenkins bared his arm immediately; but John refused, sternly and decidedly. The smith's huge bones were much admired; and he was requested to give a specimen of his strength. Accordingly, Jenkins took up a man in either hand, by the waistband of the breeches, and held his arms out—much to the admiration of all present. John took his departure while the company were engaged thus, unobserved, and proceeded along Russell-street, when a carriage suddenly passed him. He caught a glimpse of some one in the vehicle, and uttered a fearful cry: then he rushed from the place, muttering "Vengeance!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

HYDE PARK OF YORE, AND NOW—"THE SIGHT"—THE PRINCE AND TRAVERS—FANNY AGAIN—THE DINNER—THE PANDER—THE OFFER—SUPERSTITION—ALARM.

I HOPE my fair readers have pardoned me for the foregoing scene in the sporting house, which was necessary for the development of the tale; and if the custom of introducing slang be reprobated, I can only quote the examples of Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, in "Paul Clifford," of Ainsworth and Dickens, in defence, and add, "such things are;" and, therefore, if a fiction be not crowded with them, they serve to illustrate a portion of human nature, and so far are useful. I hardly know, indeed, whether the delineation of the scene is correct; but if not, I can bear to be thought ignorant on such a point. It is to Hyde Park, on a Sunday afternoon, about three o'clock, we now proceed.

The Park at that time was in its glory: *now* it has fallen into disrepute; and when we walk in it on the day of rest, our olfactory nerves are assailed with horrible tobacco and atrocious pomatum, and our eyes offended with vulgarity the most intense, strutting and staring like the peacock, and talking about "the Hopera," "*Greasy*," "Helsler," &c. &c. But at that time the Park was the atmosphere inhaled by aristocracy; and citizens went to tea at such an hour as four—neither did they smoke foul weeds, nor affect a rage for foreign singers and dancers. Hyde Park would not now be endured by a Travers Wharton; and could that essence of grace, that "glass of fashion, and that mould of form," arise, he would exclaim, in amazement, with the Latin writer, "*Heu! quantum mutatus est!*" At the beginning of the present century, it was his private lounge; and he seldom neglected to show himself to the admiring gaze of London there on a Sunday afternoon, dressed to perfection, and driving some splendid new horse.

"Ah, Countess, good morning!" said one of the Travers Wharton *clique* to a fashionable lady of title. "Have you seen the sight?"

"No; have you?"

"Yes; I caught a glimpse of her—being on horseback; but Travers keeps her close. Last night I was at Drury Lane, and I saw her face."

"She was at the theatre, then?"

"Yes; Travers took her for an hour. She was in a private box. Ah! they are coming round again. His new horse flies like the wind." And as the words hovered on the dandy's lips, a fine equipage, driven by Captain Wharton, appeared. "There is the Prince coming in from the Piccadilly side," remarked the fop who had before spoken. "Travers will stop to speak to *him*, but not to *me*."

The illustrious Coxcomb did as had been predicted; and the prince rode up to him, and gazed into the carriage, at the back of which was a female.

"You ran away from me last night, Travers," said the Prince of Wales to the guardsman, "though you had promised to play a game of piquet with me."

"My adorable prince, this fair friend of mine must plead my excuse. Fanny, my love! his royal highness the Prince of Wales."

The Prince extended his hand, and took the tiny palm of Fanny. "You hide your face, bright planet!" he said; "and there are many besides myself anxious to worship its lustre in common with our good friend, Captain Wharton."

A crowd of carriages and horsemen had already collected about them.

"You honour me too greatly, sir," returned the young girl, with trembling voice, as she turned her blushing face to the Prince.

"Heavens!—a divinity, Wharton!" whispered the heir to the throne. "I will dine with you to-day, if you like."

"You will find her full of originality and talent," replied the Captain. "But I must get on now, or my way will be entirely blocked up. I dine at six, you know, Prince." So saying, the Coxcomb put his vehicle in motion again, and drove on "the observed of all observers."

"Oh, Travers!" said Fanny, whose native delicacy shrank from what she felt to be an exposure, "could you not have avoided this?"

"Impossible," returned the Captain, coldly, conceiving the Gipsy was much honoured by the notice into which he had brought her, and thinking only of himself.

Talk you of vulgarity? The greatest of all vulgarity is that which passes for elegance with those of empty heads and hearts. That little love of wonder—of admiration,—is the vilest low-mindedness in nature. For the first time, Fanny thought her idol not only unkind, but heartless. Oh, the awakening—the *first* miserable awakening from the dream of passion, is like bursting the sweet bonds of the land of vision, when we are wretched and hopeless, and the actual rises up—vast and terrible! Then the soul is certain that those things which, at a distance, appeared uncertainty, are all too true: then, we are assured, that if time is the all-in-all for man, it is a blank, a starless void, a shadow, and a silence! The Gipsy did not speak again; she saw not the wondering eyes that were fixed on her strange beauty; she heard not the sounds of busy life around, but was absorbed in gloomiest reverie.

"Why do you not smile, Fanny?" inquired the fop, rather peevishly, as he left the Park, and drove along Piccadilly.

"Are smiles to be the creatures of our will?" returned the Gipsy. "Look up to the heavens—there is sunshine and darkness by turns for ever."

"That is a pretty conceit of yours, love! Remember, you *must* smile when the Prince comes: he does not like gloom."

"You love the Prince?"

"Eh?—no;—absurd! I like him as a companion;—the finest gentleman of my acquaintance: but as for loving a man—pooh! It's pretty well to adore a woman!"

"I mourn sometimes, nay, often, that we do not all love each other. There is joy, deep joy, in loving—even in hanging on nature: then, how much more on man!"

Fanny might have been another L. E. L. There is a deep, gushing tenderness in the imaginative and the passionate among women, peculiarly their own. Men love, and deeply too; but womanly affection is all itself. And how it is universalized as a sentiment, when it exists as a passion! Each flower that blows seems redolent—seems breathing of things unutterable and divine: all sounds and sights articulate to the spirit of what is in the spirit only—love, deep love! Fanny, willing still to deceive herself, reproached her heart with having harboured a feeling injurious to her lover, and said—

"I will try to smile on the Prince, since you wish it. Is he a great man?"

"A prince *is* great, you know, child."

"Nay, but there is a greatness beyond that of birth, surely. Is not your brother, Lord Wharton, a great man?"

"He is a devilish clever fellow, I believe; though I should find it a bore to read his speeches. The Prince is a clever man, and, except myself, the most popular of the elect."

"But the mind;—don't you think there is something in *that*?"

"Look here, Fanny; there are two kinds of greatness: the one is popularity, and lasts for a day: the other is a fame, which fools and madmen idolize, and may exist a thousand years hence. *I* don't care to be immortalized by poets when I'm worms' meat.—But here we are at home: mind you dress yourself with all your skill; the Prince is a con noisseur in dress."

"Why do you think so much of that man, if you do not care for him?"

"Simpleton! he will be king of England one day, and I shall then probably be his chamberlain." . . . .

Fanny proceeded to attire herself in a rich dress which had been made for her by a court milliner, under the direction of the Coxcomb himself. It became her well; and when she descended to the small, but elegant drawing-room, adorned with pictures and mirrors, which Captain Wharton had furnished on purpose for his mistress, she looked dazzlingly beautiful; and the Coxcomb was enraptured.

"Charming, charming!" exclaimed Travers Wharton. "Upon my soul, I think there never were two such beings as we are! Let me put that curl in its place, just over your bosom;—that is well, sweetest! You do not want rouge; but I think a little white powder might improve your neck, which is sunburnt. You must not expose yourself to the weather."

"How have you acquired all this knowledge in female dress?"

"Why, all the ladies in England appeal to my judgment. I *invent* fashions, Fanny. Come, now—study some attitudes."

"Are not the natural positions of the human form the finest?"

"Oh, it's all very fine to talk of 'snatching a grace beyond the reach of art;' but I conceive art is the highest excellence to which we can attain."

"Do you wish me to be the child of art or nature?"

"Why, I admire a wild flower as such; but when it is transplanted to a rich garden, it requires some of the care we give to other plants."

"It cannot become like artificial flowers."

"Oh, I can teach you to be anything! Have you learned that song yet? The Prince will like to hear you sing."

"I don't like it."

"Pshaw! you are full of your fancies. Every one likes that song; it is from Italy. My *bijou!* you must learn to like what others like."

"Impossible!" cried Fanny, impetuously. "I never did follow the vulgar taste. I have always delighted in seeking out beauties that escape the common eye—in investing the real with my dreams and passionate thoughts."

"But you see, my love, you have hitherto lived among beings of coarse habits and low tastes, and now you must move in a very different sphere. There is one thing you excel in greatly, and that is dancing; and I must have you taught by a French master.—That is the Prince's knock: he is punctual. You have made a great impression on him, I can see. His admiration is worth having. My Prince! welcome to my new abode!"

"Its presiding goddess would cast a radiance on squalor and darkness!" returned the Prince of Wales.

"Is she not pretty?" rejoined the Coxcomb. "You might span her waist, now the milliner has displayed her natural symmetry. Look at her neck; isn't it perfect? Show yourself to the Prince, my little queen! Her foot—did you ever see such a foot? Her ankle, too;—you have never seen such another at St. James's!"

Fanny's face flushed crimson with indignation; and she burst away from her lover, who had no idea of wounding her susceptibility by pointing out her "points," as he would have done a courser's: but the Prince had more delicacy than Travers, especially as he was ignorant of the origin of the girl.

"This is too bad of you, Travers," he said. "Lady, do not be offended with our dear Wharton, who, in his pride of heart, at being blest with the possession of such charms, has been guilty of a transgression—which he must not repeat. Travers, I condemn you to silence for five minutes, for this offence. No answer; no appeal. Sweet lady, by what name shall I call you?" Thus soothing the mortified vanity of the Gipsy, the Prince took her hand, and gazed at her with respectful admiration. She felt grateful to him, and answered—

"I am called Fanny, sir."

"And have you no other name? Then I will give you one. You shall be called the Lady Fanny of Fairyland; the most bewitching fairy in this realm of England! You must not speak yet, Travers. Your ladyship was surely intended by nature for an airy sprite, rather than a mortal. You do not seem to touch the earth;—you disdain the ground, and swim in the air of your own motion!"

"Ah, that is beautiful!" cried Fanny, "Your royal highness is a poet."

The Prince smiled at the *naiveté* of the girl.

"I am glad the fancy pleases you. But, bright fairy! we must not

be too cruel to our poor Travers. He repents, and shall kneel at your ladyship's feet. Down, penitent—down!"

"I pray your royal highness to excuse me," returned the fop. "It is impossible for me to kneel, my waist being so confined."

"The poor Travers!" laughed the Prince. "Your ladyship must extend forgiveness, then, without his doing you such homage."

Fanny smiled one of her radiant smiles, and said—

"I am a spoilt girl, your highness."

"Very much so," interrupted the Coxcomb, peevishly; but the Prince, in his turn, interposed—

"What, Sir Rebel! Do you want to be again sent to Coventry? Come, now, it is our sovereign will and pleasure that, in all things, the Lady Fanny of Fairyland be implicitly obeyed this night. She is queen, we are subjects. To what office will your majesty appoint me of Wales?"

There was something so gratifying to the Gipsy, in the tone and manner of that accomplished gentleman—even more than the homage he paid to her beauty,---that she forgot all her vexation and anger, and was all herself. It was truly surprising, how she became her new station---how elegant were her movements---how pretty, almost polished, her whole behaviour! The Prince was inclined to think that she was some actress Travers had brought from the country; and yet there was a *nature* in her which puzzled him extremely. Full of discernment as he was, he could not conjecture how the little lady had become what she was. She did not seem to feel any awe at his presence; and if she treated him as her superior, it was with no awkward shyness, though she was reserved, and spoke little. The Prince was then a very fine man; and Fanny was charmed with his fine sense, his intelligence, and vivacity: she could not but acknowledge that, as a *man*, he excelled Travers Wharton. In answer to the last question of the Prince, Fanny said—

"If your royal highness will condescend to be my minister, I shall be proud to listen to your counsels."

"Minister?—ha, ha! I could not have aspired so high: but as your majesty will——Come, Travers, you are not sulky at my advancement? Is dinner ready?"

A servant announced the repast was spread, even as the Prince spoke, and the royal guest offered his arm to Fanny, and conducted her down stairs.

"I suppose he wants to get her from me," thought the Coxcomb to himself. "Well, if he will get me some office of a thousand a year, he shall have her."

The fop regarded his mistress exactly in the light of his new Arabian. And she loved him as if he had been a god!—The madness! The dinner proceeded: it was cooked to perfection. The wine was equal to any ever

drunk, and the Prince in high spirits. By the time the dessert was on the table, all three were amused, pleased, delighted.

"To your health, O queen!" cried the Prince to Fanny. "You must pledge me in this new wine,—the best, Travers, you have yet imported. The glory of beauty never looks so divine as when it is lit up with this beverage, and we are inclined to idealize the beautiful. Lady Fanny, before dinner, I thought you a fairy, and now you seem a goddess! You *always* look the spiritual; but you *can* appear the heavenly. Oh! without wine to elevate—without the charms of woman to intoxicate,—what a desert were the world! You sing, Travers tells me. Your harshest sounds are music, fairest!"

"He is far gone, indeed, in love," cogitated the Coxcomb, as the Prince, who had already taken a large quantity of wine, thus complimented Fanny. "I did not think she would have hit his taste."

"Your highness is fond of music," returned Fanny; "and, indeed, without it, all would seem dead."

"Not so, not so!" cried the Prince. "When I gaze into the light of those ethereal eyes—so wild, liquid, intense,—I think beauty is enough to gaze upon—to adore! Divinest fairy! from what rose of Paradise did you steal that exquisite pink, that peach-like bloom, on your damask cheek? Tell me, now, how the gods made you? Did the eternal heavens pour down brightness on your orbs---of passionate meaning---making them beacons to the world, and informing it that there is Elysium in the spheres? Whisper how *you* stole those azure veins, those ruby lips! Painting cannot imitate them; sculpture cannot embody!"

The Prince's imagination was inflamed with champagne, and his blood heated with the stimulating viands he had swallowed.

"Now," thought Travers, "I might make any bargain with him for her. Let him drink on—*I* know him."

Fanny's own fancy was so orientally wild, that the adulation of the Prince did not appear extravagant; but she perceived that her royal admirer's hand was unsteady, and was too much accustomed to behold drunkenness, to construe what he said into anything like that which Travers interpreted to himself.

"Try this wine, Prince," said the Coxcomb. "It is rather powerful, but, in my opinion, very fine."

"I thank you. Lady Fanny, do you sip the dews of your own lip, that you do not drink? Ah! if it were mine to do so, I would forswear wine for ever. Happy Travers!"

Fanny looked uneasy, while the Prince darted glances of fire at her exquisite face, which had more colour than commonly, and was, indeed, divine in its strange beauty.

"As you have taken as much wine as you like, perhaps you had better go up stairs," said Travers to his mistress. "We will rejoin you presently."

"Treason!" exclaimed the prince. "Shall a subject thus address majesty? What! sweet queen—you *will* go?"

Fanny glided out of the apartment; and Travers drawing his chair close to the Prince, said—

"She is a jewel, eh?"

"Such as might hang on the bosom of a Houri!" was the enthusiastic reply. "If I were a Turkish despot, I'd wring her from you for my haram. You are a lucky dog! Tell me how you picked up this wild rose, Travers?"

"That's a secret I cannot impart even to *you*, my Prince. But what would you give for her?"

"Eh! you wouldn't sell?"

"Only to oblige *you*, would I part with her. Some more wine. She has charms you dream not of. Get her to talk to you in her wild, passionate way; when every tone thrills, when every look is fire. Ah! she *can* love, my Prince. I can tell you, when her arms are about your neck, and her fragrant breath mingles with yours, she is angelic! I see the description touches you to the quick. She has a heart; she has a soul, burning——"

"Hang it, my dear Travers, don't talk so! You, who are so cold yourself, cannot conceive the passions of a nature like mine, after I have drank more than a bottle of champagne. She is a wonder, in truth!"

"And, then, her lips, Prince!—so soft; velvet is rough to them. Ha, ha!—you must kiss her, and then you'll know what they are. Her skin is like down itself, and the blood seems to thrill under it—it is liquid fire!"

"I'll hear no more. What do you want for her?"

"Procure me a thousand a year: I know you can do it. She'll love you like the devil!"

"I doat on her already to distraction. I must have her: but do you think she'll transfer her affections so easily?"

"What cannot *you* do? She may make a little fuss; but she'll yield immediately. You'll get me the situation?"

"Yes; you shall have a colonelcy---a place---anything, in short. I'm eternally obliged to you, Travers, for your friendship. You think I can win her? Perhaps I can: I feel in the mood for making love. I will go to her."

The Prince rose, and walked unsteadily to the door.

"I shall go out for an hour," said Travers Wharton, having thus vilely pandered to the sensuality of his royal friend.

The Prince ascended to the drawing-room; and there, stretched on a sofa, apparently asleep, lay Fanny. He stole to her side; and she murmured---

"Oh, star! I do not perceive thy meaning. What danger do you

portend?" The Prince contemplated her with breathless admiration, as, with closed eyes, she continued: "What danger! oh spirit of my fate! what danger and despair?"

The royal guest bent down, supposing she talked in her sleep, and inhaled her breath. The devil in that man was alive; and hardly knowing what he did, he caught her in his arms, and kissed her passionately.

"Ah, Travers!" cried the Gipsy; but opening her eyes, she saw the Prince. She screamed and struggled violently; but she was as an infant in the grasp of that powerful man. He released her, however, saying---

"Forgive me, my fairy! I thought you slept. I am come to offer you my love---my worship! Will you be mine?"

"Begone, sir!" exclaimed the Gipsy, her slight form dilating. "If you were not intoxicated---"

"Nay, I am only drunk with the sense of beauty, my angel! Be mine, and name your own conditions! I would give my future England to you for your passion! Suffer me to clasp your taper waist——"

"Unhand me, O, royal ruffian!" cried the Gipsy, almost fiercely. "Travers! Help! Travers! Travers!"

But no one answered the cry.

"He does not love you as I will," said the Prince. "He has no heart, no feeling."

Again he attempted to embrace her, and gently placed his hand on her mouth, fearful lest her cries should be heard in the street. She threw herself on her knees before him, she clasped her little hands in supplication. That could not have been acting!

"O, royal sir!" she said, when the Prince suffered her to speak. "I am a weak, erring being; but you would not insult me, who am so defenceless? You have drunk deep, and do not retain the possession of your reason. Let me go: it has been love which drew me down from virtue,—deep, passionate love for Travers! I begin now to see the sin I have committed;—the golden light will soon vanish; and all will be utter darkness! I shall be left without a star in immensity,—Fate has so decreed it! But you will not blast my soul now with violence? I love him—none but him—never can I love another. Every passion, dream, desire of my being are centered in him. You are moved;—yes, he is my idol, my hope, my god!"

The Prince turned away. The spark of human feeling still existed in his bosom, libertine as he was, and he replied to the suppliant—

"Pardon me! I have wronged you. Unhappy girl! Yours is a wretched destiny. To love that unfeeling being,—well, well! If he should desert you, come to me. Good night."

"Heaven bless your highness!" returned Fanny, rising, and weeping bitterly.

The Prince would have attempted to soothe the young creature's

grief; but she suddenly quitted the room; and he left the house. The one went to her solitary chamber, the other to his gorgeous palace; the one to indulge agony, the other to drive away thought, among his courtiers.

"Can it be," thought Fanny, "that Travers consented to permit the Prince to insult me? No, no! I will not think it! But he will be faithless,—yes, he will, he *must*. What avails the struggle?—what is written in heaven is inevitable.—O, moon! Thou that dost look like a guardian spirit there in the firmament—hast thou not a charm to make love everlasting? *I* could love for ever—like thee, thou pure and divine!"

The Gipsy contemplated the solemn night with straining eyes, as if she beheld some ethereal being in the sky.

"Come to my heart, O thou wondrous one!" she exclaimed, tremulously. "Thou that art invisible, but the only true light;—essence of all love and immortality! Moon spirit! come hither. Tell me tenderly all,—all! I dream of thee awake—asleep! When the universe is hushed, and not a sound louder than the rustling of the boughs in the night wind can be heard, I see thee weeping for our woes! Gentlest,—purest, holiest!"

Of all the mystical idealists that ever breathed that girl was the wildest. She made a religion of the abstract; worshipping the life of things. And as she wept still, there came on the wings of the breeze a wild melody. She only heard it for an instant, but beneath her window in the street she caught a glance of a tall, shadowy form, which swept away silently and swiftly. The superstitious Fanny murmured—

"I have seen that form before, *twice*. It has visited me in my tent, it has appeared to me as I lay under the dark vault,—and I know it is not earthly. It warns me of the great eras in my existence! And always for evil, alas, alas!"

The Gipsy threw herself on the luxurious bed,—to which she would have preferred some hay,—and cried herself to sleep. When she woke, the sun was just rising, and surprised at the sight, she looked round for Travers. But he was not to be seen. She rang the bell and inquired for him. He had not been home that night. She was alarmed, and dispatched a messenger to a gaming-house which the Coxcomb frequented. The servant returned with the intelligence that Captain Wharton had been there the previous evening, and remained till a late hour; but this was all he could ascertain.

"I will seek him," said Fanny to herself.

And she went forth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FANNY AND THE "LUSHINGTONS"—THE RESCUE—THE PURSUER—THE HORSEMAN—LORD WHARTON—THE APPARITION.

It was with a superstitious presentiment of impending danger, that Fanny went forth in search of Travers. There was something in the aspect of the star which she fancied was that of her nativity, which perplexed her,—some danger, she thought, might be obviated by her; she was convinced her lover was exposed to a peril she had dreamed would befal him,—perhaps the vengeance of John Jenkins. That thought was terrible to the Gipsy; for well she knew his desperate nature, and deeply did she feel how much he had been wronged. She thought, too, when she was returning from the theatre on the Saturday night, that she heard the voice of John in a wild cry, though she had not seen him. Swiftly then did she speed through the streets, and many were the exclamations of surprise, and many were the wondering eyes turned upon her;—for she still wore the rich dress she had appeared in the preceding evening; —and her hair fell in disordered masses over her shoulders; so that what with her singular beauty, and her wild, eager looks, she was hardly likely to escape vulgar observation and remark. And she sped on with her fawn-like swiftness of foot, leaving tall men who were striding quickly to business, behind.

"My eyes, Bill!" remarked an individual, who was what is termed "a *lushington*," and who was rolling homewards, after having spent the night and the morning in some such place as the "Finish"—near Covent Garden. "My eyes, Bill! here's a jolly go! What a precious gal! I'm blowed if I ever——!"

"Whew!" whistled Bill—a gentleman with a snub nose, carotty hair, and pig eyes, who had evidently been enjoying potations deep and long. "If that aint something, strike me dead! Come on!"

"My dear!" cried the first lushington to Fanny, "what flash-house do you come from?—Don't be in such a confounded hurry; it's hardly eight o'clock yet."

Fanny increased her speed at this address; but the snub-nosed individual was determined, as he phrased it, "to have a lark with the dress gal." So he pursued her, and continued—

"Won't you come and have a flash o' lightning with us? Or, as you're more genteeler than to drink such stuff, we'll stand a bottle o' wine? You won't? Don't come it so high and mighty now! We've got lots of blunt, I can tell ye. I've just come into some money; and I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take you into keeping."

"Begone!" exclaimed Fanny, (who seemed doomed to be offended with such offers of protection.) The low blackguardism of the lushington in thus proffering his admiration to the girl was a ludicrous contrast to the elegance and grace of the Prince, when he avowed his love a few hours before.

"Blow me tight, how you runs, little one!" cried Bill.

It was now fairly a chace, and the Gipsy, hardly knowing what she did, fled down one of those narrow courts in the vicinity of St. Giles's, the inhabitants of which are of such vile character. At the time of our tale the police were ineffective, and scenes of violence and crime were of daily occurrence in the "back slums" of the metropolis. The ruffians who swarm in the loathsome hovels out of Holborn were more daring and formidable than they are now, and no respectable person could venture into their haunts without being insulted,—perhaps maltreated. Fanny then found her further progress impeded at the end of the court by a filthy house, and her pursuers, who, of course, conceived she was on the town, but new to London, caught hold of her, and one tried to snatch a kiss.

"Help!" screamed the Gipsy, loudly. "Unhand me! Help!"

"What the devil's the matter with you, my little beauty?" said Bill. "Haven't we said we'll down with the *ochre?* I never knew such a *blow*——"

"What do you want, wretches? Drunken beasts, let me go!"

"Hasn't she a tongue, Bill? But she scolds like a angel! Come along, Mary,—is that your name?—we'll take care of you."

The Gipsy renewed her cries, but the thieves and ruffians in the court only looked out of window, and laughed, without stirring to her help.

"Come, now," cried one of Fanny's tormentors, "tell us what you'd have?" And he put his arm round her waist, and again tried to kiss her.

"Murder!" screamed the girl. "Is there no help? O, let me go, for God's sake!"

"What are you a doing to the flash gal?" here exclaimed a voice. And a sturdy fellow, with a cudgel in his hand, appeared from a house in the middle of the court.

"What's that to you?" retorted the first lushington.

"Don't be imperent, my swell cove, or I'll let the daylight into your peepers!" was the response of the fellow thus addressed.

"Will ye? I should like to see ye do it. Put down that stick, and won't I give it ye!"

"Don't be a green!" here interposed Bill's companion, who still held Fanny, "that's black William, the fighting man; and if you go for to---"

"I don't care," interrupted Bill, assuming a scientific attitude. "I've been in the Fives, and I should like to lick him. Come on!"

"Very well, my little cockney, as you *will* have it!" returned the fighting man, and with a single blow, he made his antagonist measure five-feet-six on the earth. "Do *you* want it, too?" he added to the other.

"No, thank'ee—much obliged to ye all the same. Never knew a chap like that there Bill!"

It was at this juncture that a tall man—who had just emerged from the same house as "black William"—strode forwards. Fanny uttered a scream, wilder than any that had escaped her before, and bursting away with a great effort, darted past the tall man, who stood petrified with astonishment a moment, and then followed her.

It was quite a sight to the Londoners—that chace. The little dirty boys pursued, hooting, and crying "stop thief." But the fastest runner of them all could not overtake the fugitive. And Fanny, panting, and terrified, sped on. But she soon left the streets behind, and continued her flight, in the direction of Hampstead. Soon, however, she found the pursuit entirely relinquished; for the person who had excited such alarm in her breast suddenly stopped, gazed after her flying figure for a minute, and then disappeared. The mob desisted from giving chace, and wondered why they had done so,—for the vulgar act as others do, without thought, appearing to find pleasure in obeying impulse,—and the Gipsy paused to recover her breath, which was well nigh spent. She collected her scattered thoughts, and congratulated herself on having escaped the perils with which she had been beset. She was now in that part of the suburbs where the Regent's Park stands at this day, and all was still and calm. The sparrows chirped, the wind sang sweetly and freshly, and in spite of the foliage being stripped from the trees, all looked gay and cheerful. The Gipsy stood with her flushed cheek and her heated face gazing towards Primrose Hill. Her long, beautiful hair had escaped from its confinement, and what with the changing colours on that fair countenance, the excited eyes, the labouring breath, her loveliness appeared unequalled.

"What shall I do now?" she asked herself; "O Fate! direct me." Accustomed to imagine a spirit of destiny walked with her, she consulted with herself for an instant, and then murmured, "Yes, I will walk this way. I shall hear of him away from London. The Spirit never tells me false."

While she was thus cogitating, a person on horseback had been contemplating her with wonder. It was almost impossible, indeed, to have passed the Gipsy then, without observation; and he who regarded her was one too much alive to beauty not to admire her. He had apparently but recently recovered from severe illness; but although debilitated, his frame seemed powerful and muscular. He was mounted on a bay horse, of noble symmetry, and high blood, and appeared to be in the ranks of

the patricians. As Fanny was stepping forwards, the stranger rode up to her, and exclaimed—

"What brings you here, pretty one, thus?"

The Gipsy lifted her eyes, and was half inclined to resume her flight; but there was something in that man's face, which excited an unaccountable interest in her bosom. But she did not reply to the question that had been addressed to her, and took a step onward. The stranger again opened his lips.

"It is a delightful morning; but are you not cold in such a dress as you wear?"

"No; I am never cold," was the reply.

"Indeed! Ah, at your age the blood is warm and abundant! It seems rather to rush than to flow through the heart."

Fanny was silent.

"I wonder who she is?" thought the stranger. "She is a most extraordinary-looking girl.—My dear," he added, aloud, "will you ride with me? You are so little a Venus that my horse will gallop with us both, as well as with one.—You will not?"

"No, I thank you," replied Fanny; but even as she spoke she perceived two individuals in the distance—her sight being keen and far—in whom she thought she recognised her two persecutors of half an hour before. She, therefore, acting on the spur of the moment, as was her wont, altered her note and said, "I will accept your offer."

In an instant the horseman caught up her light form, muttering—

"No one will see me here, at this hour;" and set his steed in motion.

"Put him to his fullest speed," said Fanny; "I like to fly through the air."

"As you will, little beauty!"

And they were soon galloping away at the rate of sixteen miles an hour. They proceeded thus for several minutes, and when they were at the foot of Primrose Hill, the girl said—

"I thank you. Now I will dismount."

"I will not part with you, yet," replied the horseman. "Tell me who and what you are? Have you dropped from the moon?"

"Why do you ask *that?*" returned the Gipsy.

"Because I do not remember to have seen anything like you on earth. I am one who adore novelty,—and by Heaven——! But no! It were a vile thing, I suppose,—a vile return for all Anna's kind care and love——!"

He suffered his steed to walk, and gazed abstractedly into the distance. Who *was* he? That was a question which occurred to Fanny very often, as she rode before the stranger: and her curiosity was fated to be satisfied.

"Girl!" said the unknown, "have you ever known remorse?" And he fixed his keen dark eyes on her. She shuddered.

"Why do you ask me?" she returned.

"Because it is gnawing at my heart now like a vulture. If you will charm it away, I will give you all I have."

"Ah!" replied the Gipsy, "*who* has not known remorse? It is the owlet spirit that flies before our path in the bright day, when Heaven rejoices, and earth exults in the ethereal brightness. I cannot charm it away. O that I could!"

The stranger groaned deeply. He heard not,—though his ears were open,—with the mind: but he said—

"It smites the stern soul down, and the heart shrivels beneath the hot breath!—Child as you are, *your* being has been already scorched up then with the fever?—So, so! And I—I—Lord Wharton—the proud, dreaded Wharton——"

"What!" cried the Gipsy. "Are *you* Lord Wharton?"

"Ha, ha! No, I *was!*—I *will* be Lord Wharton again!—Kiss me, my girl! Come, will you be mine?—I'll have another mistress!"

"No, no! I am your brother's—Know you of him? I fear some danger has befallen him. O, my lord, take me to Travers, if you know where he is. I should die were he lost to me!"

"Travers told me of you.—But how came you here? What is amiss?—I dream!"

"You look ill, my lord?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, "I see it there again—it crossed me once before, this morning."

He leapt from his horse, and rushed down a narrow lane—first vaulting over a gate—in which there were trees growing thickly. But Fanny saw nothing. She dismounted, and hesitated for a minute or two; then she struck into a narrow path, saying to herself—

"This way the Spirit guides me,—that way his Spirit carries him!"

Strange as was the conduct of Lord Wharton, it made but little impression on Fanny, for the phantom of her brain was as vividly before it, as the vision---real, or ideal--- he pursued appeared to him. The one was the least superstitious, and the other the most so of all human beings, and yet they were acting alike. Verily, the essences of things, resolved into their elements, appear almost identical. Extremes ever meet, although farthest removed from each other. I am writing a history of mind as well as of action, and therefore it is necessary here and there to elucidate the abstract; but I would not pursue it farther than is indispensable, for several reasons; but I would ask my readers to pursue, and look into the mind which I open for them to look into for their learning, ---I sketch the outline---no more: in fact, who can?---An author may be supposed omniscient; but if he try to seem so, he is a fool. None but God can know the height and breadth of man.

Lord Wharton returned to the place where he had left his horse in the course of a few minutes.

"It shall startle me no more!" he said. "Let hell send forth its devils, and I'll laugh at them! These mocking fiends would scare me; but they know not whom they have to deal with. The mind of Thomas Wharton shall not be shaken by all the sights and sounds of the universe!—Ah! the girl—she is gone. It is well. I will now home. To work! I must work, in order to forget. It is, it must be a dagger of the mind. Conscience, lying conscience! Is it thou that dost conjure up this unsubstantial spectre? Go—in mockery! *Thou* chain down this deep spirit, which would dare damnation to compass its ends!—Enough!"

And so saying, the Peer re-mounted.—Poor wretch! He fancied he could escape from himself; but from the deeps arose a voice stern and awful, and followed him through Time into Eternity. The universe was coloured by his dark soul with all that is terrible and gloomy; yet it was inexorably he held his course,—his purpose did not change, however much his heart might veer round. The *purpose* accompanies us through circumstance; it is fixed, it wavers not: it is a principle, and must be overcome *by* a principle, and not suddenly: what is sudden, is only *outward* change; for the soul remains the same.—O, those that would win men by *fear* to virtue and religion are most unwise! The stubborn will rebels, unless Love moulds it; and Lord Wharton was wrought upon by what he imagined a supernatural agency; he disdained himself for fearing, and consequently, not being a coward, became confirmed in evil. Without love the moral is like a corpse, for love is life, is heaven, and by it alone shall we, can we find them. With all his vices and his crimes Lord Wharton was a great man;—not great entirely, but in the abstract;—there was a loftiness in all he did, which evinced that if his energies had been directed to the good, he might have been a sublime character. How much which could have been so like to God, earth has brought down to be a demon! Alas! the garden is vast, the trees are beautiful, and the fruit and flowers luxuriant, and exquisite: but the weeds, the rank weeds *will* grow, and were there not a divine gardener to pluck them out, they would overspread all beauty for ever. Ever remember that the evil which men do is like the weed, and the good is as the flower: the evil is of earth, and the flower of heaven! The eternal sun pours down upon it, the odours exhale—and then the bright one departs; but, oh! *that* fragrance remains, when the poor flower is dead and gone: it is a memory, a joy, a sadness: remember, rejoice, and be sad by turns,—through *these* is happiness.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

STEPHEN AND NELL—HARRIET'S DISAPPEARANCE—STEPHEN GOES IN SEARCH OF THE MANIAC—TAYLOR—LONDON.

It is to the country that our narrative returns. The pure, the glorious country, with its solitudes, its hills, and rivers. These are the works of no earthly hand, and endure, when all the perishable monuments of man's genius and industry crumble into dust and oblivion. The ruins of Rome stand august and wonderful; our spirit may recur to the majesty of the reigns of the Cæsars, when we contemplate the mistress of the world through the abyss of time; but when we indulge our imagination among the perennial beauties of creation, no despair seizes on us: we feel we are eternal. Stephen and Nell were together a day or two before that when the thread of the story breaks off.

"Do you think you should like to live in a great city as well as here, Stephen?" asked the girl, looking fondly into her cousin's face.

"I know not," he replied. "Great cities make me melancholy: but that is, I suppose, because I am not accustomed to them. I feel lost in the vastness of a city,—there I am a unit, indeed. But here, with the free air around, and the blue sky above, all the tongues of Nature seem friends,—the best and truest of friends!"

"Yet there must be something great, something solemn, in a huge town, Stephen. All press on to the goal, and to behold them as they strain their minds, to see their passions and their woes, must be a fine sight to him who thinks and feels."

"Ay, in spite of all the crime, the want, the lies and villany, which I believe swell the bosom of the city, I would see all I *can* see of my kind. The crowd, the tumult, the labour of life must strengthen and deepen the mind, must afford a lofty theme to moralize upon. We must be among men before we can become men: the *human* is a mighty thing.—But who is this hurrying towards us? Harris! The very man I fought with a few weeks ago!—We are good friends now. What is amiss, Harris? Mr. Travers! Is he well?"

"Yes; but have you seen the madwoman? She has escaped."

"But perhaps she may be still in the grounds: she has never attempted to quit them."

"We have been looking everywhere for her. She was left under my father's care; but the devil himself couldn't keep her, if she had a mind to slip through his fingers."

"I will help you to look for her. I trust all is well."

Stephen assisted diligently in the search which was instituted after Harriet; but to no purpose. Unless she had been subjected to actual imprisonment, the house of Mr. Travers could not hold her. Far and near did they seek some trace of the unfortunate being, and at length Stephen procured a clue which he was resolved on following. Mr. Travers had quitted his seat the preceding day, leaving strict injunctions with his servants to watch Harriet carefully; but when he was gone, his commands were in some measure disregarded, and Harriet took the opportunity to escape *surveillance*.

The youth departed, and was fortunate enough to be able to gain intelligence of Harriet and to trace her from town to town, and village to village; but he could not overtake her, with all the speed he made. He walked nearly thirty miles that day, and was obliged to rest at an inn nearly midway between Travers House and London. He was sitting in the travellers' room, enjoying some bread and cheese after his long walk, when he heard a voice which he thought he knew, and who should enter but the man who called himself Taylor, with whom he had conversed some time before, when they encountered little Quick. They were mutually pleased at seeing each other, and in the course of conversation, Taylor remarked—

"We had some talk when we were together last on several subjects. I have discovered at last the true secret of wisdom, I think, namely, never to let any opportunity pass of acquiring knowledge, however opposite the sentiments of a person be to our own."

"I met with that very notion the other day, in a work which was lent me by Mr. Travers—a sort of compilation and combination of all great systems, which he has recently published."

"Ay, Travers is a fine thinker; rather too speculative, perhaps, in his philosophy, but with large views and high attainments."

"I have gained," said Stephen, "more knowledge of religion from conversing with that great, good man, Mr. Travers, lately, than I ever had,—for there were things which startled, which made me doubt, before they were explained, in the Bible. But you believe?"

"In my fashion. But I am too erring a man to say I am a Christian. He that is such, is greater than angels."

"I think so too. He is both less and more; for he has evil passions, which he subdues, temptations which he overcomes. It appears to me that we were created to raise the soul, and therefore good and evil are blended in our nature. If we were necessarily good—as we may hereafter be—we should not understand the essence of purity. Creation is an inexplicable enigma, unless we suppose the scope of it is the exaltation of man by patience and courage; with faith and love what cannot any one accomplish?"

"I am glad to find our sentiments so congenial." . . . .

The hours passed rapidly away with Taylor and Stephen, as they conversed. There was a freshness of feeling, a bright, fervent sincerity about the young man, which created a powerful liking and esteem for him in the breast of his companion. Though many of the illusions of youth had vanished from Taylor, he was not without his high and generous enthusiasm, his poetry, and passion: and the rich stores of information which he had acquired by an observant and subtile mind in the course of his travels, the inquiring youth was delighted to have imparted to him. He was a man of education, but it appeared he disdained the science of the schools, and thought for himself vigorously and daringly. He was original in every respect; and originality has a great charm for such beings as Stephen, eager to acquire ideas and principles on every subject. And it is pleasant to those who, surrounded by the ice of the world, are obliged to lock themselves up in apathy and indifference, to find one who will listen with a 'greedy ear' to their discourse, who will unbosom the secret sentiments, and reveal the noble part of humanity with confiding heart. Alas! too often do we discover, when we broach something pure and lofty, we are misinterpreted by the vulgar, who sneer at what we say in honesty and truth, so that we are at last necessitated, if we talk at all, to be guarded in every expression, unless we despise all opinion. How it chills us to the soul, after we have made, under the influence of excited feelings, a revelation of the spirit, to behold the sarcastic mouth, the scornful eye, the curling lip; as if we could not *all* feel the sublime and beautiful, which exist in indestructibility of essence!

The following morning, as soon as day broke, Taylor and Stephen quitted the Inn where they had passed the night, the former being on horseback, and the latter still on foot. They proceeded together for about a league, when they parted, and Taylor gave his new friend his address in London, requesting him to call at his lodging in a few days, when he should have returned to town. The youth continued his quest for the maniac indefatigably, but sometimes could gain no intelligence respecting her. At last he found that she had gone by the wagon to London; and followed with all dispatch, hoping to overtake it ere it reached the metropolis. This he found was impossible, if he pursued on foot, and therefore he mounted the box of a stage-coach, and overtook the wagon as evening fell. But he found to his chagrin that she whom he supposed to be in the wagon had left it but a few minutes before, and he was informed had gone across a field towards Primrose Hill. He quitted the stage and followed again on foot; but his search was vain, and ultimately he gave it up, and repaired to Mr. Travers, who was lodging in the vicinity of Hyde Park.

Night was now descending slowly and solemnly over the earth. From a rising ground Stephen beheld London. What unutterable sensations are excited by that spectacle when beheld for the first time! Still and

vast the huge thing lay, without a breath, without an undulation. Not so much as a murmur escaped from that giant breast that contained a world of passions and of feelings, slumbering, or alive. The churches, the houses, looked sombre afar off, and the eye was weary with the interminable masses of building, as they slept in the peaceful moonlight.

"Sublime!" murmured the youth, an expression of vague awe overspreading his face. "Not a whisper, not a sigh! The volcanic fires stir not.—But they are within, fierce and inextinguishable! City of ages—is this *thou?* A world within a world! Stupendous being! Shalt thou live another thousand years, or become as Babylon, Carthage, Athens, Rome, ere another century have rolled over thy wondrous head? It must be a tempest, indeed, which can overthrow thee! That men's passions should destroy so surely, what men's great thoughts have created! Titan of the Universe! What immense toil has raised thee to be what thou art! When I contemplate thee, I feel my littleness, I shrink into my five-feet-ten of earth. O Man! Strange, marvellous, wonder-work of God! What is thy destiny? Progress, progress! It must be so. Gazing on thy works, I am assured naught but Omnipotence could have formed thee: and yet what a worm thou art! The God, the Brute, the Angel!"

Such were the thoughts excited within the soul of Stephen, and all imaginative and thinking persons have been engaged in similar trains of reflection at certain periods of existence; it is the yearning of the soul towards its eternity; it is the immortal that aspires like the eagle to the skies, while the mortal sinks appalled. Wordsworth, as he stood on the bridge at night, felt like the humble peasant; and how grandly he breaks forth—

> "Dear God! the very houses seem asleep,
> And all that mighty heart is hush'd and still!"

The sceptic who has a soul must doubt if he doubt, when his fancy darts into futurity, when he looks back at the peopled past, and reviews the great Drama of Existence. The harmony of the universe is present to his mind, and, as though a thrilling music rose from the unfathomable Sea of Time, the imagination listens to the deep voices of its mysterious life, and trembles and adores!

The youth proceeded onwards. He was not, strictly speaking, of the poetical temperament, but with intellect so superior to the generality of his class, and accustomed from early childhood to roam among all that is beautiful and sublime in nature, his thoughts necessarily assumed something of a poetical character. There are those of great reflective powers possessed of highly imaginative feelings—Thomas Carlyle is a fine instance of this—and Stephen, who thought deeply, in his undisciplined way, for a lad of seventeen, inwardly ejaculated,

"Surely, there is a soul in Nature! Out of the deep woods comes a spirit forth breathing of the invisible and ideal; and from the myriad-peopled city the genius of civilization seems to issue, telling us of the abstruse mysteries, of the recondite wonders of the breathing mass of life! Those dusky spires, those massive domes—the confused, intricate labyrinths spread in immeasurable majesty before me—have they not tongues to speak of immensity, and hands to point beyond the walled-in universe? Where are the pillars of creation, where the arches of the world?"

Of a truth, the lowliest son of nature may feel the beauty, the grandeur, the infinity of existence as deeply, or more so, than he who has devoted half a life to study and meditation! What is it that breathes such rushing ideas and crowding images into the mind! O deep Nature —"deep and vast as Night and Heaven!"—who can conceive *thee*? And thou art but the robe of Divinity! Betwixt Nature and Deity the gulf is immense, though the connexion is indissoluble. Confuse not the two, when you wonder at the glory of the invisible world: for while Pantheism may elevate and purify the fancy, it leaves a blank, a dead, awful blank in the midst of the divine emanations of the life of loveliness! Yet who but worships Nature? It is the abstract adoration of Deity, and leads to the religion, which is the worship of mind.

Stephen, it has been said, proceeded on his way, wrapt in thoughts which could hardly find utterance; when he fancied he heard a voice singing in the distance. But the moon had withdrawn, and all was dark. The leafless trees sighed in the gale, a stream murmured at his feet, and he concluded that he must have confused these sounds with a human voice. But he paused, and listened. So hushed were all things that he could have detected the slightest murmur within a hundred yards; but nothing again broke the silence.

"We sometimes fancy unearthly tongues are speaking to us, at such an hour as this," thought Stephen: "the dead rise up, and we behold bright forms, dim and shadowy—Ha! what was that?"

Something crossed him within a few paces, and vanished behind some trees, but what it was the darkness, which had grown intense, prevented him from ascertaining. Smiling at himself for the momentary alarm which had seized on him, he continued his way, humming the words of a wild, plaintive song—a favourite of Nell's.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WHARTON'S SOLILOQUY—TAYLOR—THE LETTER—WHARTON AND THE ASSASSIN—A STRUGGLE—SHARP AND HIS POLICY.

ALONE in his study sat Lord Wharton. The room was about a dozen feet square, and was furnished with great regard to comfort—a cheerful fire blazing in the grate, and a lamp burning on a small mahogany table, on which he leant his elbow, supporting his head with his hand. Before him was a newspaper and some MSS., but he did not raise his eyes, the monotonous ticking of a clock, hung up over the book-case, being the only sound that was audible.

"Tick, tick, tick," murmured the statesman. "Thus the heart beats on for ever! Tick, tick! Poor fool, why dost thou beat thus wildly? Thou canst confound thine enemies, thou canst do and dare all things, in spite of the powers of light and darkness; but what avails it? Tick—let it beat on! When it ceases to mark the flight of time, when the everlasting Hades ensepulchres all the wild emotions, and the passionate desires,—why then——Well! Let death come! I never sought for life; but since I *do* live, it shall not be said I lived for nothing. Fame is a bubble, ambition a dream; but the pursuit is stirring and animating: it is a majestic thought, absurd though it be, when we reason deeply and coldly, to think that when our dust has mingled with ashes, and the worms creep through the subtile brain—then torpid, senseless—that memory remains undimmed, unfaded; and may endure immortal and lofty till the sound of the last trump!" He compressed his lips, and folding his arms across his noble chest, contemplated the fire. "Why, what a madness it is!" he exclaimed. "Ambition! What does it matter, when we sleep the endless sleep, how the world is convulsed; and if we are deified or consigned to dumb oblivion? That the fire in this deep heart should be for ever extinguished, when the earth whereon I tread will afford a bright flame like this! Time! thou mockery—what art thou? A feverish vision, a damned reality, a delusion,—and then a silence. Methinks I see thee with thy huge overgrown carcase, breathing heavily;—methinks I see thee even now before me—a phantom and a God! The next dark pulsation in thy gross heart may create my elevation or my downfall. What are we who struggle on the ocean of Destiny? Insects that glitter, flowers that rejoice and gladden, but exhale unwholesome and infectious dews—gall and aconite!"

It was seven o'clock. The Peer roused himself from his reverie as

the chimes rang on his ear, and he rose with the intention of shaking off the lethargy that crept on him.

"I must not indulge in sloth," he said. "Inactivity, now, were sure destruction.—That fellow, Sharp, hang him! I did not think him the scorpion he is! But I know him now—well. The dotard! To think he could crush *me!* The low attorney who I have employed to do my dirty work, rival *me!* Ha, ha!"

And he laughed scornfully and bitterly.—As he was about to refer to some papers, a servant knocked at the door, and on the Peer demanding his business, replied—

"My lord, a person has just called who sends his card by me, wishing to see your lordship."

"Ah! give it me. 'Mr. Taylor.' I recollect. Bid him come in."

Presently the visitor was ushered in, and Wharton received him cordially, saying—

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Taylor. Be seated."

"I hope your lordship will excuse my intrusion at this unseasonable hour——"

"No intrusion, Mr. Taylor!" interrupted the statesman, with one of his blandest smiles; "I was wishing just now to see you. Will you take some wine? You find me recovered from severe illness: but I've beaten it completely."

"Your lordship has borne such an attack, as few persons could. I am glad you have recovered. But I was about to excuse my visit by informing you of some particulars, which I think you would wish to hear. If I am abrupt, the urgency of the matter will plead my excuse."

"Pray proceed; what is amiss?"

"I have obtained by mere accident possession of a paper containing a vile plot against your lordship. The hand-writing may be known to you."

"Ha! By Heaven.—Well, Mr. Taylor; I see what this is."

"Was your lordship prepared——"

"May I ask you to inform me exactly how you obtained this document? It may be a forgery, after all."

"Do you think so? Your lordship may be right; but I will tell you how the paper came into my possession, and then you can judge for yourself. I was riding in the country this morning, when I observed an elderly man, also mounted. I passed him, and remained for a minute or two at the house of a friend on the road, when I again resumed my way. This paper attracted my notice ere I proceeded a furlong, and picking it up, I read it. The contents, as you may suppose, surprised me not a little, and I put it in my pocket, resolved to send it to you. Scarcely had I done so, when the elderly man I mentioned, who had got before me, returned, and asked me if I had seen a paper lying in the road. I

told him no, and hastened towards London, remembering the pleasant hour I passed in your lordship's company a short time since, and willing to serve you——"

"What was the man like, who dropped this paper?"

"He was of middle height, with a very intelligent face, rather stout, and dressed rather in an old-fashioned style. His age might be fifty-six."

"And you have brought this paper to me, remembering our conversation on the road a month ago!—It is strange!"

Lord Wharton cast one of his soul-searching gazes at his visitor, but Taylor met it with an unquailing eye.

"Hark you!" cried the statesman, after a minute's pause. "I do not say I mistrust you; but credulity, you will admit, as a man of the world, were unpardonable in one situated like myself. You are a stranger to me——"

"Not quite, my lord," interrupted Taylor, quietly. "Years ago I knew you."

"Indeed! I do not recollect your face, though I am not apt to forget. Is Taylor your real name?"

"You knew me as Williamson more than twenty years ago. Do you not recollect a boy you fought with——"

"True, true. But why did you not make yourself known to me when I last saw you?"

"My lord! I have reasons for wishing to remain unknown. I will not conceal the fact from you—as I am certain you will not betray me—that I have been guilty of actions which some men do not esteem honest. But as this world goes, there is many an one hanged better and more honest than the sleek rogues who live on the fat of the land by cheating."

"I like your candour. You say true, it is an old, lying, canting world, to say the best of it—now we understand each other. Williamson, you come to me expecting to better your fortunes. You are bold and unscrupulous,—so am I. You occupy a place in society which lays you open to suspicion; but I will not fear to employ you—for you *dare* not, desperate being as you are, play me false."

"I should hardly have made the confession—"

"No protestations! This paper informs me of some things whereof I was ignorant, though I suspected all long ago. But I shall not be taken by surprise, as my enemies shall find. Your services shall not go without reward. I will make it your interest to be faithful. Well do we know that interested motives alone can bind men together. But I must be prompt!" He rang the bell, and ordered a coach to be fetched. "Let me see you again to-morrow morning," he added, to his new ally, "and remember—my gratitude, or my vengeance! Farewell!"

Williamson's full, dark eye met the imperious and haughty glance of the statesman as he moved away. It was the hawk and the eagle.

"You are a great man, my lord," he said, "and I shall be glad to follow your fortunes."

With these words he departed; and when he gained the street, inwardly exclaimed—

"I almost repent me,—it is pity of him! How much more noble a villain,—at least how much *grander* is he in his villany than the generality of such men! How Sharp loses in comparison with that man! He seems the low, sordid pettifogger, after I have looked on that splendid face, and heard that thrilling voice!"

And the minister thought—

"No: he could not play me false! His face,—I like his face. But I'll have him watched; I will not trust him too far."

Lord Wharton quitted his study, and in the hall was met by Anna.

"You are not going out?" she said.

"I must, my love!" replied the statesman, as he wrapt himself in a cloak and donned his hat; "but I shall be back in an hour or so."

"Be careful of yourself, dearest! It is getting rather foggy."

The coach was at the door, and entering it, Lord Wharton ordered the driver to convey him to the house of an eminent person of great influence in the House of Lords. And the lumbering vehicle rolled away through the ill-lit streets. The statesman thought deeply.

"These machinations are deep and subtle,"—thus ran his cogitations—"and I ought to have foreseen them a long time since: but that cursed illness!" He revolved the line of policy expedient to pursue, and a smile of triumph passed over his pale cheek. "I have it!" he cried, "that was a happy thought!"

The coach was now proceeding through a low, dirty street, worse lit than those it had left behind. The moon had vanished, and the fog was increasing rapidly, so that the darkness was intense.

"Ho! Coachman!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, "you have missed the turning," and he put his head out of the window.

The fellow was deaf, and he was obliged to vociferate several times ere he could make him hear. At length he succeeded in doing so, but "Jarvie" was drunk, and he could not see through the gloom. At this juncture a dark form emerged from a court the vehicle was passing, and as Lord Wharton again shouted to the coachman, there was heard a clicking noise,—then there was a flash, and a report, and a ball whizzed within half an inch of the Peer's face.

"Damnation!" exclaimed Wharton, throwing open the door, and jumping out. The assassin rushed away, and the Peer pursued. "I must catch that scoundrel!" thought the Minister, "I cannot remain in constant danger of being murdered."

But it was so dark that Lord Wharton lost the villain he pursued, and soon found himself involved in the intricacies of those vile abodes. In former years he had been accustomed to these horrible places, and was of a nature too fearless to dread aught that might befal him; but in the obscurity having lost his way, he was obliged to grope about, and found he could not extricate himself from his dilemma. At this juncture he heard the sound of voices—he heard oaths and footsteps. To have raised an alarm would have been worse than useless in that place, and if the ruffians found him, it might go hard with him. He repented of his precipitation in pursuing the baffled assassin into such a den, the more so, when he found that he had got between two very high walls, that his further progress was prevented at one end by a building in ruinous condition, and the men he had heard were now within a few paces. He drew his sword—one of those slight weapons, worn rather for ornament than use, and retreated as far as possible. He tried the door of the ruinous house, but it resisted all his efforts to force it. The ruffians came onward,—a dark lantern which one of them carried revealed the form of the statesman. With his back against a wall, he stood erect. The fellows were armed with bludgeons, and were all of cut-throatly aspect, but Wharton did not recognise among them the man who had attempted his life.

"Ha!" cried the foremost of the band, holding the lantern he carried aloft, so that the light might fall on the face of the Peer.

Lord Wharton still felt the effects of his illness, and he was well aware that it would have been absurd to hope he could contend successfully in his debilitated state against half a dozen brawny desperadoes; but he looked at them steadily and haughtily, as if he scorned their numbers, not a muscle moving, not a nerve excited.

"O, my flash cove!" exclaimed the ruffian in the van, "are *you* here. Come, out with your ticker and flams, at once!"

"Back!" said the statesman, calmly, without raising his voice. And there was such unutterable command in that tone, such majesty in the stately form, such power and pride in the white face, rigid as that of a statue, that the low ruffian actually retired a step.

"What! chicken hearted?" cried a second fellow, "let *me* get to him; I'll settle him."

The last speaker made a rush at the statesman. Then Wharton, feeling his life was in such danger, and that his only chance was that a watchman might overhear him, vociferated with all the might of his trumpet voice, which rung through the night air clear and like the thunder in its volume—

"Death to you, miscreant! What ho! Watch! Watch! I say."

The sword of the statesman passed through the right arm of his first assailant, and hurling him to the ground, he attempted to force his way

through the ranks of the enemy. And the giant might of mind so overcame the brute daring of the robbers, that they might have given way, when another form advanced, and a husky voice exclaimed—

"Down with him! Dash his brains out!"

Lord Wharton was attacked by six strong men at once. He retreated with his face to the banditti; but the fellow he had wounded caught his legs, and tugged at them. Again Wharton shouted for the watch. Defending himself with his slight weapon, it was shivered by a blow of one of his assailants' bludgeons,—he fell, he felt a huge hand on his throat. He thought his hour was come. Another moment, and help would have been too late. A heavy cudgel was raised in the air, and was even descending on his skull,—his arms were pinioned, his strength exhausted, and his brain reeling;—when the ponderous stick was dashed down, and a blow like that of a sledge hammer prostrated the ruffian who had so nearly been successful in taking the statesman's life. A man had just leapt the high wall of the court—which was about seven feet on the other side,—and he now strode over the form of the prostrate Peer. With one hand he drew a sword, with the other a pistol.

"Scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "Help is at hand."

"That's all gammon!" returned the man who had led on the robbers to the assault, savagely, as he perceived that his comrades wavered.

But Lord Wharton was able to rise, and suddenly picking up a heavy stone that lay at his feet, he hurled it with all his remaining strength at the ruffian who had spoken. It struck his vast arm with awful force, and uttering a savage yell, the bludgeon he had raised fell from his grasp—for the arm was broken. Wharton seized the weapon in an instant, and standing side by side with the person who so opportunely came to his aid, they presented a formidable front.

"We had better be off!" cried one fellow, "the watch *is* coming now."

The suggestion was complied with, and the band made off, as lights flashed at the bottom of a second court, and advanced to the other end of that in which the struggle had taken place. Favoured by the fog, which instead of diminishing increased, they succeeded in baffling pursuit—and, in fact, the three constables who at length ventured into the place, hardly tried to seize them. The danger over, a dizziness again attacked the brain of Lord Wharton, and but for his rescuer, he would have fallen. That individual caught him in his arms and supported him.

"'Tis a brave spirit," he muttered. "He *would* not give way to *this*, before. How strong the will may be!"

But it was only for a minute that the Peer was unconscious, and when he lifted up his eyes again, he exclaimed—

"Ah! Williamson, my life has been saved by you! Twice have you saved me. Those d—d constables are only this moment here."

"Most fortunate was it that I heard your cries," was the rejoinder.

"Lean on me; you are still weak. But you must have most tremendous lungs, or I should not have recognised your voice as I did."

Other persons, in addition to the constables, now were visible; and by the time Lord Wharton quitted the court, a crowd was at his heels. He speedily regained the coach he had left, and requested Williamson to enter. But this was declined, on the plea of business, and the Peer ordered the driver to proceed to his original destination, as if nothing had happened.

Meanwhile, Williamson, after speaking a few words to a constable, walked away, and made for a quarter of the town at some distance. The fog was so dense, that it was with some difficulty he was able to thread the many streets it was requisite to traverse, but in less than half an hour he stood before a pretty substantial house, the residence, it seemed, of a person of some wealth, and was admitted into it. A little man shook hands with him, and said—

"He's out: this note is for you."

Williamson read the billet, and having done so, mused a moment.

"I will call again," he said, "I cannot wait. But say all has gone well."

Without waiting for an answer, he then disappeared. He retrod a portion of his previous way, and arriving at a hotel, there inquired for some person.

"He is at home, sir, but engaged at present," said a servant.

"Take up my name to him," returned Williamson, "my business is pressing."

The servant departed on the mission.

It was to a well-known character of the old-fashioned Whig,—or what would now be termed the moderate Conservative party,—that Williamson had repaired. He was admitted into an apartment where two persons were seated drinking their coffee, and one of them motioned the visitor into a chair.

"You know the Marquess, Taylor?" he said. "We have no secrets from each other. Will you take some coffee?"

"No, I thank you. I am come to give you the information which you wanted."

"I am sorry to tell you that there seems likely to be a split in the coalition we have formed, and Sharp is almost at his wit's end—if there be end to his wit."

"I feared it would be so. Lord Wharton has been busy to day."

"D—n that fellow! There is no getting into his policy. But you must worm it out for us, Taylor.—That he should be able so soon to sow dissension!—It can hardly be!—My dear Marquess, some more coffee."

"If you please. Perhaps, Mr. Taylor will communicate what he has to say."

"I forgot. Come, Taylor."

"I have succeeded in all you wished; and I think that an adventure which has occurred to me, may be useful hereafter. Lord Wharton was nearly assassinated an hour ago, and I saved his life."

"Indeed! How was this?"

Williamson related the attempt on the statesman's life, of which he only knew the outline, to the no small surprise of his hearers.

"I heartily wish——" began the Marquess; but stopped short.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the old Whig, "it were well for you if he were dead. O, Marquess! I foresee your fine intrigue for the destruction of Wharton, will fall to the ground, and if it do, beware, lest you are buried under the ruins of your own edifice. I can't think, why Sharp—a long-headed fellow, with a cool brain—could have set this going. To patch up a coalition between two such opposite parties, whose only bond of union was dislike of that imperious minister.—But, I dare say, he is not idle now. A rap!—Perhaps that is he!"

And Sharp entered, with a calm brow and steady step.

"What is the news?" inquired the Marquis, anxiously. But the lawyer did not reply immediately.

"You have got into a devil of a mess, Sharp,—or at all events have got your party into it," remarked the old Whig.

"Have I?" returned the lawyer, coolly. "In what respect?"

"The Marquess tells me, you are all at sixes and sevens, already. If this is the case, when you are OUT of office, what will it be when you are *in*?"

"I expected this," answered Sharp, in the same cold manner. "Well, Taylor, I have just heard the news. You have saved Lord Wharton's life."

"How did you hear that?"

"I hear everything.—Touching these dissensions, my lord Marquess, I have a plan, which if adopted, will end them for ever."

"What is that, pray?"

"Ay, what is it?" echoed the old Whig, with some interest.

"Why, we are to come to an understanding, that he who first introduces discord, shall be left out of the Ministry. You stare, my lord—"

"But, Mr. Sharp, surely you have made an egregious blunder, if you think that the coalitionary government can be carried on without opposite views."

"It cannot *be* carried on *with* them," replied the lawyer. "And now, behold, you must either agree to concede that measure we were talking of the other day, or else,—the present Ministry falls,—and Lord Wharton *must* become Premier."

"But you promised me——"

"I promised nothing, my lord Marquess! If division be the cry, I

can do nothing more. Perhaps, your lordship can carry on the government without the majority I have secured in the Commons."

"Impossible!" cried the crest-fallen Marquess. "But Wharton must not come in. No—let the cursed measure pass. I lose a fortune by it."

"You're a patriot, my lord," returned the lawyer, drily.

The old Whig turned away to stifle a laugh. "Cunning fox!" he thought. "The game is his."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SHARP TALKS WITH WILLIAMSON—LITTLE QUICK AND LOVE—LORD WHARTON AND THE LAWYER—REVENGE.

"You have them now," observed Williamson to the lawyer, as they quitted the hotel together. "Your faction has become your tool. It was well done to lead them by the nose into this difficulty, and then to take advantage of the panic. How have you acquired this great power?"

"I will tell you. There are many richer and with more *real* strength than I. But there is such a thing as artificial power. I have plotted for it, and it is mine."

"It seems to me, however, that if it be artificial, it must end in smoke."

"No, it will last as long as I want it: and then the shadow will become the substance."

"But philosophers tell us nothing can be created out of nothing——"

"Bah! the merest dogma of shallow speculators! *Every thing* is created out of nothing, and yet nothing is. Mind creates, matter is passive."

"But what is this artificial power?"

"That which the keen of soul possess over all with human passions. I study the minds of the men I would make mine, and build on their *weakness*—which is wiser policy by far than relying on their *strength*. Moral force I laugh at,—it is *im*moral power."

"That is a sandy foundation, indeed! There is no such thing."

"I am well aware of that! But what then? Will gulls and dupes stay to consider whether principles and sophistries agree? Sophistry, my friend, is the great engine of government. I propose a measure! Well.—A man of intellect points out that it is calculated to do mischief. What then? I tell this man, and I tell that man, in private, it will benefit *him*, and that's all he considers. I only want his support."

"The immoral power, however, you acknowledge is only a shadow that deludes. Reason, not passion, must in the end conquer."

"Exactly: but passion will have served my purpose, and it will do so

again. As for the substance, men shut their eyes, and hold them fast down,—the chimera is all they choose to see."

"And will this last?" murmured Williamson. "Are we to be the slaves of error, instead of the servants of truth?"

"Yes," said the lawyer, overhearing his companion, "for what is truth? Ask the sordid wretch who toils for gold—to hoard it up for others, and he will hug the bright dust to his heart—cold to all else, and he will say, '*This* is truth, *this* is substance! Ha, ha!' And turn to the adorer of a system, and ask him what truth is, and the reply will be, '*This, this*, and no other.' None will admit there is any truth, but in his own sect; and therefore we, who despise sects at heart, take advantage of the madness of party, and fatten, while fanatics starve! It is the high mind, superior to prejudice, it is the astute intellect above opinion, by which Greatness lives."

"I suppose you are right, and yet you are certainly very wrong. I am willing to be an honest man; but when I see how the knaves grow rich on roguery, while others starve on sincerity, I conclude to be knavish is to be wise."

"To be sure. There is wisdom of action as well as of thought, and they never can be compatible with each other in this world. How wise it is to teach the soul virtue, to drink of the waters of philosophy and moral science! How idiotic to reject advantages, because Conscience troubles the brain! No man can withhold his assent to ethical demonstration, but what advantage would he reap from loving and serving his fellow creatures? They would laugh at him, sneer at him, take his character to pieces, eat of his dinner, share his purse, flatter him to his face, and speak him foul behind his back. Such is the world: and I would see it at the devil ere I cared one farthing for its praise or censure, misery, or joy."

"It is only after we are dead that we are rightly understood."

"Never believe it. Hear people talk of the dead—magnifying virtues which hardly existed, and making small vices into awful crimes, to suit their own purposes! Even if it were not so, it would make no difference to the wise. Here we are at home!"

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A few words are here necessary to explain the state of parties in England at the period to which our chronicle refers. It has been said, though the proposition is questionable, that 'wealth ruins republics, poverty monarchies.' The exchequer of England was almost exhausted with the immense expenditure consequent on recent wars, and the amount of additional taxation was enormous. Some there were who considered that the monarchy was tottering, and what with the murmurs of the people at their burdens, and the prospect of new wars, the state of public feeling excited no little alarm in the breasts of the rulers. People talked of

national bankruptcy, not without some colour of probability, and it was evident that some modification in her foreign policy was requisite for Britain. There were many fierce spirits in the nation, deeply imbued with the principles of republicanism, the intelligence of the people was making vast and rapid strides, and the old, bigoted Tories of the time trembled, and feared the Revolution in France would be acted over again in England. But no: there was something nobler and wiser in the English people than that blood-thirstiness which had animated the French a few years before. We have always been different from our neighbours on the other side of the Channel—and thank Heaven it has been so! Even in the days of Cromwell, Englishmen did not become murderers.

It will be seen at a glance, however, from what has above appeared, that England was in a very critical position: and it required a master-spirit to extricate her from her multitudinous embarrassments. But Whigs and Tories were greatly divided among themselves, and from that division sprung up Radicalism and Conservatism, both of which are at this day busy in the hearts of men. Conservatism was gradually superseding Toryism, and the far-seeing Lord Wharton modified his policy accordingly. He was called a regenade by a few bigots, but he had such consummate art, that like a modern statesman of equal tact and ability, he made them imagine he only sought *their* benefit.

But the Peer was too proud a man to stoop so low as Sharp stooped: having convinced and won over an opponent, he heeded him no further; he openly avowed his intentions, and would not make any compromise whatever. Sharp, on the contrary, temporised, cajoled, descended to the weakness and the littleness of his supporters, and there are always so many weak and LITTLE men, possessed of wealth and influence, so many who are offended if their petty aims are not assisted, and their paltry measures carried out, that among these Lord Wharton had a host of enemies, and Sharp a large body of partizans.

But the lawyer had at last dared to throw off the mask, and men who thought were convinced that he was to be the future rival of the Irish peer. Those who did not look below the surface were still befooled by Sharp, who flattered them this moment, and then compelled them to support whatever he dictated: and his abilities were so indispensable to those who desired to overthrow Lord Wharton, that they never for an instant thought of separating themselves from him. And his business enlarged astonishly, his intellectual resources were developed more and more each day, and he applied himself with wonderful energy to effect his aims—thinking nothing beneath him, however trivial it might be, while Wharton left minor details to underlings. And now to resume the story.

Sharp and Williamson remained for an hour closeted together, and when the latter passed through the office in order to quit the house,

little Quick cried, "Good bye for the third time to-day, Mr. Williamson. "I have got a situation for you, since you were here, if you like it—the very one, in fact, I mentioned to you some time ago."

"No, I thank you," returned Williamson, "I am now a political agent, and in the fair road to fortune."

"Ah! Take care of yourself, then. I suspected this: but thought you wouldn't be a tool—excuse me,—always speak my mind. Good night, I must go and see Mr. Sharp."

And the clerk quitted the office.

"A tool!" soliloquised Williamson, somewhat bitterly. "Well, we shall see what the tool may become. I have something in me, I know, to command, if I choose to be ambitious. 'Tis a fool's game, perchance, but all play it at one time of their lives. Yes, I was not born to be a menial spirit, and lacquey the heels of the sordid and the avaricious, the mean, the vile and cunning!"

As this man's thoughts ran in such channels, Quick was ascending to the room where his employer usually sat. He was buried in deep abstraction when the little man entered the apartment, murmuring indistinctly, and did not perceive Quick for some moments. The clerk hemmed and coughed, and the lawyer turned to him.

"Are those letters ready, Quick?" he inquired.

"All right, sir. Here they are."

"Sit down, my good old friend. I am weary of thinking, and would relax the overstrained mind. Quick, you are a happier man than I am—you are a better one, perhaps? You have not had to contend with the passions I have. This is a miserable life at the best; and we want rest, when we seek enjoyment—a vile blunder, is it not?"

"Rest! Nothing in nature rests! Look at the stars,—you *may* see them now the fog's dispersed,—they dontt rest! Everything must be in motion; so I don't think rest is to be found."

"Don't you? Do *you* find pleasure in action?"

"Yes,—if not pleasure, *comfort*. Occupation is the greatest blessing we enjoy, and if we abuse it, more fools we. All make mistakes, sir, and it's well if we do nothing worse."

Quick was silent, and the lawyer lapsed again into reverie. At length he said—

"Quick, I want to hear your history. Will you tell it now?"

"No objection. I suppose you allude to that love affair; for you know everything else about me? . . . . Yes, sir, poor Kitty and I were boy and girl together. She was a light-hearted creature; but her health was delicate. She was a tender plant, full of all that's fragrant, fresh and pure; and I cherished her as a flower from heaven. I was almost a child, then, and extremely small of my age, of course. Others used to joke and laugh at me: but Kitty did not,—for she saw I felt mortified, and

she wouldn't hurt the feelings of an insect. And her smiles stimulated me to exert myself, and I took away all the prizes at the village school where I received the rudiments of education. Not that any book learning, crammed in by a master, can make an intelligent man. No, the object of all education is, only to make one think for himself.—Yes, I thought I would be a scholar, since nature cast me in such a mould, and I read books which few of my age and class would have liked. I believe I've dipped into every thing in a small way, and I find all comes into use.—But, Kitty!—I make a fool of myself, when she comes to my mind. Love won't do to talk of, especially to those not in love. What d'ye think it is, sir? Some folks tell you there's no such thing; but if this is true, whence arose the idea of such a principle in our nature? We may exaggerate the sentiment, but I think a man who is sceptical as to its existence, is very credulous."

"It is possible," returned Sharp, Quick pausing for an instant, "that scepticism in some matters requires a good deal of faith."

"To be sure. But be that as it may, I loved little Kitty. She used to knit and sing;—her face as bright as the laughing sky,—scarcely as blue as her eyes. And I would whisper things to her, such as I would not have breathed to any one else alive, for they would have sounded ridiculous from *me*. I used to speak of the delights we derive from nature; I used to describe my secret sensations at the wonderful and glorious sights in the earth. I wrote poetry, and she used to like it,—poor thing! How I painted scenes of felicity that never came; how I hung enamoured over ideal joys never to be realized!—But the anticipation of happiness is a blessed thing, and though it come not, I think it makes us more certain of a world where it *is* for ever. Years pass away, we know not how, and are buried with all their sorrows and their pleasures. We sit over their graves, and mourn; yet have they not voices of music, hushed though they be? I would not lose the recollection of the past for all the world.—But you don't like sentiment. For my part I can relish a little of everything.—To continue:—Kitty was advancing towards womanhood, and might have had far better sweethearts than myself—though none would have loved her so well.—But she used to say, 'No, Peter! your very want of form and comeliness endear you to me.' *That* is woman's love, sir,—not like man's,—deep, unselfish, fervent, and of the soul!—But she began to look pale and ill, and the doctors were afraid that something serious was the matter.—She drooped like a lily, and grew more beautiful as the bright hues faded away, and dim death made her eye lack lustre, and her frame warmth. It was one fine, starry night, I recollect, that she called me to her side, and said—'Peter, they do not tell me that I am dying: but I am too happy to live.' 'What do you mean, dear Kitty?' said I, wonderingly and sadly. O, how she turned her liquid eyes on me, swimming with tears which

the spirit only sheds—all of heavenly joy and hope, and replied, 'The angel has been with me, and I have heard *such* music,—none ever heard such and lived! I am sorry to leave you, for you are very dear to me: but they say, all is disappointment and care on this side the grave. So I am taken away before the stroke came. How good is God!'"

The little man stopped short in his narrative, and passed his sleeve across his eyes.

"I am an old fool!" he muttered.

"And she died, and you were desolate! Better thus, than to live on and sin—it might be—or go mad," remarked Sharp.

Quick contemplated the dark vault of night, and resumed, as though he soliloquised—

"She is there!—Not a breath of desolation can touch her now. She cannot grow weary of the struggle, she cannot wither beneath the canker and the blast.—But I will make an end of my story.—'Bury me,' said Kitty to her sorrowing friends, 'in the little, quiet churchyard, in which the birds sing so merrily, and the flowers bloom so sweetly, when the green spring falls,—and do not weep for me,—O do not weep for the happy and the at peace!' It was such a beautiful death! I had her last, sweet kiss—her blue orbs were fixed on me ere they closed in the deep and dreamless slumber. The last kiss! It lingers still!"

"How I have misunderstood this man!" thought Sharp. "But you were a boy, then, Quick! Have you never loved another?—Because one with such feelings—as I hardly gave you credit for—must have yearned for sympathy in maturer life."

"So I might. But did I not find it?—Yes, sir,—not in man, indeed; but it came to me as from some distant clime, where all is bright eternally. My lost one would visit me as I lay asleep, sad and dreary, and she would converse with me on those high themes which the angels do not despise. And I have loved!—What though the world is cold and dull, should I not love it? For *her* sake I let the waters gush out, though they might flow in strange channels. And as years passed, and I acquired some of the practical philosophy which beating about on this troubled ocean of existence teaches, I learned to be happy in the consciousness of trying to be tolerant and just to all.—People won't believe there can be honesty in a low rascal of a clerk, like I am: but I don't care much what they think; for he who has a brain or a heart must learn to find his pleasures in himself. I hope I have enough intellect and feeling for such an odd little body as I am: but I'm up to snuff, and keep the latter to myself.—There, I've not talked so long like this to any but my own soul, since I was a boy. Good night, Mr. Sharp. Dare say you'll laugh at me, when my back's turned—*good* humouredly, eh?"

"Not I, Quick. You are an excellent fellow,—one in a thousand, at all events. I am much obliged to you for your confidence. Good night."

The clerk vanished.

"These men, whom fame never reserves a niche for, are infinitely better than the mighty and the great!" thought Sharp. "I know not how it is: but that little fellow's genuine feeling and pathos have almost given me a better opinion of my race. Well; I will write for another hour, and then I'll to bed.—Quick, now, will enjoy half a dozen hours delicious rest, and I shall be tossed about with feverish dreams of Wharton and revenge. O that only hope and desire! Sweet revenge!"

As the attorney settled himself in his easy chair, a servant brought him a letter. It was late: but Sharp was accustomed to receive communications at all hours, and opening the epistle, he read the contents. The first few lines are subjoined.

"My dear Sharp,

"I have just heard that Sir C—— has refused, positively, and unequivocally, to support you. I fear this will be the death blow of your party, if you cannot make up his loss speedily. Lord Wharton is playing old gooseberry with your game, and his success is miraculous. What shall you do? Call on me early to-morrow."

"Sir C.! muttered Sharp. "Let him go, the double renegade! I care not.—But what is this?—A letter enclosed from——" The lawyer's brow darkened as he read the second missive. "This must be put a stop to!" he exclaimed. He rang the bell. "John," he said, "go for a hackney coach." The servant departed, and Sharp was buried in intense thought. "Wharton cannot have done all this already!" he exclaimed. "But let him do his worst. He knows me now for his open, irreconcilable enemy. Curse him! They know not my strength, they know not how I have undermined his power!"

The hackney coach rumbled to the door, and Sharp entered, and was driven to the west end of the town. As he alighted, he noticed another coach as it was passing, and perceived Lord Wharton in it. Their eyes met. That glance determined both in their future course. The eye of the Peer expressed scorn—deep, bitter scorn—and that of the lawyer rancorous hatred. But Sharp remembered himself, and turned away.

"I thought so!" was the inward exclamation of Lord Wharton. "I should no more be able to conciliate that man, than heaven could make friends with hell. I will not despise him *too* much, but what can he do against me?"

Proud and elated the statesman returned home; but he was to find that he had a more dangerous enemy than he anticipated.

Is it not wonderful that rational beings should expend all those noble powers of intellect merely to degrade another in the eyes of their fellow worms? We behold a child torturing some hapless insect, and ask our-

selves why the writhing and struggling of his victim should amuse his fancy, but revenge against one like ourselves! When we feel what we are, when we know all the diseases, the miseries, and infirmities that flesh is heir to, that each moment we are subject to lose our feeble life, that a few brief years *must* terminate the poor span, it is a wonder that we should harbour an instant's dark resentment against our foes! Alas! the slightest wound our wretched vanity receives, causes us to feel wrath for the time towards those who love us most; and if we are not careful to banish the fiend, we at last hate our species, ourselves, our Maker.

The lawyer closed not an eye that night, fearful lest his long-cherished scheme should be baffled. He resolved to set new engines at work, in addition to those he had previously employed, lest by mischance anything he had counted on should fail, and he was determined to sacrifice all he possessed in the world rather than lose one *iota* of vengeance. What a thing for sages to moralize upon is the heart of man! Mystery of mysteries! O, wise ones! Ye who would pierce into the infinite plan, ye who would have us believe all is intelligible, if we reason on it. Rationalists, who deify what you cannot comprehend, elucidate the enigmas contained in a few inches of flesh and blood!—This very man who was so inveterate a hater that he could love but hate—*might* have been a Howard, if nature is not omnipotent in forming the individual. Why is it that one person should become a murderer and another a philanthropist? The *how* passes thought, the *why* is incomprehensible!

CHAPTER XL.

THE GIPSY—SUPERSTITION—THE HORSEMAN—BENEVOLENCE—THE FEMALE—THE DANDIES AND THE YOUTH.

We left Fanny rather unceremoniously after she leapt from the back of Lord Wharton's horse. She pursued her way, absorbed in thought, dreaming in her wild fashion, and seeing in every shape something of fate: the whole earth was to her a volume, and the only way to read it, she imagined, was to ascribe everything to supernatural agency;—that each object, animate, or inanimate, was a letter in the vast alphabet of destiny. The wise and the great of intellect *have* held similar doctrines to these;—but the progress of reason had not arrived at the height to which it now reaches in civilization:—but the girl had no more real knowledge than an Indian; and was rather of the past than the present. It is well to have a large share of faith in good and beauty; but when dark superstitions are blended with the belief, demons spring up and scare the weak mind, until it is almost driven to frenzy. Where super-

stition reigns, there is universal monomania; nay, there is no real sanity at all, for the foul spirit conjured by a morbid brain, mingles with every pure and wholesome breeze, and turns the world into a charnel: the very planets that shine for our hope and our delight, shed malignant influence, and nature, instead of hymning heaven, syllables only—perdition.

"O," thought the Gipsy, in her rambling strain, "where is the life which is the light of *my* life? It is in the great earth, and in the azure skies—ethereal and pure *there*, but corrupted in my heart and brain! Life! What is it? Who shall answer, *but* Life? And Death,—what is Death? The grave is silent:—but the bright ones we worship—the trees, the flowers, and the verdure, weep:—'the sleep of life!'" She proceeded, and her thoughts or fantasies assumed a new shape—"I will live in the heart of nature, now; and the fragrance of her deep soul shall steep my being in wild bliss!" she murmured. "I shall be happy for a season, at all events. Now, I perceive my destiny smiles on my spirit. I will sing! The soul of song is the breath of happiness. Music is a great mystery." And she warbled a wild air.

LOVE.

I am weary, I am sad: but from the heaven above,
Descendeth, like a spirit bright, unutterable Love!
The zephyrs sing the chorus, and the burthen of it thus:—
"Sweet Love, the splendor of the spheres,—Eternity to us!"

Those accents thrill my being, and I spring aloft to see
What harmonies, what glories, what felicities there be;
The liquid sky, the firmament, the interstellar air—
All murmur only "What with Love in heaven can compare?"

"These words float in my brain: but they are not my own," murmured the Gipsy. "Love!—I live, and die by it.—But where is he I seek?"

Suddenly she became aware that she was noticed by a person she had not before perceived, and saw a gentleman on horseback gazing intently at her. There was a kindliness, a radiance, a dignity in his mild and intelligent face, which Fanny never remembered to have before noticed in any one; but she was passing him, when he arrested her by saying—

"I would not advise you to go on in that direction, for it is a complete swamp; and slight as you are, you will sink half a foot or more."

"I thank you," returned Fanny, blushing slightly: "but that is my path."

The stranger contemplated her for an instant, and then sighed.

"May I ask what song I heard you singing a minute ago?"

Fanny would not have stayed to answer the questions of an ordinary

person; but she could not resist the gentle, persuasive manner in which she was addressed, and said—

"The song! I know not."

"It is long since aught has affected me so much as that song;—even the poor maniac's—" muttered the horseman to himself, "was scarcely so full of strange melody!—Stay! do not think me impertinent; but your appearance is so singular, that——"

"I am in haste," interrupted Fanny.

"Your patience for one moment! Are you happy?—I fear your situation is not such as you could wish! Am I right?"

"I do not understand you. I am no beggar,—no—no wanton!"

"I am glad to hear what you last have told me. Forgive my rudeness."

On a sudden, as the stranger turned away, the girl burst into tears, and hurrying on, threw herself under a hedge, and indulged her grief. She thought the horseman had proceeded; but five minutes afterwards, raising her eyes, she beheld him close to her, his fine countenance expressive of deep sympathy.

"I told you false!" she exclaimed, with startling earnestness, rising from the earth. "Leave me! I am a vile, abject wretch."

"Poor thing! I *knew* you were unhappy," returned the horseman. "But be comforted: perhaps I can be of service to you."

Is it not a blessed thing in this cold world of apathy and heartlessness, that there should be those who cannot pass by a beggar—a dog, without desiring to alleviate suffering? The good Samaritan kindly took Fanny's hand, and added—

"Tell me if I cannot assist you with counsel or money?"

"No, sir, I thank you. You are very good: but pray leave me."

A terrible suspicion, engendered by the singularity of the girl, entered the stranger's bosom.

"But," he said, "promise me you contemplate no rash act. Have you been deserted, deceived?"

"No: you mistake. I repeat my thanks, and bid you farewell."

"I cannot allow you to leave me thus. Why are you in this condition? You tell me that you are not—and you do not look—one of those unfortunates who spend the night in riot.—I pray you confide to me your condition. My name is Travers, and you need not fear I will betray any trust——"

"Travers!" interrupted Fanny. "Then I know who you are. I must begone,—I cannot stay in your presence; you are good."

"Nay, do not fly me on that account, even if you think I am so. Evil should only scare you."

"Not so. Good is evil to the vile. I cannot tell you, sir, what I am. My brain is whirling and oppressed.—Ah! Can the spirit of truth which

the pure adore, look into the evil, false, and corrupted heart, and shall not the voice within reproach?"

"Is *she* mad?" thought Travers, whom the Reader, perchance, may have recognised some minutes ago; "I see something in her large, bright eyes, like insanity. But yet, I scarcely know what to think. The pure spirit of truth," he said, aloud, willing to sound the depths of the eccentric girl's mind; "is the comfort of all that will take it to their worship. You say you are unhappy and degraded in your own estimation. Some false demon has lured you into error, then. Is it so?"

"Fate, fate, has done it," was the response. "Of course you believe in fate?—You shake your head. I will stay to hear you, if you can prove to me that it is *not*."

"Fate is not Providence," answered the Christian philosopher, more and more puzzled to understand the girl. "There is no such thing as destiny,—otherwise human life were an enigma incapable of solution. Every action of existence is uncompelled, every thought unnecessitated."

The Gipsy shook her head.

"Impossible!" she exclaimed. "I do not understand these things; but I *feel* the mighty Being who controls this *me*, who lives in my soul of life, dictating all that I shall do;—no, no: tell not me. The only guides we have—the only *certain* guides are our feelings—our inward, invisible sensations. Following this unerring instinct, we cannot go wrong. There, that is your path, and this is mine. Go, and forget that such a wretch as I am breathes on earth."

And she started away, like the frightened hare, and eluded the philanthropist's endeavour to overtake her. Well had it been for her if she had listened to the good man's voice, full of heavenly wisdom, full of all that can purify and sustain. But she fled. Why is it that impurity of every kind thus shrinks from the presence of virtue?

She fled: and it is not my intention to follow her through the day, as her adventure with Travers was not succeeded by any other of interest for some hours. But as night fell, she returned weary and footsore towards London. Her mind had worn out her body, and she could hardly drag on her feet: she was disappointed and disheartened, and at length sunk down and wept. Tears are the relief of women, and are necessary to them,—a luxury, a solace, and a refuge. Men are of mould too stern to resemble the other sex in this respect; and, therefore, *their* struggles are darker, deeper.

The girl, exhausted, heedless of a cool December wind, closed her languid eyes, and slept. She remained thus for the space of half an hour, when a figure approached, and when within a dozen feet of the slumberer, paused. It was a tall, shadowy female who stood before Fanny.

"I thought," she murmured, gazing fixedly on the girl, "that none

but such as I am sleep in the open air in these cold nights.—A fair maiden, truly!"

"Where are you, Travers?" cried Fanny, in her dreams. "Do not fly me. Help me, Travers!"

"They will not hurt you, if you fear the evil spirits!" exclaimed the tall female, "because the angel of the night's abroad: so, let thy visions be of peace and rest!—Blessed are the dreams of youth and passion,—they are of Eden and the stars!—Poor child. Are you houseless, friendless, like Harriet? Have you no food to eat, and do you pluck the wild berries, and eat the bread of charity? Well, the poor have no temptation, as the rich have; God loves them."

The woman moved away, and her form disappeared, just as the sound of laughter was borne on the breeze, and several persons, somewhat the worse for liquor, approached. It was quite dark, and the fog was slowly rising.

"Egad, Sir Harry!" observed one of the advancing party, "you've played the deuce with poor Travers at those billiards. Never saw you play so well—dab as you are.—Why, what is that, lying yonder?—A woman, or a child? By Jove! it is a girl. We must provide her with better lodgings for the night, if she's pretty.—Why look at her dress! What can this mean?"

So heavy was the Gipsy's sleep, that she was not disturbed by the noise of the revellers, who were probably taking a walk after dinner, and enjoying their cigars and the fresh air. But as the foremost of them, stooping down, was spanning the tiny waist of the fair sleeper, another ejaculated—

"Why that is Wharton's new wonder of the world! It can be no other! There never was a form like this but her's! Let us carry her off to Sir Harry's: Travers was so damnably close in hiding her from the vulgar eye."

Fanny was accordingly lifted from the ground by two men, who bore her gently along for about a furlong.

"Where is our dear Wharton?" inquired one of the party.

"He was asleep," was the reply, "when I saw him last. He had no rest last night, for he was at play."

Here Fanny was aroused by one of her bearers stumbling and falling; and becoming sensible of her situation, she uttered a piercing shriek. She struggled to release herself; but she could not, when, as she renewed her cries, a youth sprang over a hedge, and making his way to the side of the Gipsy, exclaimed—

"What is this! Surely I have heard that voice before!—Fanny,—is it you?"

"Be off with you, low blackguard!" ejaculated a dandy.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE RESCUE—TRAVERS WHARTON—STEPHEN AND FANNY—TRAVERS AND REGINALD.

It was Stephen who had come to the help of the Gipsy. A stout cudgel in his hand, he faced the persons from whom Fanny was attempting to get away, and his cheek flushing crimson at the vituperative epithet applied to him, he turned to the individual who had insulted him, and who raised his cane menacingly at his head.

"Strike me at your peril!" he said. "What is it you are doing to this young girl?"

Ere the words had well left his lips the cane descended on him; but he arrested the blow, and taking one stride forwards, wrenched the stick from his assailant's grasp. This was an insult which the aristocratic blood could not brook, and three hands were raised against Stephen at the same time. He retreated, saying—

"I provoke no quarrel; but am here to protect this female from outrage."

But he was attacked by the whole party, with the exception of the two engaged with Fanny, and he from whom he had taken the cane by force, drew upon him. Bravely did the young fellow sustain the unequal contest, and with a blow of his cudgel shivered the blade that was aimed at his heart. Four men against one boy were awful odds; but they were butterflies, and he had been often accustomed to desperate struggles. His courage and address might not have availed, however, when all drew against him; but another individual arrived on the scene of action, and Fanny uttered a wild exclamation of joy.

"Travers! Travers!" she cried. "Come hither, Travers!"

She was allowed to burst away, and rushed into the arms of Captain Wharton—for it was he—while the combatants ceased to fight.

"*You* here?" ejaculated the Coxcomb to his mistress. Then perceiving Stephen, and recognising him, added—"How is this, my friends?"

It is necessary to mention that Stephen had known Fanny when she was among the gipsies; but it was not until after the attempted assassination at the ale-house, which he had been instrumental in frustrating, that he was aware of the exact position of Fanny and Travers Wharton. He knew but little of the girl, indeed, and had been in the habit of dissuading John Jenkins from marrying her;—though this was in vain.

"Let the lad go;" drawled the fop to his friends, "I see how it has been. Fanny, my dear, don't cling to me so! Sir Harry! your heavy

Port doesn't agree with me; it gets into my head.—But how do you come here, Fan?"

"Those men have insulted me," cried the Gipsy. "I have been searching for you all day, fearful lest you had met with some mischance; and they found me asleep, and carried me off."

"Hang it! You must learn not to dog my heels thus. Return home, now. This young man will accompany you. I shan't be able to get back to you for some hours yet."

Then dropping his voice, he whispered into her ear.

"What is it you say?" exclaimed Fanny, with throbbing bosom. "The Prince! Did you know then?—Ha! tell me."

"Don't expose yourself! We'll talk over the matter, calmly, presently. —But Sir Harry, you owe me my revenge. Come along."

"That rascal deserves to be thrashed to within an inch of his life," cried the dandy whose sword had been broken, glancing wrathfully at Stephen.

"Never mind. This young lad saved my life recently. Now, Fanny, go with him. I hope you will never be so imprudent, as you have been to-day."

So saying, he turned on his heel, and followed by his associates, departed.

"The dream is plain, now," murmured Fanny.

Taking the proffered arm of Stephen, the Gipsy silently struck across the fields towards the town. The youth spoke—

"You know not what has become of John?" he asked; but he was obliged to repeat his question, ere he could rouse Fanny from the reverie into which she had fallen.

"He is here—in London," answered the Gipsy, with a shudder. "He is my fate."

"In London!" exclaimed Stephen. "I must see him.—And you,—he loved you deeply. Poor John!"

"Yes, he loved me; but I could not return his passion. Who can command the soul? He hates me now, and would destroy me."

While the Gipsy was speaking, the fog was at its height; and she uttered a cry.

"What ails you?" inquired Stephen, wonderingly, for he saw and heard nothing.

"Did you hear nothing?" asked the girl. "It was the spirit who visited me in my sleep—who has warned me before of my fate."

Stephen thought he could distinguish a distant murmur dying away, but was not certain.—The Gipsy's eyes were like an American Indian's.

"I am doomed," said Fanny, solemnly. "The earth contains an awful Being who spins the thread of each one's life, and who sends forth spirits to bid us be prepared. He is not to be seen, but his immense existence

is in the winds, his voice is in the elements. Hark! hush!—It is gone! Now it has mingled with the one soul which absorbs all souls!"

Of a truth the Pantheism which some of our Rationalists adore, is the grossest superstition imaginable. It has much that is poetical and sublime in it, because it contains a great truth: but it is a hallucination at the best. And before the only religion was diffused—and wherever it is not universalized even now—it is Pantheism, and not Theism, which philosophers held and hold. It is not fair to judge of Theosophy, as it is held by Deists, where the principles of Christianity are known:—see it in its nakedness.

Stephen looked at Fanny, stupefied with astonishment. That she was deeply imbued with gipsy superstitions he had heard; but there was something so wild, so preposterous to his clear, strong sense in what she said, that he could scarcely believe his ears. He spoke to her after a minute or two, but no answer could he elicit from her, and they had now reached the outskirts of the town.—At length she said—

"You do not comprehend me;—I cannot comprehend myself. My being sometimes appears poised in mid air, and the worlds *which are in worlds*—the life of matter—surround me; and all the mysteries of existence pass through my brain. The lamps of heaven cast from their golden urns keen odour on my soul,—I sail through the blue firmament, and darkness wraps me as with a mantle.—I wish I knew what is the sea of life! Ah, me! Rocks are above, and shoals below, and our frail barks speeds but to destruction."

"I cannot grasp your meaning:—but it is beautiful!"

Fanny smiled in her strange fashion.

"You will, I dare say, think me crazed. But do you know I have a notion insanity is the coinage of our own sick minds. *That* you will not understand, either.—But we are all mad. Look at the wisest and greatest and best of men! What absurd objects, what nothingness they follow!"

By this time the youth and the girl were near Portman Square, and much confusion reigned, owing to the fog—for there was a party in the neighbourhood, and carriages were driven up against other vehicles;—their conversation was therefore broken, and was not resumed. They reached the house which had been hired by Captain Wharton, and then Stephen asked if Fanny could tell him how he was likely to find John Jenkins: but she replied she could not: she had forgotten where she saw him.

Stephen repaired to Mr. Travers, and having with some difficulty found his residence, sent up his name and business, and was admitted instantly. Travers and Reginald were sitting before a cheerful fire, and laid down their books, in which they had been intensely occupied when Stephen entered.

"What is it you have to tell me of the poor maniac?" asked Travers, shaking the youth by the hand.

"I am sorry to tell you, sir, she has escaped; and I have traced her to within a short distance of London. I am persuaded she was in town last night, and then returned part of the way, in order to baffle pursuit; but I trust, from her remarkable appearance, we may yet discover her."

"I am very sorry to hear this. The servants must have been negligent:—but give me the particulars."

Stephen related briefly and simply the facts with which the reader is acquainted, as far as they had reference to Harriet; but did not mention his own adventures.

"We must send to the police office," said Travers, when the youth had finished speaking. "Now, come and take some supper with my son and me. I am much obliged to you for having taken all this pains to trace the poor creature. You must be hungry after such a walk."

Stephen would have declined the honour which Mr. Travers in his kindness proffered—for he was the least assuming person in the world, despite his great superiority to the generality of his class: but the philosopher insisted on his sitting down and partaking of some bread and cheese and meat, while he and Reginald ate their biscuits and drank their chocolate. Travers was not a democrat, in the strict sense of the word; but his actions were all those of one who admitted no real rank, save that of mind. And Stephen was one of God's noblest gentlemen, so Travers held him in the light of a friend.

What can compare, indeed, with that stamp of Heaven, which nothing can obliterate,—the clear, fine sense, the manly, honest heart, the upright, frank, and bright integrity, which can alone constitute a gentleman fit to associate with angels?—Give me the pure soul and the kindly breast, and I will prefer them to all the gauds, the courtliness, the grace, the adulation, which pass for gentility with the crowd.—A gentleman! Does *he* bow, and cringe, and flatter; or does he even listen with unwearying attention to fools who prose, and dunces who chatter, merely because a coronet may encircle the brow.—Can the possession of a graceful air, and the power of saying honied things, create intellect, reason, information; or serve the cause of virtue? Away with the trappings of splendor and the fine purple of ostentation, if they do not clothe worth and sense:—they are as a gorgeous tomb—containing a corse!

"He is a noble fellow that Stephen," remarked Travers to his son, as the youth quitted the room, and ascended to a garret in which a bed had been prepared for him.

"I wish I may be like him," returned Reginald. "There is something strong and deep in his nature,—don't you think so?—Something that nothing can crush,—a fire, a greatness!"

Travers delighted to hear his boy admire anything that was good

for he believed admiration to be one of the strongest incentives to exertion that we possess. Envy is a stimulant to some minds; but it is a dangerous and a *little* sentiment: it can hardly evolve the lofty in man. Admiration, when it is not a blind passion, instead of an exalting sentiment, is full of mind and poetry: it is adoration of the true, abstract worship of the Immortal in us!

The fond father kissed his son, coinciding with him relative to Stephen, and Reginald ascended to rest. Travers took up his book again: it was a work on the origin of evil, and contained the following passage.—"We have reason to conclude that to endue created beings with perfection, that is, to produce good, exclusive of evil, is one of those impossibilities which even infinite Power cannot accomplish."

"Assuredly the infinite is not the absolute," mused Travers. "But could not the Creator, in creating, prevent the possibility of evil?—Not without creating a greater evil;—not without withholding liberty from man! Every action must be necessitated, or it must lead to imperfection. Was evil, then, a part of the scheme of Heaven?—This is a difficulty; but it is not insuperable. What is evil? There is no such thing in the absolute sense; only in the relative. It exists, however, and therefore God must have admitted it to work out good. He did not create aught evil; but he must have a principle in all he does. Then, if he had created what is *necessarily* good, his principle would have been that things in their own essence may be so. Now this is a contradiction: for what is good? Is it happiness? Well then, how can happiness exist? Could a reasonable soul be happy without freedom in its choice? Could it be content to resemble the material and helpless atoms, regulated by eternal laws? No: the secret is, that *Freedom is Happiness!* How can we be free? By subduing evil passions, which make us slaves: we serve virtue;—we idolize vice, and are shackled by it. O, virtue has no chains, no dungeon of the soul: it is the bright heaven, and is its own eternity. —And shall this imperfection always exist out of God? No: for we shall have purified ourselves by faith and love, and then we may be fit to dwell in the bosom of our Father!"

CHAPTER XLII.

NELL AND THOMPSON—UNSUCCESSFUL LOVE-MAKING—THE GIPSY—THE LETTER.

ALONE, in the little room of the cottage where she had remained with a deaf old superannuated woman and Stephen for the last few weeks, sat Nell Jenkins. She had been employed by Mr. Travers to work for him,

and she was glad to be able to earn a subsistence without being dependent on bounty, or gratitude. The old woman above alluded to was gone out, and she was knitting away at a pair of stockings for the young heir of Travers. Sometimes a tear would steal into her bright eye, but she dashed it away and raised her glance to the sky.

"It is something to see that beautiful vault with its peace and splendour!" thought Nell. "Even in the dull, cold winter, I love to look at the sky, and to think of what things there may be beyond it. Would that I were a lark to soar thither!"

She hummed a song; the very one that her cousin sang on the evening when he rescued Fanny—or at all events went to her rescue. But she was in no mood for music.

"When will he come back?" she murmured. "All is a desert without him, now. Dear Stephen! My own generous-hearted cousin!" She laid down her work, and drew a poniard from her bosom. "Yes," she said, "this was the first specimen of his skill, and I prize it more than any gem on earth. They talk of steel dividing loves; but *this*——"

What she was going to add must remain unknown; for she heard a footstep, and placed the dagger again in its resting place. The cold, bright steel so near the pure, warm heart! She was a fine creature, that girl. Full of passion, full of noble impulses, which only wanted cultivation to make her the best of women. Notwithstanding the "bad circumstances," (as Owen would term them) in which she had been placed, there she was, uncorrupted.

"Good morning, Miss Nelly," said a short man, entering.

Nell nodded coldly, and her visitor advanced. He was quite young, but yet there was a coldness, an ice, in his rather intelligent face, which made him appear older than he was.

"I suppose Stephen will remain in London, if he goes there?" remarked the short man.

"I don't know that he *is* gone there," returned Nell, knitting away.

"But I met a fellow I know who came up from London last night, and who saw him within a few miles of the metropolis."

"Indeed!" cried Nell, with interest. "Then I shall hear from him by the post of to-day."

"He is a lucky chap, is Stephen, in more than one respect. Lord Wharton is a munificent patron, and Nell the prettiest girl, or nearly so, in England."

"You are pleased to be complimentary to me, Mr. Thompson."

"Nay, do not blush! But is it true you two are sweethearts?—Well, I wish you happy. But London is a dangerous place to a lad like Stephen. I'm going there on business in a few days."

Nell felt affronted at the freedom of Thompson, and was silent.

"A boy's love is not worth having," continued the short man, "the

mind and character are unformed in our sex until after twenty. If Stephen should be led astray by the blandishments of London beauties—"

"Why," interrupted Nell, her bosom swelling with indignation, "do you insinuate these things against Stephen? You would not dare do so to his face!"

"Would I not?—But I have said nothing against him. I do not suppose he is worse than other lads. But it is not likely he will resist temptation at his age."

"He is far more a man than you are," cried Nell, with flashing eyes, glancing scornfully at the pigmy beside her, and recalling the manly form and stature of her cousin.

"I am small; but I have strength, I have health," returned Thompson, reading Nell's thoughts. "My intellect is developed, I know the world, and am doing well in it."

"It is possible," responded the girl, "that without knowing the world, virtue may be as high, mind may be as strong in him as in you,—nay, more so."

She stopped herself, and Thompson rejoined—

"He has been a wild lad, you must admit, and he has not yet sown his wild oats—he cannot, at seventeen, have done so."

"What is age?" returned Nell, disdainfully. "Some never become men at all, in spite of their beards and their big voices."

"True. You are a very sensible girl. It is seldom, indeed, that beauty and understanding are thus united. Helen! I have a little present for you, if you will accept it."

"No, I thank you; give it to your nephew, Jem."

Thompson hummed and looked a little disconcerted.

"It is a book," he replied, "which is above children. I know you are fond of reading, and so I bought it for you.—Accept it as a token of friendship—of affection, I may add.—Helen, I have been fortunate in a speculation I have recently made, and am now in possession of some money. I am looking around me for a wife. Know you of any who would share my fate?"

Nell burst into a fit of laughter.

"Go and see if you cannot stretch yourself a little, ere you think of a wife," she cried. "Four feet eleven of husband I am not aware of any person—unless, indeed, my old deaf friend, who is bent nearly double, has a mind to marry—who would take to her arms?"

Thompson bit his lip at the sarcasm of the girl. He was aware of the truth she so bitterly and derisively expressed, for he had been refused by a rich man's daughter but a few days before, and that lady had just run away with one of the sturdy thick-headed ploughmen who had been engaged with him and Harris against the poachers. This was but a sorry beginning of love-making; but the short man called to mind

Richard the Third, who, with a hump on his back and blood on his hand, had wooed and won the Lady Anne, and having no less an opinion of his ability than the deformed king, he tried a new tack. "I am diminutive; but the heart is not proportioned to the size of the body, Helen: neither is the brain quicker in a fellow of six feet high, than in a dwarf. I have heard your father and mother are in London, and I think I shall obtain a clue to them soon."

Another sarcasm had curled the lip of Nell when the short man commenced the last sentence; but she turned very pale when he concluded. He narrowly watched her changing face, and a smile of triumph came over his own. "And what think you," he proceeded, coolly, "I have found out, at last, where your brother has been lying hid. You know, or you have heard of old Richards, who lives about a league hence?"

"Is he there now?" cried Nell, in fearful apprehension. "Save him —oh, save him!"

Thompson shrugged his shoulders, but did not answer the appeal of the blacksmith's daughter.

Nell rose, and paced up and down the room—"Who knows of this, except yourself?" she asked.

"None know it was he except myself."

"Then you can save him?" she said, imploringly.

"What would you have me do?" returned the short man, coldly.

"Conceal the fact—and I will go to him!"

"Not so fast—he is not there now—but I know where he is, and can lay my hand on him at any time. Were he not your brother, the reward offered for his apprehension is high."

"But you will not—oh, you will not betray him!—But how is it," added Nell, a suspicion of Thompson crossing her, "how is it, if this be so, you who have been so eager to catch him, do not secure the reward now? Are you so suddenly seized with an admiration of my poor person? I have known you long—confess, now, you have been deceiving me. I see through you, John Thompson. Your low cunning avails not!"

"As I live he was at old Richards's cottage! Do not think I have not long admired you: but you have been almost a child. I will tell you how I became aware of the fact that your brother has been at Richards's. It was only yesterday that I happened to be passing near the old man's abode, and who should I see but his daughter, Rose. I entered into conversation with her, and she mentioned all the particulars. They found a wounded man at their door some weeks ago, and charitably took him in. He told them he had been wounded by some gamekeepers, having been betrayed into going on a poaching expedition, and told them he should get into trouble if they acquainted any one with the fact while he remained where he was. As he had left some time, how-

ever, Rose, like other girls being fond of gossip, let the cat out of the bag. I thought the affair strange, and asked Rose to describe the person they had so long afforded a shelter to; and her description left no doubt in my mind that it was your brother; especially when I learnt also that it was on the very night when he effected his escape so cleverly from us that he came to her father's cottage. They concealed him in a little back room, where he lay for the best part of a month in a very feeble state. Yes, it is a great temptation—I wish he were not your brother."

"You are lying, Thompson! It may be true he was at old Richards's, but you do not know where he is now. Think you I cannot see through the flimsy veil you cast over your designs? I can read your very heart, and I am certain its every throb is avaricious and unfeeling save for yourself. I hardly understand why you should want me to be your wife—for that I see is your object. I have not a farthing, and am never likely to have anything. You are too cold of soul to care about aught save money."

Thompson bit his lip till the blood spouted from it. He turned livid with rage, and exclaimed, "You shall repent this—I never forgive insult!" With these words he left the maiden's presence, hating her because she had so thoroughly penetrated his falsehood. She did not conceive all the baseness of his black nature. "No," he said to himself, with a bitter smile, "she could not understand why I wanted her to marry me. I would have sold her,—that's the way to get a place,—sold her to one of these great men! I'll try to inveigle her to marry me yet, if only to make her wretched, curse her!"

I question if any one has ever exaggerated the depravity of man, when he has an object to attain by wickedness. As for gratuitous villany, *that* is inconceivable. Shakspeare in *Iago* appears to me not to have assigned an adequate motive for the Italian's dark malice—though it may be presumption to question *his* insight into the human heart.—*Richard* and *Shylock* are stimulated by ambition and revenge; but *Iago* only hates the *Moor* in reality because he feels he is loftier than himself. This is not *man*, it is a fiend; and there is a distinction between the worst of human beings, and a lost spirit. Thompson would not have scrupled to commit any act of crime for an end, so that by so doing he did not incur danger himself: but even he would not have been an *Iago*. —To return to Nell.

"The shallow wretch!" she murmured. "How mortified he is!"

Scarcely was Thompson out of sight, when a female in the attire of a gipsy thrust her head in at the door, and said, "Shall I tell you your fortune, pretty one? Cross my hand, and you shall hear of him you love. I can tell you, young maiden, there's many a proud gentleman would be glad to have you in his embrace! Who knows what you may be?"

"I do not want my fortune told," answered Nell. "Begone!"

"Speak not so pettishly! Ah, I know of one who loves you dearly,—and, I suspect, you love him too!—Not that little manikin who has just gone! No, no! He is a fine, tall, handsome youth, with an eye of fire, and a form of grace. Ha, ha! I see you can blush, fair maiden. Come, cross my hand with silver. You know you want to hear of him. I will tell you exactly where he is, and what his thoughts are. Surely, if you love him, you desire to hear of him?"

"Well: there is sixpence for you," returned Nell, laughing at herself, as she held out her well-formed hand to the fortune-teller.

"A lovely fate!" exclaimed the crone. "I hardly ever saw such a palm as this in my life."

"I want not to hear my destiny, but——"

"Don't be impatient. You will marry, and be a mother; you will be rich—very rich; but will undergo many great changes.—Your lover's thoughts are of you——"

"Enough!" cried Nell, seeing some one approach, and ashamed of herself, at having yielded to a momentary impulse. "You may go!"

She quitted the door, and entered an inner room. Ah! Now she felt how dear Stephen was to her. She had not been separated from him before for a day, and as the song says—"Absence makes the heart grow fonder."—She was not permitted long to indulge her pleasing, melancholy feelings, for the voice of Harris, the gamekeeper's son, called her.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

"Here is a letter for you," was the reply.

How eagerly she came forth, and took the missive! Yes, it was the hand-writing of her beloved cousin. She uttered a cry of joy and kissed it fondly. The first love-letter! What enviable, rapturous, thrilling sensations it must excite in a warm, passionate heart, when words that burn and breathe are thus devoured! They seem to have a soul of meaning beyond the dull words, which are but as the body that would conceal, but cannot, the radiant and immortal soul. Amid all the sorrows of this mortal life, amid the nightshade and the aconite, are there not flowers of Heaven, whose sweetness is too divine to proceed from day? Pure passion is the antepast of Elysium!

The letter was short and simple, having been written before Stephen reached London: but each word was a gem more treasured than the brightest pearls that ever adorned a kingly crown. It was *true*, from beginning to end,—none but a true heart could have dictated such sentiments. I fear, therefore, were I to imitate them, I should give words without feelings; only those who have been similarly circumstanced can exactly apprehend what is meant by the freemasonry of love.

Nell read the letter over and over again, utterly forgetful of the presence of Harris, utterly forgetful of the existence of time,—with all its

shadows and glories swept away—of the wreck of hope, the ruin of happiness—of all but that present. If, as the Divine One says, "Ear hath not heard, nor heart conceived" the transports of the Invisible beyond our ken, are there not brief, fleeting moments in existence, which poets cannot describe, nor music embody? If you have a heart you catch my meaning, and you feel that beyond the shadowy metaphor and the ethereal melody there is a diviner sphere: it is the assurance of life—the life of life—that it will be renewed when death is swallowed up in victory! Harris watched the glowing countenance of Nell sadly. He was not like Thompson, though an ordinary man and of his class, and he thought to himself—"Why is it we may not always be like this? The absent pleasure seems the greatest.—I hope that Stephen is well?" he said, aloud. "Any news of the maniac?"

"No—none!" answered Nell, colouring deeply. "I am much obliged to you for bringing me the letter. He is well."

"He is a good lad, and a clever lad," rejoined Harris; "and I wish him well from my heart. Good morning to you."

Nell was glad when she was alone again. She put the epistle in her bosom, its contents being indelibly impressed on her memory from beginning to end. She did not knit much more that day. She smiled and wept by turns; she poured forth her soul in snatches of song which Stephen loved, she repeated to herself the verses he admired, she fancied him present, and told him how much dearer he was to her than ever. She was too happy to be composed for long together, and at length she rose and went forth, just as evening commenced.

Here we must leave her for the present, and return to Fanny,—the wilder and more ideal.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FANNY AND THE UNWELCOME VISITOR—TRAVERS WHARTON—THE BURGLARS—THE PURSUIT—THE CROSSING.

It may be a matter of surprise to some that Lord Wharton and Fanny should not have recognised each other when he met her after her escape from the clutches of the "lushingtons;" but it must be recollected that they only saw each other on the occasion of the attack on the Peer for a few moments, and then under the influence of excited feelings, so that if their respective appearance were remarkable, they had not time to notice the fact. Besides, the dress of Fanny was so changed, and the expression of her face was so variable, that at the precise time when she was noticed by Lord Wharton, she might not have been recognised by those

who knew her, while long illness had made terrible ravages on the countenance of the statesman.

But when Fanny was alone, and reviewed the occurrences of the day, she asked herself where she had seen any one like Lord Wharton? Her brain was so thronged with images that flashed on it continually, so full of wild fancies, of dreams and superstitions, that her senses, though keen, did not retain the impression of external objects in the same mode as other people's. She forgot a thing almost immediately after it was gone from sight, and months afterwards she would brood upon it, as though it were present. Even the most *un*idealized of us have been amazed at finding how *actual* a trivial circumstance has appeared, long after it has departed; but Fanny had very crude notions of time and space; she would have been invaluable as an illustration of Berkeley, for she would not believe her senses sometimes in her mystic moments,—and to tell the truth, we cannot always depend upon them;—as optics show:—but breathed in the abstract, the past, and the future. Her life was like a passionate dream, shadowy, incoherent, yet beautiful.

She sat upon her bed, having partially undressed, but she did not intend to sleep. Weary as were her limbs after walking the whole day, her mind was too active to allow her to sleep; she would often, in fact, lie awake the whole night, absorbed in visions and feelings too deep for utterance. Her spirit darted from one thing to another; now she asked herself, if Travers Wharton would explain away his conduct to her satisfaction, now she trembled lest John Jenkins should avenge himself on that idol of her soul. Her mind was in perpetual motion; she could not rest on an idea for a minute.—There are periods in the most commonplace existence when the excited brain darts like lightning through a subject, leaves it, takes up another, and again dismisses that. This was the ordinary fever in which the Gipsy lived, but on the night referred to, she was driven almost to madness by the rushing thoughts within. She pressed her hands upon her brow, to still the fierce throbbings that were agonizing from their intensity.

"I fear I shall go mad one day," she murmured to herself. "This brain is too finely organized, this heart too quick and sudden!"

Highly imaginative persons frequently feel this dread of losing reason; and this is because the very reflective powers fuse with fancy rather than intellect. Shelley and Byron, it has been said, entertained such an apprehension, and many of our poets have become insane. Fanny was all a poetess: fear, love, hate, wonder, joy, were the elements in which she lived: sentiments became passions with her. But she closed her eyes, and strove to stifle thought. Vain effort! How can the will control the spirit beyond? We must think for ever: there is no vacuum in mind. But she could not compel herself to pursue one train of reflection, and her head ached to such an excess that she with difficulty

refrained from screaming with the pain. It grew late, and the streets were left perfectly empty. She heard the chimes,—ten—eleven—twelve.

"Why does he not come home?" she exclaimed. "He loves me not! I could remain through all eternity with him!" She rose and went to the window. The fog had cleared away, and all was solemnly and sweetly bright, as if heaven looked *on* heaven! The stars were gazing down upon the sleeping city, while crime and anguish prowled and moaned in the dark corners, and splendid vice held its midnight orgies, heedless of death and disease. Fanny wept hot, scalding tears, but they at length relieved the oppression on her spirits. "My star!" she said, "thou wilt receive me when I leave this sphere. Blessed star! I must despair on earth: but wilt thou not lay me to sleep, after I die, in the divine valleys which rest beneath ethereal mountains whereon angels build their dwellings?"

Thus rapt from herself, she continued endeavouring to read Fate in the mazes of the planets, when she was alarmed by hearing a noise. The servants slept below, and only a boy and a maid were in the house. She was confident she distinguished a strange man's gruff voice, and was about to raise an alarm, when the door of her chamber opened, and a towering form advanced. She uttered a piercing shriek, but the door was closed in an instant, a strong hand seized her arm, and a fearful voice, though little above a whisper, exclaimed,

"Another such cry, and I plunge this knife into your false heart!"

The tongue of the Gipsy clave to her mouth, and she could not articulate another syllable. The man glared on her, without speaking, for more than a minute, and then said,

"I do not come to kill you: I want gold, for we are almost starving."

"Here, here!" cried Fanny, taking a rich chain which Travers had given, and handing it to the robber, "take all!" she sank into a chair.

"That I should be reserved for this!" muttered the man. "But be it so! *All* your jewels, girl!"

"In that box!" gasped Fanny, placing her hands over her eyes, as if to shut out some awful sight.

"You fear to look on me!" said the robber, with a dark smile. "But for you, I should not have fallen to this. Hark you! When you see me a corse, dangling from the gallows, exult and say, 'I have done it!'"

"Forbear, forbear! Oh, what has brought you here? Begone!"

"Not yet. I will tell you why I chose this house to rob in. My father and an accomplice—Ha, I heard a noise! Be still, girl—if you utter a word, I swear I'll stab to the seat of life!"

"It is Travers come home!" ejaculated the Gipsy.

"I'm glad of it," returned the housebreaker. "I'll go behind the cur-

tain of this bed. You must sit still where you are, or this pistol shall end your being."

He concealed himself, and the Coxcomb, who had let himself in with a latch-key, staggered up stairs. He was well-nigh intoxicated, and uttered sundry maledictions as he ascended. The burglars who were below in the drawing-room ceased from ransacking the cabinets, but finding the officer noticed nothing, permitted him to pass, though at first they meditated seizing on and gagging him. Before another minute had elapsed, he turned the handle of the door to the room where Fanny remained. What maddening terrors possessed the Gipsy's soul, as Travers Wharton approached! Would that desperate man within three paces of her do violence on him? She was on the point of rushing forwards and warning her lover; but a stern, thrilling whisper—"Remember!"—caught her ear, there was the clicking sound of a pistol-lock, and she saw the weapon was pointed to her breast. She cared not for her own life, but she feared to enrage the robber, and it was now too late to raise an alarm.

The fop reeled into the room with a curse. He was very drunk, and in vile ill humour:—his temper being irritable when he was vexed or thwarted, despite his indolence and apathy, and never improved by much wine, especially when it disagreed with him.

"Is that you, Fanny?" he said. "Hiccup—come here, you little devil, d—n you! It's all through you—hiccup! I've lost a thousand pounds at play." The Gipsy was silent. "Why don't you speak?" cried the Coxcomb, with a loud oath. He was the greatest blackguard, when *not* a fine gentleman, in existence. Still she spoke not. "Curse your blood!" cried Captain Wharton, fiercely, "what ails you?" and he actually raised his hand menacingly against the little creature, who remained pale and motionless, as if transformed into stone. But to his astonishment the intoxicated brute found his arms pinioned from behind, and a vast form cast a shadow on the wall.

"Dastard and villain!" said a low, deep voice.

"Help!" cried Wharton, struggling.

"Another word," exclaimed the robber, hissing the accents through his teeth, "and I will send you down to hell!" A knife glittered at the throat of the Coxcomb.

"Have mercy!" said Fanny. "He knew not what he said or did: he is drunk! Oh, mercy!"

"Speak lower, if you *must* speak! It seems this wretch, this miscreant, is a greater ruffian than him you scorned."

"Let me go!" gasped the Captain, the fingers which were now at his throat tightening, till he was almost suffocated. But he was not strong, and his might was much diminished by liquor.

"It were a good deed," muttered the robber, "to rid the earth of

such a scoundrel! But it is not worth while; let him live, the miserable wasp!" Fanny threw herself on her knees, and looked piteously into the housebreaker's stern face, but her lips moved not. "And you love him still? Poor fool! You take him to your bosom, and he will sting you to death!"

"John!" here whispered a person outside the door, "are you coming? We have secured the swag, and if—"

"The watch! the watch are coming," here vociferated another of the burglars, and rattles were sprung, and feet were heard ascending the stairs.

"Ha, they have seen the open window," exclaimed the tall fellow who had got the fop in his grasp, and hurling him away he fled.

"Quick, John!" exclaimed a dark man, who was rushing away as the other darted through the door. "They will not be able to take us."

But, even as he spoke, three others closed with him, and others were coming up. The tall robber hastened to his assistance; they threw down the constables, but they saw it was vain to hope they could force a passage to the street, for there were a dozen persons below. "Black Bill has gone through the trap-door at the top, I think," said the dark burglar, "let us try that." They rushed back, ascended a flight of stairs, and found that their comrade had already disappeared; but he came back and cried, "Now, pals, it's all right, we shall do them."

The burglars sprang through the trap-door of the house, but the last was caught by the leg, an active constable having followed. He was struck senseless to the ground with a crow-bar by the dark robber, and on they sped over the tiling for life or death. A crowd was collecting below; but most fortunately for them the moon had withdrawn behind a cloud, and it was very dark. The shouts of the constables were borne on the wind, and they fled until they had nearly reached the extremity of the street. Then the fellow who had been named as Black Bill produced a coil of rope from under his coat, and said,

"We shall easily cross this narrow place. No one can see us up here —indeed, they've gone t'other way. I'll throw this on to the opposite chimney."

But the constables and their assistants, who had also gained the house-tops by this time, discovered their error, and as the rope was thrown over the street, and attached to a chimney, the robbers saw them hurrying along.

"I'll cross first," said Black Bill, "you hold the rope tight." And he commenced the perilous enterprise, swinging himself over, with nothing for his feet to rest against.

"Now, John," said the dark man, as Black Bill accomplished the feat, "you go next."

"No," answered the tall fellow, sternly, "I shall hold the rope for you. Come, there is no time to lose—begin!"

Perilous Adventure of the Blacksmith.

Finding expostulation would be vain, the dark burglar followed the example of his precursor, and, though his great bulk impeded him, reached the opposite roofs in safety. But how was the remaining housebreaker to follow? By this time the pursuers were within a stone's throw; but it was difficult to maintain their footing along the tiles, and a false step would have been fatal. The tall robber paused but for a moment, and then suddenly threw away the rope, let himself down from the tiling, by holding a leaden pipe which ran from the top to the bottom of the house, to an attic window, and entered, motioning to his friends to hasten away. He had not been seen—though a moment later, and the constables would have detected him,—and he disappeared, as one of the pursuers passed over a stack of chimnies which had concealed his person. The other two burglars also vanished, but the rope which dangled down betrayed them, and a party in the street gained admittance to one of the opposite dwellings, and continued the pursuit.

"There they are!" shouted the constables. "They are entering a house!"

The moon having burst forth for a moment, revealed the housebreakers: but it was again visited by a cloud.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE FEMALE AND THE MAN—JENKINS AND BLACK BILL—THE PURSUIT—STEPHEN—WHERE IS HE GONE?

THE narrative retrogrades a few hours, ere it is resumed at the period where the last chapter breaks off.—The past is a tomb, but its silence has a voice; it pervades the future, and nothing ever can be disconnected from it!

It was evening when two persons sat in a squalid room in the worst part of a wretched house in St. Giles's. One was a woman of about seven-and-forty, with a coarse, stern, masculine face, but still what is termed "a fine woman." Her dress was soiled, her appearance slatternly, and she was the picture of moody thought; while ever and anon she contemplated the tall form of her companion, and then looked downwards again. The other occupant of the room was a young man, just at that joyous age when commonly all nature teems with pleasure, and the very sense of being is delight; when, without having lost anything of the elasticity of boyhood, "man" is written on the clear brow and the muscular figure. But this individual appeared scarcely ever to have smiled. There was a savage power in his pale lineaments, a rugged majesty, like that of some barbarian chief, in his Herculean form, and irregular, but

still noble features, which, though they might not give great intellect or grace to his countenance and figure, would have afforded a fine subject for the painter who could impart a stern, deep character to manliness and subdued ferocity; the nakedness of a nature, indomitable and fearless. He rose from the stool on which he had been sitting, and stood with folded arms regarding the declining sun. At length the woman also left her seat, and putting her hand on the young man's arm, exclaimed—"John!"

"Well, mother," was the reply; and the tall man looked down upon that face which seldom had a glance of love.

"What were you thinking about?" was the rejoinder.

"The course of this life is not like the sun. Clouds may dim the glory of that god of light; but we—well, you do not understand these feelings. —I wonder my father is not come home. We must have money."

"You are the only being I love on earth, or out of it," said the female, gazing proudly at the mighty frame of her son. "Those limbs which are now like a giant's, have lain in infancy on my breast: and were I to see them writhing in the agonies of death,—I *am* a mother."

"I read your thoughts," answered the young man. "But I shall not die like a felon. Mother! To live is nothing, if life have not an object. The pursuit of one great thing, though it may be a shadow, is lofty, is sublime. If I had not found falsehood and treachery, I would have dedicated myself to the sacred cause of liberty:—but that is over now.—A robber!—Be it so!" There was a silence of several minutes, but the man spoke again. "Look you, the sun is setting!" he said. "A mist is creeping over the face of the city, and soon the hideous scenes which are of nightly occurrence here, will begin.—It is a foul world! Where is there an honest heart?"

The woman made no reply, and her son paced to and fro, muttering to himself. But at last he stopped before his mother, and looking her full in the face, exclaimed—

"Was she not beautiful? Heaven painted her with brightest hues; love, life, glory were in her gestures and her motions:—she was a devil! —Yet, no! Enough of this. I will drive her from my brain, and be calm, cold, passionless!—Slave that I am!"

"My poor boy!" said the woman. "But there are others as fair as she is, who will love you! That pigmy of a girl——"

"They may love me," interrupted the young man: "but do you think I can be mad enough to think of passion more? No: every feeling of my soul, every thought of my brain, every throb of my heart, every pulsation, desire and hope of my being were centred in her; and henceforth I abjure my very nature. Never shall woman clasp me in her arms; my passions shall be crushed, ruthlessly crushed: only revenge—Ah! here is my father, at length."

Two men entered the apartment as he spoke, and one of them cried—

"It will do, John! We have been looking at the house, and shall be easily able to enter it. Black Bill has got the instruments, and likes the notion. Come, Deborah, cook this meat I've brought! Here's some gin."

"Why are you going to attempt that house in particular?" inquired the female. "Do you expect to find much money?"

"It is the house of the scoundrel, Travers Wharton. I found *that* out after my seeing Fanny this morning," replied John Jenkins, (the reader has concluded it was he.)

"But why not Lord Wharton's house? He is rich."

"We can reserve that for another time. I saw Lord Wharton depart in a post-chaise about an hour ago."

"We'll do his business for him all in good time," said the savage smith. "This house will suit our purpose, well. House-breaking will suit me, as I've been a smith, and know how to pick a lock.—I say, Black Bill! don't swig too much of that gin!"

"No," cried the younger Jenkins, "you have both had quite enough. We want a cool brain, all of us, for this business."

"Why," said Black Bill, "there's nothing like this here stuff for clearing the mind, and sharpening the wits. Your health, mistress! There, I won't drink any more. Now to business!"

"You have been engaged in this sort of work before?" asked Jenkins of the fellow who eulogised the liquor; and who responded—

"Yes, I've done a little of everything in my time. First I was a cly-faker, when a boy; then having got into the Stone Jug for nimming a ticker, I gave the dubsman the slip; and then I went to sea. I was a smuggler for some time; but that wouldn't do, by no means; for in an affray with the coast-guard, a gentleman sent a bullet well nigh through my guts. I took to prize-fighting then, and was in the ring for some time. It's a noble purfession; but I was too old for it, and so I took to poaching.—Now, pals, I've told you my history, and we'll arrange about our little adventure."

The burglars set forth on their enterprise about midnight, and all went favourably with them. They speedily succeeded in effecting an entrance by a window, and John Jenkins ascended to the third floor, while the others examined the cabinets in the drawing-room. The reader is acquainted with all that followed, and we will now return to John Jenkins, after he had got into the attic of the house which was nearly the farthest in the street from that of Captain Wharton. The window of the garret had not been fastened, so that he easily got through it, though, of course, he made some noise in doing so. He looked to see if there were any one in the apartment, and, at first, thought it was untenanted; but he became aware that some person slept in a tent-bed at the farther end of the

chamber. The breathing was so quiet and regular, that the house-breaker at first almost thought it was that of a child; but peeping through the curtain, he saw a muscular arm lying on the counterpane. The sleeper's face was turned from him, but the shape of the head attracted his notice. It was a beautiful head, like that of some Greek statue, and was covered with fine, glossy hair, the colour of which was peculiar.

"Can it be?" exclaimed John Jenkins. He went around, and drawing aside the curtain, discerned a calm, tranquil face, moulded in the purest, manliest form, the beard yet light on the chin. "It *is* Stephen!" cried John. "What a sleep is this! Never shall *I* have such dreams as now cast their brightness over his happy face!"

"Dear Nell!" murmured the youth in his visions. "Kiss me, my own cousin! My wife that shall be! Angel of my hope! My pure maiden!"

"He loves my sister!" thought John. And a little tear started into his eye; which he dashed away, indignantly. But Stephen did not long remain asleep; for when our dreams have carried us to the pinnacle of bliss,—as to the lowest depths of woe,—it seems, the mysterious spell that binds the sense, must be dissolved. Thus it is in the actual, as in the ideal world. Life! What a phantom it is! What an unreal assemblage of joys and miseries! Pomp, pride, genius, greatness, vanish, and are no more seen! We arrive at the goal of our ambition, and then, like the fruit on the Dead Sea shore, the splendour crumbles to ashes and to dust, "a dream, a thought, a passion, and 'tis gone!"

Uttering an exclamation, the youth awoke, and beheld John Jenkins standing within a foot of him, the moon streaming on his pallid countenance, and softening its stern aspect. Stephen thought he must be still dreaming: he rubbed his eyes, while John stood still and motionless, gazing sadly on his young kinsman.

"Can it be possible?" ejaculated the youth, stretching out his hand and touching the arm of John.

"It is I!" said Jenkins. "The hounds of the law are in pursuit of me!—Hark! They are shouting! I hope my father is not taken!"

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Stephen, jumping out of bed. "Do I hear them on the house-top?"

"Were there not three of them?" cried a voice outside. "This stack of chimnies hid them when the moon was shining."

"John!" whispered Stephen, "you must hide yourself. Here is a closet—go in. Make haste,—or stay. Perhaps, if you get into my bed they will not think of looking for you there, if they come here. The moon will be out again in a minute,—and see! there are men on the opposite roofs!"

Meanwhile the smith and his companion having been discerned by the constables, were followed by several men; but favoured by the dark-

ness of the night, they effected an entrance into a distant house, unseen. Scarcely had they disappeared when the radiant planet burst forth. Stephen looked eagerly through the window, John having concealed himself. By this time all the neighbours were alarmed, and heads were poked out of casements at every house. The constables called out to them to search their attics, and examined every trap-door as they passed along the tiling. Stephen trembled lest the opening in the roof of the dwelling he was in, should afford a clue to John, not knowing that he had come through the window, which he had shut after him. But he had forgotten to lock the door, and while he was watching the constables on the opposite side, it was thrown open, and Reginald Travers entered.

"O, Stephen!" he exclaimed, "what is all this?"

It was fortunate that the curtains of the bed Stephen had left were closed, or John Jenkins would have been discovered.

"They are pursuing some robbers, I suppose," replied the youth, glancing furtively at the bed, fearful lest his cousin should be seen.

"They have gone through this trap-door," shouted a distant voice on the opposite side.

All London now appeared to be alive, and the whole street where the burglary had taken place was thronged with eager spectators. What delightful excitement it was! Can any one conceive aught more stirring? Even an execution could not have created such interest; for the event was so doubtful! Presently, another shout was raised. Were the burglars taken?—No; they had entered a house, and were jumping down at the back on to the leads: but the brightness of the moon discovered them. Stables were behind, and the robbers reached the top of them in safety. One of the constables had a blunderbuss, and fired at Jenkins. The ball struck him in the arm, but did not do any serious injury to it: and with a curse, the smith was following the example of Black Bill, and letting himself down to the ground—which was about ten feet from the tiling to the stables,—when a mob rushed down the Mews, and he saw he must be taken, if he descended. Black Bill was seized; but Jenkins sprang up a high wall skirting the Mews, and ran along it. He entered another house, and succeeded in doing so without being seen. Once more it was dark for a few moments, and the constables were at a loss how to proceed. Black Bill was securely handcuffed, and led away to prison, and the men on the roof dispersed in quest of Jenkins. At the same time those on the opposite side, who had not desisted from their search, exclaimed that the lead was bent at the top of one of the houses.

"Good God!" thought Stephen. "John will yet be discovered! What shall I do?"

Reginald Travers was at the window, and Stephen thought his cousin might slip through the door and make his escape by the back of the dwelling. But the moon was out, and he feared he would be seen if he

ventured out of the house. The constables had fixed the rope which had been left by the burglars, so as to enable them to descend to Stephen's window; for the lead indicated, in their opinion, the robber had entered by it.

When young Reginald came into the room, it must be mentioned he had left the door open: in the next room were the servants, looking out, and Travers was in the chamber below. If John quitted the apartment, would he not be seen?

"I will die, rather than he should be taken," thought the youth.

He was totally ignorant of the ins and outs of the house, or he might have tried to smuggle his kinsman into a securer place: but there seemed no possibility of doing so.—And now the constables let themselves down to the attic window: they threw it open, and jumped in. Stephen retreated and stood before the bed where John lay. He was very pale, but not a muscle of his face moved.

"He must have entered by this window," said one of the officers. "See, there is a footmark!"

"Whom do you seek?" demanded Stephen, in a steady voice, while Reginald looked on in silent amazement.

"The house-breaker!" was the response.

"He is not here," said the youth. But the constable advanced, and suddenly threw aside the curtain of the bed. "You are exceeding your duty!" he exclaimed, giving up all for lost, but still determined not to yield up his kinsman to certain death.

The officer of justice shook off the grasp of the young man, and, his suspicions excited by his conduct, poked under the bed with his staff, while another man did likewise where there appeared a heap on the couch itself.

"It is all over!" Stephen inwardly ejaculated.

And the vision of the fatal tree, the hooting of the populace, the convulsions of that giant form, flashed on his imagination. O, the agony of those moments, the suspense making them appear hours! The constable threw aside the bed clothes,—the youth gasped for breath.—Did the figure of John Jenkins appear? No. Stephen could hardly believe his eyes: but he was gone.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CURSE—THE GIPSY'S FRENZY—THE STRANGER AND THE WATCH —THE PRINCE OF WALES AND FANNY.

THE Coxcomb was somewhat sobered by the shock his nerves sustained when he found himself seized by the house-breaker. Recovering from the momentary stun produced by the fall he met from the rude hand of the robber, he regained his feet, but was so dizzy he was obliged to sit down.

Fanny did not stir an inch, but remained in the centre of the room, her eyes straining, her breath suspended. She did not utter a sound until the burglars had reached the roof, and then drawing a long sigh, she turned to Travers.

"That cursed ruffian!" muttered the fop. "I wish I had the hanging of him. Fanny, explain all this business!"

The Gipsy advanced, and gazed on her lover with withering scorn.

"Sot!" she exclaimed, as if beside herself, with indignation; "I saved you from that fierce man; but he that can raise his hand against a weak girl, even when in liquor, must be a coward, a wretch, a slave!"

"How!" exclaimed the Coxcomb; "do you dare to apply such epithets to me? Beggar! out of my sight!—Away!"

The Gipsy laid her hand upon his shoulder and her eyes flashed lightning and fury. She was metamorphosed, as if by magic.

"I know you now!" she said, with a preternatural calmness, a bitter irony, which gradually gave place to storm and indignation. "You would have betrayed me to the Prince, I doubt not! O slave, slave, I say!" Beneath the fire of that beautiful face the Coxcomb felt himself shrink into nothingness. The fairy form of the Gipsy dilated, she threw her head back, and stamping her little foot, frantically, she continued—"The idol has sunk into its original clay! I see it now in all its hideous grossness.—The spirit of my destiny opens my eyes; and I am blind no more! Dastard and villain!—And I sacrificed an honest heart for *thee!* May Hell pursue thee to all eternity! You have made me mad, Travers Wharton; but *that* is nothing. You have taken from me all I possessed —I who would have suffered the torments of the doomed for your sake! O, my God! what a wretch I am! The universe darts flaming frenzy on my soul! Ha, ha, ha!" That fearful laughter! It rang in the ears of the fop to his dying day. But she proceeded thus—"I curse thee, traitor! I curse thee for thy treachery, I curse thee for thy cruelty! From the deep depths of my being I hurl my malediction on thy coward

soul! May that curse pursue thee through all the paths of life,—may it cling to thee like the leprosy, when thou art in the middle of thy pleasures and vices! May the light of heaven blast thy health, and may the elements conspire to make thee accursed beyond all men! If thou hast children, may they be thy bane, may disease sap thy life by slow degrees, may thy blood curdle—Ah! How can I shower deeper curses? —The air is thick! I am stifled!—Damn thee, miscreant!"

She rushed away.

"Ho, Fanny!" cried Captain Wharton, when his stupefaction at the torrent of anathemas poured upon him allowed him to find his speech. "I did not mean what I said! I was drunk, Fanny! I am a ruined man!—She is gone!—But she'll come back, surely. O yes, she'll come back!"

But the wild girl darted into the street, without shawl or bonnet, and, indeed, but half dressed. She flew swift beyond conception along; she heard not the exclamations of the mob around her, she felt nothing, she saw nothing, except one horrid image, which appeared to her excited fancy to shriek to her the awful words which sealed her fate. Sudden had been the conviction of the baseness of her seducer; but it was deep and terrible;—she now loathed him with an intensity not to be expressed: —always in those extremes throughout her life.

She took a circuitous course, and ran until exhausted. The brief vision was over, and all was darkness! No human eloquence can depict the anguish of that passionate heart, no mortal tongue describe the agony of that strange bosom. She never gave herself time to think, and reason, therefore, was no friend to her; she only said to herself, "It is my fate." More and more desperate grew the war of passions, until she threw herself on the cold stones and beat her breast. No tears relieved her, and she writhed in her agonies, without giving vent to a syllable. But none saw her. The deep and solemn Night was above, and deep silence reigned; it seemed as if Nature had no voice, when she looked on that unutterable woe. Poor heart! how it was lacerated, how it was stricken! If it had erred much, was not the punishment severe? Think you that racks could torture the limbs, as *that* agony *did* the spirit?

"Pain, pain!" she ejaculated, in the words of Shelley's Prometheus, "pain for ever—pain, for ever pain! I have lived already through ages of intolerable anguish! Oh, that *he* might suffer thus! Withered be his soul—lightnings blast his beauty, and scorch his foul heart! Oh, what do I say? Miserable me!"

She rose: but she was dizzy, and all things swam before her. She reeled, she staggered, and fell insensible, cutting her head against the stone step of a door. John Jenkins was avenged! There she lay, in a blessed oblivion, for some minutes. Even as a white corpse, after the mortal struggle, very, very still, but the traces of the death-passion on

the marble lineaments, on which the cold light of the moon shone down, she lay. No sleep was ever so hushed, so breathless, so sublimely calm after the storm which was over. In eastern climes Nature appears thus; and she was of the East, alas! The poor flower should have bloomed in the wildly odorous gardens where cold things cannot exist, and the nourishment whereon they live is 'passion's essence!' She lived long after she was torn from her early dream—but she was a withered thing; beautiful in that decay, but the glory and the radiance departed. She was not formed for happiness, save such as she might find in the Ideal: the many understood her not; for what Keats and Shelley were as poets, she was as a woman. . . . And this divine, wild rose had mingled its sweetness with the sickly perfumes of a Travers Wharton. . . . . We shall see but little more of Fanny for a long time, and therefore let us linger to take a parting look at the strange loveliness which will speedily be hidden from sight.

The clock of a church tolled one, as a tall, portly man was let out of a house in the immediate vicinity of that before which the insensible girl lay. Happily for her, she had not been before seen, or she would have been conveyed to the watch-house as an improper character, and perhaps sent to prison, "for having got drunk and exposed herself;" for our enlightened magistracy rarely discriminated forty years ago; and has, in fact, made but small progress.

"What is this?" exclaimed the gentleman—for gentleman he evidently was—as he noticed something lying within a few paces of him. "Good God!" he added, "How is this?" He raised the poor creature in his powerful arms. He thought there was more than mortal beauty in the countenance; but he had never seen living face like it. He put his hand to her heart to feel if it yet beat. He then perceived that her temple was bleeding. "That rascal Travers has been ill treating her. I would bet," muttered the stranger. "Where shall I take her?" Now this was what is called 'a poser' to the gentleman. He did not wish it to become known that he had been in that street on that night, but he could not desert the girl. "I cannot take her to Mary: she would be jealous," he thought; "but a surgeon must see her." He cast his eyes down the street, and two glimmering, coloured lamps caught his view, before a dwelling at no great distance. "Yes, I will take her there, and direct that —— Taylor to treat her well."

He was very near a court leading out of a street that communicated with the Haymarket, and as he was passing it, with Fanny in his arms, an old watchman advanced from it.

"What air you dooin' with that 'ere gal, feller?" cried the guardian of the night suspiciously, hastening up to the portly gentleman.

"Scoundrel! this to me?" exclaimed the person addressed.

"And why not to *you*, my swell? I suspects as how, that is, as if—"

"There, there, be off, old copper-skull. Take that guinea, and keep a more civil tongue in your head."

"I shan't: What if I air a copper-skull—mind, you said copper-skull—I knows *my* dooty. I ain't to be bribed, I ain't—with a guinea."

"Fellow! do you know me?" interrupted the gentleman, haughtily. "Stop me at your peril."

"Oh lor, indeed! Know you? I don't know you, but maybe you're the Pope of Wenus—an if you air, I shan't let you pass——"

"Sirrah, I am the Prince of Wales—"

"*You* the Prince of Wales! A werry likely story! Haw, haw! The Prince of Wales call me a copper-skull, eh? he's more of the gentl'man in him than to do that, I knows. So, come with me, you wants to do summut agen the laws, and I, as a dootifull watchmen—"

The exasperated Prince struck down the trusty guardian with a blow, and hastened onwards. The watchman sprang his rattle, and vociferated lustily for help. In three minutes a crowd collected. The watchmen, who came to the assistance of their comrade, entered the house into which the gentleman with the girl had gone. They insisted on taking him to the Roundhouse, despite all the expostulations addressed to them. At length the Prince appeared, and gazed sternly at the faithful guardians of the night.

"Whew!" whistled one of them, who knew his person, 'my eyes, Ben, that *is* the Prince, and no mistake about it."

The object of this altercation was much provoked at the publicity of the affair; but the watchman he had knocked down humbly apologising for his mistake, he threw him some money, and bade them all disperse. He then returned to the room where he had left Fanny. She opened her eyes as he did so.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed. "Ah, Travers, was that well done? O, my poor brain! O God!"

Gradually consciousness returned; she was bled by an apothecary, and sent to bed; the fever of her blood abated, and she became excessively calm to outward appearance. The Prince remained with her until nearly day-break, and she thanked him for his kindness to her with perfect self-possession. She never smiled, she never wept as she used to do; for smiles and tears were the only vent to such a soul as hers. Every passion seemed to have left her breast, and she scarcely ever opened her lips for weeks. But when she was alone, she would indulge in dark soliloquy: she would address her natal star, as if it were a being, and hold discourse with what her imagination conjured. She did not go mad: but she moved among men without a feeling, as it appeared, in common with mortals. She disappeared on a sudden; but the report went that the Prince of Wales kept her in a cottage remote from London. He might have kept her; but I believe there was no

criminal intercourse betwixt them. It was true that he went to visit her occasionally, but he never remained long; and he treated her with a respect not ordinarily exhibited towards a mistress. Be this as it may, Travers Wharton lost the countenance of his royal friend for some time. They met, and they spoke, but a coldness had arisen between those who had formerly been inseparable. The conduct of the future monarch to poor Fanny was one of the very few redeeming traits in his character: and though he was never given credit for a disinterested generosity, there can be no reasonable doubt that he befriended her from kindness. Those who ascribed sinister motives to *him*, did not know the heart of her he was as a father to.

But Fanny was forgotten. She had flashed like a meteor on the town, and nothing but her beauty was talked of for a few days; and then Travers Wharton made some Opera girl the fashion. But in noticing these events we have advanced farther in our narrative than we ought. New scenes must be delineated in rapid succession; new thoughts and situations must make those which have preceded them become dim and shadowy. Thus, "in the turmoil of our lives," the gone is obliterated, with all its radiance, by something new and actual.

CHAPTER XLVI.

LORD WHARTON AND LADY RIVERS, *a la* DON JUAN—INTRIGUE—THE ASSASSIN—THE SPECTRE AGAIN.

LORD WHARTON lay on a splendid bed, in one of the most magnificent mansions in England. On the day of the occurrences detailed in the preceding chapters, he had received a letter, which induced him to quit London immediately, and post to the residence of the Duke of ——. He arrived there at a late hour, and was closeted for a considerable time with the powerful nobleman he went to visit. The result of this interview it is not necessary to specify: at midnight Lord Wharton, exhausted with the fatigues he had undergone, after so recent a discovery, retired to rest, and in a few minutes his weary eyelids closed. But the scenes of the day were acted over again by the dreamer, and he tossed, and talked in his sleep. Presently he thought a shadowy form appeared to him—*the* form—and said,

"Why do you sleep? You are in danger from assassins! Arise, and be guarded. Farewell!"

So strong an impression did this phantom make on the brain of the Peer, that he started up, his eyes opened, and he looked, expecting to behold the spectre. But there was nothing to be seen, and he was com-

posing himself again to rest—for it was not more than two o'clock—when he thought he heard a noise, as of a door opening; and a soft step approached. In an instant he was out of bed. Was it the coinage of his fancy? A figure dressed in white was before him. "Again do you come?" cried the statesman, "what want you?"

The form was not distinct, but remained in shadowy outline at the extremity of the immense chamber. There was a closet, Wharton had remarked, where the figure stood, and he compelled himself to walk in that direction.

"I'll touch her!" he muttered, "whatsoever she be." And he seized the supposed phantom; but what was his surprise when he found the apparition struggling with suppressed mirth.

"Hush, Wharton," said a not unmusical voice, "don't you know me—Adeline?"

"Is it possible?" said the Peer.

"Yes; I will explain in a few words. I heard that there were some political intrigues going on here, and made the Duchess invite me. You are betrayed, Wharton. They are talking, even now, below—the Duke, Lord ——, and some others—how they may cajole you. I saw you get out of your post-chaise as I went to bed, and I knew something extraordinary was going on. So I sat up, and after you left the Duke I discovered he went to his study—an unusual thing with him. I managed to overhear all. He has been plotting with some of your foes who arrived yesterday; they are to lead you on with fair promises, and then fall off when you count on their support. I have secured one friend among them, Lord S——, but he has no power."

"I am much obliged to you, Adeline, for your untiring zeal. But how did you get here?"

"That closet communicates with an ante-room to my chamber, and a key let me in. Ha, ha! You thought me a ghost. You look very well after your illness, Wharton?"

"Sweet Rivers, you are charming in that loose robe! But give me the particulars of this business. I suspected all was not right, from the manner of his Grace. Hang him, he shall pay for it! Who are those in the plot?"

"The Premier, and his toady the Chancellor, Lord ——, Sir C. A——, and some more. They think to secure the Prince against you, but he hates the Duke especially." Lady Rivers (for she it was) proceeded to inform Lord Wharton of all she knew or suspected relative to the conspiracy; and, having finished her narrative, added, "You ought to be *very* much obliged to me for venturing so much for you."

"And I *am*, Adeline: you are my most valuable friend. I shall proceed, of course, as if I knew nothing, and you must learn all you can for me. I wish you would marry one of these powerful men, and make him ours."

"I can do that, without wedding a gouty husband. I will marry you, if you have a mind to my money and my person; but I won't have any one I don't like."

"You honour me by your preference, fairest! But, you know, 'An oath—an oath—I have an oath in heaven' that I will never wed."

. . . . . Lord Wharton remained at the Duke's to breakfast only, next morning, and then returned towards London. He had accomplished about two-thirds of the intervening distance, when he saw several persons on horseback trotting towards him, and among them the Prince of Wales. Wishing to speak with his royal friend, he alighted, and the Prince recognised and cantered up to him.

"Well met, my lord Wharton," he said. "I am going to Windsor; will you accompany me?"

"I thank your royal highness, but affairs of state require my presence in town for a few hours. May I ask your ear for ten minutes?"

"Certainly; I will walk with you." The Prince dismounted, and good naturedly offered his arm to the minister. "You still look ill, Wharton," he said, "lean on me."

The Peer then conversed on some measure about to be proposed in the Commons with his companion, made him allow its expediency; and then introduced the subject next his heart, relative to the Duke of ——.

"I abhor that man," said the Prince. "If I can help it, he shall never assume office."

They talked for nearly half an hour thus, when the Prince exclaimed, "And now I must tell you of an adventure I met last night. You know that your brother astonished us all, a short time since, with a new mistress he brought to London. Well, he has behaved most shamefully to her! You will hear all soon, and so I will tell you the truth myself. He wanted to make money by her, and the day before yesterday he plied me with wine at his house, and then offered to sell this *bijou* to me. You know, Wharton, when a man has exceeded his usual quantity of wine he is not in his right senses. I fell in love with the girl, and would have taken her under my protection. But I soon found she was not what I imagined her to be. Travers had won her soul, and she was not to be taken from him, willing as he was to part with her." The Prince then glanced slightly at a few other particulars about Fanny; and proceeded to narrate how he found her in an insensible state a few hours before. "I was obliged to leave her at Mother Taylor's," he added; "but she shall be removed as soon as it is possible. Poor thing! I pity her! She insisted on knowing whether Travers had connived at the business I mentioned at his house: and as I thought the best way to cure her of her unfortunate passion was to acquaint her with the unworthiness of her idol, I acknowledged all. She is a strange being—half crazy on some points; but much too good for him. I never knew such a heartless fellow as he is, in my life!"

"I thank you for this confidence," said the Peer, when the Prince of Wales had finished speaking. "It is just like Travers to desert a woman, after he has satiated of her society."

"Yes: I can forgive a man for indulging his passions; but to treat one who loves him thus—just as he would a horse or dog—is quite brutal. Well, good bye, Wharton. Come and see me at Windsor, shortly. You are always welcome."

"I have secured the Prince, I think," said the statesman to himself, as he entered the post-chaise once more. "But where is the being we can trust? *All* are false!"

While thus cogitating, Lord Wharton proceeded at a brisk rate over a level tract of country, farm-houses and little cottages sprinkled over the face of it. He might have left the Prince half an hour when a person on horseback came up with him, and ejaculated—

"What, Thomas! Is it you?" Travers Wharton was before his brother. "I am a lost man," continued the fop, riding by the side of the carriage, "if I cannot raise £1000. I lost it to Sir Harry last night at play.—Can you lend it to me?"

"I neither can, nor would, if I were able," returned the statesman, coldly. "Go and pledge some of your rings."

"I have hardly got a jewel left; they *are* pledged," was the reply of the Coxcomb, but in a low tone of voice that the post-boy might not overhear.—"Did you pass the Prince?" continued Travers—Lord Wharton remaining silent.

"I did: he seems in the mood to cut your acquaintance, so I would advise you not to follow him.—Travers, you are a great rascal!"

"Yes, with the sole exception of your lordship, the greatest in the world.—Bah! You have heard of that girl? Why, I picked her up on a common,—a little, dirty beggar, and be d—d to her! I wish I had never seen her. Come, Tom! Enough of this. Have you not a hundred mistresses yourself?"

"I may have *had* a thousand, for aught I know, my good brother: but I have never turned woman-dealer, at present. When all other trades fail, I shall come to you for advice."

"Woman dealer? Stuff! The Prince told you I wanted to part with her to him? It was only to indulge his fancy;—a loyal subject can hardly refuse a favour to a king's eldest son."

"I admire your sentiments most cordially! Generous man!"

The Coxcomb bit his lip with vexation. "Is it true that you were attacked the night before last?" he asked, wishing to turn the conversation. "The papers are full of it; but they tell such infernal lies. They've got a story about me—hang them! They ought to be prosecuted."

"After all," returned the Peer, "they generally have some sort of truth in their liesand mis-statements. I *was* attacked."

"And haven't you made a fuss about it,—sent to Bow Street? No! Well; you're an odd fellow.—My house was broken into last night, and some valuable gems have been carried away; but we shall catch the rogues, and we'll have them all hanged. Do you know who fired at you?—for the story goes you were nearly pistolled."

"I know the man: he has before attempted my life. Why his malice is so inveterate I know not.—But what of this burglary at your house?"

The Coxcomb narrated the incidents of the preceding night, adding, that one of the robbers was taken, but the others had baffled pursuit. By the time his story was over, they were within a league of London, and the fop inquired once more if his brother would lend him the money to pay his gambling debt. If it had been any other creditor than such as Sir Harry to whom he owed money, the Captain would not have troubled his head about it till doomsday; but the modern code of honour demanded the claim should be satisfied at once. Lord Wharton again firmly refused to assist the Guardsman, and he left him, in diabolical humour.

"I'll go and marry the old dowager Countess with half a million," he muttered. "I never knew such a cursed screw as Tom, in all my existence. And yet he is so profuse to others!"

Lord Wharton returned home, and numerous letters were put into his hand as soon as he alighted. Some of them he saw were important, and probably required an instant answer. He, therefore, gave directions that none should be admitted to him, and proceeded to his study. He had scarcely reached it, when Anna came running to him, and threw her arms round his neck.

"Is it prudent, my Wharton," she said, "to exert yourself thus? You must be very careful, all the physicians say, dearest!"

"I wish she did not think so much about me," inwardly exclaimed the Peer, returning the kiss somewhat coldly. "After so long an intimacy as ours this is ridiculous."

He opened one of the letters he had just received, and read. Anna waited for a moment to see whether he would notice her, but as he appeared absorbed in business, she left the room.

"So," muttered Wharton, "the crisis is at hand. The Premier will send in his resignation to-day, and the new Ministry must be formed immediately. Who *but* me can they have? I should have a formidable opposition to contend with, though; and, what is worse, there will be many foes in the camp of my own party.—What of that? Am I not Thomas Wharton? Let them try to undermine the structures I have raised: let them oppose me openly or covertly; I care not. But, wherefore, do I take all this trouble? For the mere love of triumph? No! For the sake of patriotism? Absurd! For wealth and power? No, no, no! What is it, then, I seek? To fly from myself? Am I so vile a coward?—

That horrid image! It makes me mad. O, what a slave I am! I had resolved to drive it from me, to despise it: and yet it glares upon me still. If I but lay my aching head upon my pillow, it rises up: and if I open my eyes, it is before me. No sooner do I subdue my dastard fears than it comes in some new shape.—No more, no more!"

He leant his face on his hand and thought. He had slept but little the previous night, and sleep suddenly overtook him. It was about the shortest day, and the shades of evening approached, though it was not more than three o'clock. In half an hour it was almost dark. The apartment in which the statesman sat was at the back of the house, and it was not difficult to enter them from the Mews which it adjoined; consequently, it was protected by grated windows. But as the darkness increased, a form rose from underneath a sofa at the extremity of the room, and crept stealthily towards Lord Wharton. He gazed upon him with a look of fierce malice for the space of a minute. He then stole to the door, and locked it.

"Now, then, I have him at my mercy," he said, and lifted up his arm. A knife glittered above the head of the sleeping Minister. Why did not the assassin strike?

"Ha!" ejaculated Lord Wharton, in his sleep; "frightful phantom! are you here again?"

The murderer started back, while the face of the statesman became distorted, and his strong frame shook. Again the man of blood raised his hand; when, as if by enchantment, there rose a liquid strain of melody. The murderer turned very pale, and his arm dropped. He was not aware that there was a second door to the library, for it was concealed by a curtain; so that when it was thrown open, and a tall shadow-like figure advanced, what with the darkness, the voice of conscience, and all the circumstances combined, the assassin was quite unnerved. The form stood motionless and erect, about ten feet from the desperado. His blood curdled, the knife dropped from his grasp, and he rushed to the door which he had locked, burst it open, and fled, just as the Peer, roused by the noise, awoke.

The statesman thought he had dreamed he heard a crash; but the knife which the assassin dropped in his alarm caught his eye.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. As he spoke, there was again a low harmony, but it seemed to come from a distance. Lord Wharton listened, as if petrified. But the music died away, and all was hushed as death. The kitchen of the statesman's house was remote from his study, so that the servants who were there, heard not the crash of the door;—and Anna was in her chamber, which was on the second floor; consequently, none came to him. The cold perspiration stood on Lord Wharton's pale and haughty brow, but with a vast effort of resolution he strode to the door. How came it open? He examined the lock: it had been broken.

There was no denying the evidence of the senses.—At length Lord Wharton rang the bell, and a footman answered the summons.

"Who has been in this chamber?" demanded the Peer.

"No one, my lord, but yourself," replied the amazed domestic.

"Look at the lock of that door. Is it not broken?"

"Y-e-es!" stammered the servant.

"And this knife.—Hold the candle." Lord Wharton examined the blade attentively. "Let the house be searched," he said. "Something is wrong."

All was bustle and confusion, and every nook and corner of the dwelling was examined. The study had been locked before Lord Wharton entered it, as was usual, so that none could have got in by fair means. There was no mode of egress from the second chamber, save by a window, and there were no signs of any person having been there. The statesman went to his sleeping apartment, and threw himself on his bed.

"Are you ill, love?" asked Anna, who was there.

"Not ill—not ill: but the spectre—the damned lie and awful truth, that makes existence hell!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

MIRACLES—HARRIET—THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED—JENKINS—THE PURSUIT OF THE OTHER ROBBER—THE RIVER.

The reader may have wondered almost as much as Lord Wharton how the apparition of Harriet, if not spiritual, indeed, rose to the statesman, and as mystification is not my object, I will at once proceed to explain the matter.

The age of ghosts and wizards has gone by for ever, and now we are so sceptical, that we laugh at the idea of a spectre, though wherefore, it is not very easy to say. Those who believe in a world of spirits, of course allow the possibility of their taking bodily form, since in our own being we are as immaterial, as regards the eternal which is in us, as any angel of them all. It was a shallow sophistry of the metaphysician who asserted that a miracle is irreconcilable with reason, because miracles were not of every-day occurrence. A spiritual appearance, if it *be* a miracle, is perfectly rational, perfectly credible; provided there be no antecedent contradiction, in a law opposed to it:—now as we know not what a law, in the abstract sense, may be, it follows, that what appears *prima facie* a miracle, is only a revelation of that which we did not previously take cognizance of, from our ignorance. A Hottentot would consider a rail-

road as great a miracle as an European would the raising of one from the dead; and, therefore, the common-sense argument of David Hume, unless it can be proved that a miracle is the reversal of the system of the universe, appears to me ridiculous. But there are no spectres. No; we see not with our gross senses: but in every smile of Heaven which comes down upon us in eternal light, in every whisper of the pure gale, redolent of love, it is poetical to believe, and certainly not irrational to conclude, spirits of joy may breathe, and the departed whom we love may be watching us with serene eyes, and exulting at every pure thought and sublime aspiration which draws us to them. But yet these gentle ghosts, these guardian spirits, do not appear; and supernatural machinery is exploded in fiction, not because it is impossible, but because we conceive it improbable, in our deification of these poor five senses.

Harriet had got into the house of the statesman.—In order to make it plain how she did so, we must describe an old London house, since pulled down. There was a gate in the front of the house, usually left open for tradespeople to descend to the kitchen. Unperceived, the maniac had got into the house; but how could she remain without being detected? With the cunning of insanity, she hid herself in a cellar, until the proper moment arrived, and then stole up stairs while all the domestics were occupied. There was a window which opened to a conservatory, which Lord Wharton had placed over the leads that covered his study and the adjoining room. Through this the maniac passed. The study jutted out from the dwelling, and had been built more recently. A wall ran along beyond it for a great distance; and it formed the extremity of the new building, windows looking out thence on stables. One of these windows was grated; but the other was not, because it was placed at the top of the room instead of nearly at the bottom, and the roof of a low stable, which belonged to the house, and which was insulated from the other stables, ran parallel with it. There was no great difficulty in descending from this window, because the roof of the stable was in a line with it, but it could only have been reached by a ladder, unless a person walked along the wall. Harriet *did* walk along the wall, which was but a few feet above the conservatory, and so entered by the window. She remained for some time in the apartment which adjoined the study, and when she left it, after having saved Lord Wharton's life, did so by mounting a table at the window, and closing it after her, let herself down to the tiling below, which was about ten feet from the ground; and then easily dropped from it, and disappeared.

You may ask why she did all this? Who can account for the freaks of insanity? But she saw Lord Wharton enter that house the day before, and determined to get into it. But ere the narrative is resumed, it will be better to show how the baffled assassin effected an entrance also.

His identity with Jenkins may have been concluded, annd, therefore,

it were unnecessary to detail how he got on the high wall. He entered by the window to the conservatory, and descended. The house of the Peer was at a considerable distance from that of his brother, and, indeed, was in another street. It will be recollected that the burglars crossed from the opposite side by means of a rope,—which they had done, because they conceived they might cross without difficulty when there, to a remote quarter, and escape by some narrow street. If they had let themselves down at the back of Travers's house they would have been immediately caught, for other dwellings blocked up the passage thence.

To return to the smith. By the light of the moon he examined the abode he was in; and to his surprise beheld a portrait of Lord Wharton, which had just come home from an eminent painter's, and was standing in the hall. A ferocious joy seized the wolfish heart of the smith. But he suddenly heard a voice, and stood still to listen. Two servants were sitting up, enjoying a bottle of wine, and from their conversation he gathered Lord Wharton was out. He, therefore, crept away with the intention of concealing himself. He had skeleton keys with him, and thinking he should be secure in the study, he opened the door, and locked it after him. He lay hid there until Lord Wharton returned; and when he thought he was fast asleep, made the attempt on his life, which was so singularly frustrated. For the rest,—some blood was discovered underneath the sofa where Jenkins had concealed himself, for it will be recollected he was wounded by a constable's blunderbuss, but this threw no light on the mysterious affair.

It may appear extraordinary that the inmates of Lord Wharton's house were not disturbed by the shouts of the multitude at the distance of a few hundred yards; but with the exception of the two servants who were drinking, they were all buried in sleep, and those individuals were nearly fuddled, and though they heard a noise, did not choose to stir. The search might have been extended to the house of Lord Wharton, but a circumstance occurred which drew away the attention of the mob and the constables. A person stole out of the house of Mr. Travers, and an officer of justice on the roof perceived him, and called out—"There goes one of them!"

The man thus pointed out rushed away, overthrowing several who attempted to stop him. Having lost sight of Jenkins, the officers descended from the house-tops, and pursued the fugitive. On—on he dashed, thousands behind him, desperation winging his feet. All the narrow streets he met with he instantly turned, thinking that his only chance of safety was that his pursuers would lose sight of him. Many he distanced, but a few swift runners, animated by the hope of a reward, pressed hard upon him. And now he reached a bridge thrown across the Thames. "Stop him!" cried those behind. A dozen men, among

whom were two or three constables, prepared to seize the robber. He was panting and nearly exhausted. Another minute, and he must be taken, for retreat was cut off.—But no. He paused a moment.

"Better to die bravely than on the gallows!" he muttered. He leapt on to the parapet of the bridge: his towering form was seen for an instant erect, and then it descended from the immense height into the dark and icy waters below. They closed over him, as the pursuers reached the spot from which he had taken the awful jump. A shudder ran through them all.

"A brave fellow, by Jove!" exclaimed a Bow Street officer. "Who will go after him?"

"Where is he?" cried the mob. It was dark again, and nothing could be seen above the surface of the river. "He will never rise again!" exclaimed the people. But as the words left their lips, the moon burst forth once more, and they perceived a head at a great distance from the bridge. "There he is!" shouted the multitude—for by this time hundreds had again assembled.

A boat was instantly put off; but some delay occurred ere it could proceed in the direction the fugitive had taken, for in their haste the rowers in passing under one of the arches broke their oars, and a few minutes elapsed ere they could procure fresh ones. Nothing could be now seen of the daring swimmer. He had dived a second time when he found he was seen from the bridge, and no one could perceive where he had risen. Several wherries were set in motion after him, and torches were lit and held aloft; but still he was not discernible.

The crowd hurried along the banks, and their numbers swelled immensely every moment. From every lane and alley in the vicinity of the Thames flowed that vast living stream, every face eager with expectation, all shouting, running, swearing, and wondering by turns. Had the man sunk to rise no more? The boats reached another bridge, and still the rowers saw him not. They began to think he *must* be drowned, and rested on their oars.—Suddenly a shout arose from the opposite banks.

"He is taken! he is taken!" was the universal cry. "Ha! he has burst away again! Look at him! What a splendid fellow he is!" shouted others.

And it was true. He gained the opposite side almost insensible with the vast exertions he had made, and lay like a corpse for several minutes concealed by a barge which was drawn up on the shore. He started up as the crowd was advancing to him, he staggered—but with an effort of desperation would have again taken to the river. But a constable seized him. He struggled—he threw off his opponent: but where was he to go? Many boats, containing officers of justice, were within a few hundred yards of the banks.—He stood still for an instant,—when he

dashed into the stream. One boat there was in which there were three men, which had kept aloof from the others during the pursuit: but now it was rowed as swiftly as six arms could urge it on towards the fugitive. His brain whirled until he could see nothing, he heard shouts, he felt hands grasping him; but nature could do nothing more. He was at the mercy of those he had so long baffled.—But a voice cried—"Come along, pal! You're the lad, and no mistake." He was dragged into the wherry, and off it went, like a shot. It darted through the arches of Blackfriars' Bridge, leaving the boats that pursued far behind. In vain the rowers in them strained their muscles to the uttermost, for the wherry in advance was one of the swiftest that ever cut the Thames.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the men by whom the daring robber had been saved, when at last they were safe, and made for land. The fugitive housebreaker revived a little, and he was made to swallow some spirits; and then half led, half carried, was lost to view.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE BLIND MAN—ROSE—A DISSERTATION ABOUT MILTON—SIR ALGERNON—ROSE FALLS—SEDUCTION—NELL.

It must not be forgotten that such personages as poor old Richards and his daughter Rose have been introduced into our chronicle; and lest their existence should be merged in the more important drama, which is the foreground of the picture, let us see what destiny has been doing with them of late.

The blind man sat on a ricketty stool, his sight entirely lost for any purpose of existence, though a few glimmering rays might occasionally visit him. It was night, and the ethereal hosts were shining in the heavens.

"I wonder why Rose does not come home!" murmured Richards. "It must be late,—for, surely, it is dark.—Ah! I cannot now distinguish between the beautiful day and the solemn evening. The sun shines no more for me, the merry light is darker than darkness,—for they talk of it, and I—— But it is sinful to repine. God forgive me! Have I not a daughter, have I not the necessaries of life, have I not my intellects unimpaired? Wretched creatures that we are, to rebel thus against the dispensations of Providence!—Why do we suffer? That by suffering we may grow into the Redeemer's image. 'He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' And by faith and love, by fortitude and resignation, we are prepared for immortality!—But O, we are weak and human still! Dear Heaven sustain me!"

The blind man's lips moved after this, but did not articulate. Those sightless orbs were raised, those withered hands were clasped, and the long, white hair, the bending form, the devotional attitude, were the sublime of the lowly and meek. That good old man: so resigned, so resigned, so pious, so patient! Was he not more to be venerated than the mitred bishop, the great and haughty monarch, the subtle statesman? *They* are not fit objects of reverence to a true philosopher.

At length there was a light footstep at the threshold of the cottage; but so absorbed was Richards in devotion, that he heard it not. He was praying for his dear child, and tears were streaming down his furrowed cheeks. She entered, and stood before him, her head bent downwards. She heard the murmured benediction, towards its conclusion, and sobs choked her.

"What Rose! Is it you?" exclaimed the old man, joyfully. "Come to my arms, dear child! Have you not been out a long time?—But it is a beautiful night, is it not? Surely the stars and the pure moon are shining in the brightness of their glory! I can see them in my heart, now—see them with my soul, although my eyes behold not!"

Rose coloured deeply as the old man commenced speaking, and her manner was embarrassed when she replied: but he noticed it not:—for there are periods in the existence of every human being with a spark of feeling or imagination, when the divine and infinite occupy the mind, to the exclusion of the temporal and earthly.

"How God loves us!" continued the blind man, enthusiastically, but in a low voice. "It is not until we have lost one of these exquisite capacities of sense, that we know their true value. And the blessing taken from us, think you, He does not bestow what is more precious still? O, he never takes away aught, without giving *more* than something equivalent! I see now what I never beheld when my sight was spared to me. I seem to float above the blue sky, and to behold the Paradise in store for us: I am happy—so happy!"

The blind, however much they deplore their affliction, are usually the most cheerful and contented of beings; they are dependent; and, after all, the sense of dependency must be sweet, when it is unaccompanied by a feeling of inferiority. Religion is *all* dependence:—and, it may be said, it is the abasement of the proud intellect before the Creator: but on the other hand, it can raise so high, it is so full of love and peace, that there is no painful humiliation in it. There are those who find joy in pain and woe,—not of the senses, indeed,—for that is impossible:—but in the secret depths of being, where all may be ever serene; and such was the case with the old blind man. He continued to speak, thus—

"The universe of matter is divine to look upon: but how diviner is that of the soul! When sight is taken away, the eyes turn inwards: and we see what is in us of good and beauty! All is dark *without;* but

within, how great the light! We concentrate our ideas, feelings, hopes, in the Eternal and unseen, instead of those fleeting glories of the visible world! The inspiration of the stars may make a sublime poet for earth; but the inspiration of the soul can make one for Heaven. Read some of Milton to me, Rose. He lost his sight, to gain a keener vision into the infinity of Being."

Rose took up a soiled book, containing the works of that mighty spirit which could not rest within time and space; which soared on the wings of eternal imagination into the immense of heaven, which heard the melodies of seraphs, and filled its burning thirst for the majestic Life in Life, for the ineffable Existence within Existence, with the essences of primeval light and glory. O, what a mind was that! It flashed Eternity upon us; it seemed to grasp in one gigantic plan, earth, sky, and ocean, and saw into the depths thereof; and brought out all that is beautiful, lofty and magnificent in nature: but ever imbuing what is material to others with the intenseness of a divine idealism,—which all great poets must have:—he brought down the spiritual to earth and blended them.

None but a blind man, and an enthusiast, could have been a Milton. There is a fervour in his adoration of the Invisible, some of which, we, who have our sight, must transfuse to the earthly. I know of no such enthusiast in love of spirituality, with the sole exception of Shelley: but Milton loved to convey his feelings and ideas of spirit by types in nature, while Shelley continually idealises matter: the one imagined *à priori*, the other *à posteriori*. Milton is heavy, therefore, to the general reader, because he had a different quality of imagination to that which we usually possess. In almost every piece of poetry we read, the writer is on earth, and aspires upwards; but Milton is in heaven; his blindness shut out earth. He would have been more popular, if he had retained his sight; but he would not have been the sort of prophet he now is, singing to his soul, as it were, and from that soul to us, of all that is divine, stupendous, and immortal.

A clever friend of mine observed, "Milton is a great poet; but he is such a d—d bore!" And why is this? Because, unless we can etherealize ourselves, and from the altitude of the empyrean look down on the great universe, we cannot behold the mighty drama as he did:—were a spirit to write a poem, and give it to the world, it would be written from heaven; and, therefore, to us poor things of dust and sense, it would seem, like Paradise Lost to T——, "a d—d bore!"

To return from this digression. Rose read, in her clear, sweet voice, a few pages of the more than mortal eloquence contained in that very miracle of genius; and the old man listened earnestly, seeming to feel every word in his inmost heart: and when she had finished, he rose, and stretched forth his arms. He embraced her, and exclaimed—

"I have been there, in the spheres, my child! I bless God I am blind!" . . . . . .

Alone, in her little chamber, sat the blind man's daughter. Tears were flowing down her smooth, round face, and her breast was labouring with heavy sighs. That this sweet bud, so bright, so lovely, so fresh, and fragrant should be so sad! How soon the fountains of our deep feelings are let loose; how soon does the shadow chase the sunbeam away! In this chequered life we are continually smiling, sorrowing, despairing. The best and strongest have their moments of dark despondency, and poor Rose was weak and childish. A woman in form, her mind was still unformed, and though she did not want for sense, and had many amiable qualities, it was natural she should have some of the vanity and feebleness of her age and sex,—at least not one in ten thousand at fourteen, so pretty as she was, is perfectly free from weaknesses and follies.

"It is very wrong of me," she murmured. "Why have I trifled with Williamson's honest heart?—But he is so much older than I am! How can I love him? He will forget me, I hope: I have always looked on him more as a father than a lover. But I promised to marry him when I was old enough! It was unthinking—worse than unthinking, in me! —Ah! There is Algernon below."

The window of Rose's chamber was not above ten feet from the ground, and a tree grew close to the side of the cottage, so that it was easily entered, without passing through the door. A small, boyish form might have been seen climbing the tree; and a youth of about nineteen was at the window. The girl opened it with trembling hands, and her lover entered.

"My own dear rose-bud!" he exclaimed, throwing his arm round her waist and kissing her. "I shall never know how to thank you enough for the confidence you repose in me. Sweet Juliet—have you not aught for your Romeo?—a fond word, a tender smile? Speak!"

"O, Algernon! Why have you required this proof of my love? Why cannot we meet as usual—as we have done, now, nearly a month? Were you seen here, might it not injure me deeply?"

"Nay, Rose! I have sworn to make you mine, when I am of age.—But why should we wait through two long years for the fruition of our love? His heart must be cold who can be satisfied with words and looks. —Ah! that I could excite in your bosom the same passion as burns *here!* Why do you look away from me? I have not offended you, sweet!"

"No—no: but this is not right. Pray leave me, Algernon!"

"You drive me mad, with your coldness! Good Heaven! Can that be love which feels aught of distrust, which does not surrender the whole being, heart, mind, body? But I will go. Since you cannot feel for me in the same——"

"Forbear! forbear!" sobbed Rose. "This is cruel of you. Do I not venture all things for your sake? O, Algernon! You will not wrong me so foully as to think *so!* I love you as I do my life, and more! Were you the poorest peasant in existence, I would joyfully share a cottage and a crust with you!"

The young man was silent. "Does she really love me thus?" he inwardly exclaimed. "No, no; she only thinks of me as 'Sir Algernon Sharp.'" There was a short pause.

"What is it you ask of me to prove the strength of my affection?" asked the young creature, looking anxiously into the face of her lover.

"I am unhappy, Rose," he replied. "I want to marry you, and I cannot. Cursed fortune!—Well, I must leave you soon, and you will be married to another—to some low wretch."

"Never!" interrupted the maiden. "I will take any vow you can propose, never to be the wife of any man but you. O, that I had never seen that Williamson. I hate myself for having acted towards him as I have."

"I know your heart. You like him better than you suppose. Why will you not fly with me, if you care not for him?"

"I had not seen you when I consented to marry him. It is not because I care for Williamson, but because I love my poor father, I will not go with you. Do not ask me."

"But you can convince me of the truth of what you say without leaving your home. We are here together. The ceremony of the priest—man's invention—has not been gone through; but our union is of the heart. If you *do* love me, you will despise the cold forms of the world—you will *be* my wife, now,—this will be our bridal night. Give me a reason why you will not consent to this? I am not happy, because I doubt the sincerity of your attachment. I fear, when I am away, you will forget me; but if we are bound by other ties than words——"

"Algernon! Urge me no more. It is not generous to doubt:—why should I believe you, more than you trust in me? I believe you with all my soul,—indeed, indeed, I do!"

"If so, you will consent to my wishes, for you must know I adore you, and that all my hopes and desires are centred in you. What do I ask? What sacrifice do I demand? Who will know aught has passed between us? I cannot believe what you tell me!"

An innocent country girl, like Rose, who had imprudently formed a connexion unknown to her father, could hardly withstand the importunities of an accomplished libertine, under such circumstances: and, it were almost needless to add, that in a moment of delirium, her feelings worked up to the highest pitch, she surrendered her virtue at the shrine of love. Ignorant of the world, unsuspicious of her lover,—of him to whom she had given all the fond affection of a warm, romantic heart—

almost a child in age, and scarcely knowing what was sought of her, she added another name to the long list of those who have lost happiness for the sake of gratifying a mere transient passion, which usurps the name of nobler feeling.

Seduction, most assuredly, is one of the greatest crimes a man can commit; but it is not one of the darkest errors into which a *woman* can fall. It is the greatest and most lamentable indiscretion, but no vile selfishness, no gross sensuality, is the cause of female dereliction. And yet, the false morality of the world makes woman pay all the penalty, and however much she may repent, she can never regain her station in society; while, if a man play the villain, he will be received still into families where there are girls; and people exclaim—"O, it is the wildness of youth; he will reform when he has sown his wild oats!" or, "Ah, poor fellow! he has been unfortunately circumstanced! Who can withstand temptation?"

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind!"

But it is *not* the mere wildness of youth, where a man is a libertine; it is the corruption of a foul heart, which leads to excess, and unbridled licentiousness. And temptation! And the difficulty of resisting to pluck the fruit ready to the hand! In nine cases out of ten, at least, man seeks temptation, and woman avoids it. How many of those who have become victims to insidious arts have whispered the first unhallowed breath? I will not believe there are many women in the world, who are like the unfortunates in the saloons of our theatres, until they have fallen. Eve committed the first transgression; but it was from ignorance. 'She was tempted and she did eat.' That those who may be so like the angels, so full of love, endearment, truth, and all that can adorn humanity, should fall, as it does seem they fall, into fiends who lure to perdition! But remember, O man! the crime is on *thy* head!

Poor Rose, when she met her father again at breakfast, would have betrayed her secret, if he had retained his sight. But he saw not her flushed cheeks, and the traces of recent tears; he beheld not the look of shame and remorse in her candid and fair young face; he suspected nothing; for he was the least suspicious of men, and though he remarked her voice trembled, and her manner was nervous when she spoke, he attributed it to some slight indisposition, and thought nothing more of the matter. She sat with downcast brow, vainly attempting to swallow a morsel; and when her father asked her, as was his custom, to read a small portion from the sacred volume, she excused herself on the plea that she had a cold and hoarseness. She could not bear to see the bright sun, as it poured down on the frozen stream, which used to gladden her eyes; but above all the sight of her poor, blind father troubled her. She stole out unobserved by him, and sought the most secluded spot, to

indulge her tears and agony. And she felt relieved by giving vent to her woe, and delusive Hope whispered—

"He will not deceive thee," even while Conscience demanded, "What hast thou done, misguided girl? Dost thou not know thy guilt will be thy despair? Thou wast not so ignorant as to know not it was a crime."

"Ah me!" murmured Rose, "what is it that lies so heavily on my poor heart? God forgive me! I am sinful, sinful!"

"What ails you?" here exclaimed a sweet voice, pityingly, and the young girl starting up beheld a bright, pretty face, full of intelligence and kindness looking at her.

"I thank you," she replied, "nothing ails me." And she moved away; but the stranger said,

"I think I know you. Are you not the daughter of Mr. Richards? How is he: I am very sorry to hear he is so blind!"

"He is pretty well," replied Rose, stifling a sob.

"You do not remember me. I am Helen Jenkins, the daughter of the blacksmith who lived two miles hence."

"I recollect you now," answered Rose; "but I am in a hurry. Good morning." And she departed. She had not proceeded far when she perceived a dashing vehicle coming towards her, and would have turned away, desirous of escaping all observation, when a well-known voice reached her.

"Rose, Rose! where are you going?" cried Sir Algernon Sharp, who was driving alone. She turned, and he asked her to get into the carriage.

"No, I must go home," she said. But he prevailed on her to enter the vehicle, and put his horses into a gallop. They passed Nell; but she only caught a momentary glimpse of Rose, and almost conceived her eyes must have played her false—having previously noticed the elaborately dressed young man who drove. She had been to see little Jem Thompson, and was returning home, when she encountered the blind man's daughter. But the idea of her cousin, Stephen, soon obliterated the circumstances from her mind, and having reached a romantic little valley, nestled under a low hill covered with thistles and brambles, she sang these words, without much skill, but with pathos, taste, and sweetness.

NELL'S SONG.

Love lives among the woodlands like a bird,
And its deep voice in every gale is heard!
Voice of the spirit—eloquent of heav'n!
By angels worshipp'd—by their Maker giv'n!

O, the pure breath of passion in the heart!—
All holy, heavenly;—it can impart
Dreams of the land unseen by mortal eyes—
And seems to utter—"Come to Paradise!"

Each rill, each vale, each breeze and sound appear
By Love to live in beauty; and our tears
Are the sole tribute that our souls can pay
To the bright sun of a diviner day!

CHAPTER XLIX.

WILLIAMSON——THE GIPSY—OLD RICHARDS—THE FATAL INTELLIGENCE—DESPAIR AND MADNESS.

It was noon-day, gorgeous, glorious, noon-day; and the King of Light poured down its golden beams on the hoar-frost that hung, gem-like, on each spray and on the withered herbage, lending every object splendour and brilliancy. The sparrows chirped, the wind was fresh and invigorating, and although it was cold,—for January had arrived,—it was not that keen "eager air," which seems to pierce through the marrow. In spite of the desolation winter had made, Nature seemed to lift up her voice and cry—"I will be gay, whether you will or not, O stern spirit of decay and ruin! My heart is glad, and though my beauty is consumed, I have something immortal in me!"

A solitary horseman was pursuing his way over the heath where the encampment of the gipsies lately stood. They had departed but a few hours before, and nothing human or living could be seen far or near. The sparrows hid themselves, the weazles and reptiles were in their holes, and earth seemed left to the wind, which swept along in continuous gusts, sporting as merrily as in the early spring. The horseman paused for a minute to contemplate the scene.

"How wonderful is Creation!" he exclaimed aloud. "There is grandeur and glory in the meanest spot of the universe, and all is redolent of love and joy!—Thou sun, that shinest in the everlasting majesty of thy immense being, what a thing thou art! How finely the poet says, it seems like 'the god of this new world!' I marvel not that barbarians, seeing its astonishing powers of vitality, should worship the mighty orb. Each man in existence now, thinks it ought all to be for him. How absurd! We are not happy, because we are extravagant in our wishes, and our means of realizing them are so limited.—But *I* am happy! Yes, Rose shall soon become mine, and I will lead a new life for her!"

It is needless to add that the traveller was no other than Williamson, and that he was going to visit his heart's idol. How he anticipated the joy of that meeting, how he conjured up the vision of felicity, despite what he had just been thinking on;—who is a philosopher when he

loves! And sweet voices came to his fancy, as it darted through the ideal future, calling him endearing names, voices of young children the images of his beloved and of himself. A tear stole down his brown cheek: but brushing it away, with a slight touch of shame, his thoughts found a new channel, and he said to himself—

"That Lord Wharton! What a fine brain he has! Is it not a pity that such a man should be lost through the lust of power, and the wild strength of passion;—worse than lost—enslaved, enslaving?"

He was now crossing the common at a round pace, and was within a few yards of a huge hollow tree in the centre of the open space, when a withered form emerged from behind it, and stood before him.

"Shall I tell you your fortune?" she said, with a malicious grin. "I will tell you for nothing, for the love I bear you." She laughed.

"What mean these grimaces, old Mabel?" asked the traveller, addressing a woman of forbidding aspect and of elderly appearance, who, leaning on a staff, had spoken.

"You think now you are going to see little Rose Richards. I told her her fortune a few days ago; and I said that she would be a gay lady, and live——"

"What of Rose?" interrupted Williamson, with quivering lip. "Is she ill? Bird of ill omen! answer."

"O, no! she's not ill, that I know of: but you'll hear more presently."

"If you have aught to tell of Rose, out with it, hag!"

"I am much obliged to you for your polite epithets, Mr. Williamson! No, ten minutes gallop will take you to the cottage, and she will welcome you with smiles and caresses. Ha, ha! You are too old now——"

"Bah! I waste time talking to you. Where is Fanny?"

"Gone; I know not whither," and the gipsy woman left the horseman, adding—"as you will find your foolish puppet, Mr. Williamson. Ha, ha! I am glad of it. I never liked that man,—he has too much of what the d—d world calls '*good*' in him." She lit a pipe, and smoked.

The object of her regards increased his previous speed, and in a short time the cottage of Richards was visible. How his heart leapt within him! He had been lucky of late, and was now in a condition to marry. When Rose had attained her sixteenth year he hoped to make her his. The smoke did not curl as was usual from the chimney of the blind man's cottage, and when the traveller was within gunshot, he did not hear the soft voice of Rose carolling, as she was wont, when the sun shone, and she was at her spinning-wheel. He stopped and listened for an instant, —then dashed forwards, and entered the cottage, having jumped from his horse's back with all the ease and lightness of youth. It was the last time he did so.—All was hushed and silent, and Williamson had almost concluded the blind man and his daughter were gone out, when

he perceived a bending form at the other end of the apartment sitting near the fire, which was nearly out.

"Why, Richards!" ejaculated Williamson. But the old man stirred not, spoke not. The soul of his visitor misgave him. The blind man was murmuring to himself, and Williamson caught his broken accents.

"Forgive her, O Father!" he said, "for she is a child—a very child! But to desert me—thus. To leave me alone in my age!—O, the villain! Curse him, whoever he be. What a fiend to wrong such innocence!"

"What, Richards!" exclaimed Williamson, very loudly. The blind man started up as if by electricity.

"My child!" he screamed. "Where is my child—my Rose?"

"Good Heaven! What is this? Tell me, quick, old man."

"Villain—villain!—But I rave. Forgive me. You have not seen her? No: they tell me she is gone.—But I cannot believe it. If I had eyes I would seek for her through the world."

The old man lifted his sightless orbs to heaven, while Williamson placed his muscular hand on that shrunken shoulder, and said, in a hoarse voice—

"If you would not drive me mad, tell me, where is Rose?"

"I would she were in her grave!" returned Richards, solemnly. "I know not where she is.—O, that I saw her—her whom I love next to my hope of immortality—dead here—stiff, rigid, motionless!—O God! She is a harlot, Williamson!"

"Liar!" cried the man apostrophised, his strong frame shaking, his eyes rolling fearfully, and the blood deserting his cheek.

"I am no liar," returned Richards, mildly. "I am blind—a father—daughterless, childless. God visits me heavily. I cannot lie."

"O—this is horrible! I cannot doubt your word, my worthy friend. But you may be in error."

"I would sacrifice the means of life, I would die a thousand times, joyfully—endure torments unutterable to know it were so!" answered Richards. "But I can tell you nothing of her. She was seen by a girl yesterday—ay, it *was* yesterday—but my poor old brain is very dizzy, and I forget,—she was seen, I say, in a carriage with some one—a young man."

Williamson struck his broad forehead with his fist.

"Revenge!" he shouted, till the echoes rang again. "We will have revenge, revenge! A thousand deaths to him—the villain! O, lead me to him, good star!"

"'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord," replied Richards. "I only want to find my Rose—and then to die!"

"Damnation! Talk not to me!" cried Williamson. "Who but man shall execute justice? I will have revenge!—But is it so? Rose was

pure—O, so pure, so good, so gentle! She may have been calumniated old man."

"Indulge not such frantic feelings," returned the blind father, apparently having risen superior to his own woe. "Revenge is an unhallowed thing, my friend. Man has never yet benefited by it. Let us only recover our lost sheep, and then we will thank God, and leave the rest to Him."

"God sleeps--if this most monstrous thing be true!" was the wild exclamation of Williamson. "Yes, I will think that the Eternal Justice has been wrested to——"

"Forbear, forbear!" interrupted the blind man. "This is blasphemous. Calm yourself, and let us pray for guidance."

"I cannot pray—dotard! All hell is in my heart, and you bid me pray!—Do you know, I ask, if this is true?"

"It is—it is: but this frenzy of yours—this awful——"

"Speak not to me!—You bid me be calm. Talk to the whirlwinds and the thunders! Descend on me, ye hills, and crush me—for I am desperate—blasted—dead!"

The mood of Williamson changed, and he now stood so still that he seemed stricken into a statue. He kept muttering something, while the blind man was straining his eyes in vain to catch the expression of his countenance; and at last said—

"What ails you, my good Williamson? Are you ill?"

"Not Omnipotence can annihilate the past," said Williamson, with a strange calmness. "You are old—and you will die soon. Farewell: why do I live? Why was this old rotten world ever created;—foul hearts—gross natures?—I say, farewell, old greybeard. Now the thick darkness palls me.—You shall hear of your daughter soon."

"But do not be rash,—vindictive, Williamson!"

"O, world!" was the reply. "O, death! Bless your blindness, bless evil—for good is a cheat, a lie, a delusion!"

"These are wild things to utter——"

"O, *annihilation!*" said Williamson; and when the blind man addressed him again, he was gone. Richards fell on his knees and prayed. The one was a Christian, the other but half one.

Williamson, darting into his saddle, plunged the spurs into his horse's side, and dashed away at a furious pace. The trees, the hedges, disappeared, and he was soon in a dreary and unfrequented part of the country, where the rocks rose in a nearly perpendicular manner to a considerable height. Then at last he shook off the sudden madness which had seized him, and reason again assumed its sway. But he knew not where he was, having traversed many miles in the course of the half hour he had been galloping. He reined in his panting steed, and recalled his scattered thoughts. How was he to obtain any clue to Rose? It was

useless to return, as no one knew where she was gone; and, besides, he wanted to be alone.—Alone—alone—the deep solitude around, and the quiet skies above him.—Evening was approaching; and he welcomed the solemn shades as they gathered over his head. O, what but solitude can console a spirit racked like his?—Consolation, in its high and sublime sense, indeed, is not to be found in the visible world: but Wordsworth has beautifully shown how nature sinks into the heart and tranquillizes the fierce passions that consume us. The universe has a voice to solace him who will open his heart to hear the things of which it is the exponent and the symbol; the universe may be considered one infinite illustration of the truths of the Bible, and the whole Bible one sublime elucidation of the facts of the universe. Nature, then, can teach analytically as God teaches synthetically; its harmonies contain truths, if we will seek them out, its myriad shapes are the manifestations of illimitable power and goodness, a book written by Deity, though blotted foully, alas! by man. Where was the philosophy of Williamson? I asked. Let us look into his soul.

"The dream is over, then—the passionate dream which visited my manhood, robed in Elysian hues!—Let it depart. Why do we shadow forth a heaven, paint the stern realities of existence with all this glory, and find a corpse within the palace, which is but a charnel-house?—I have been insane, no doubt; but shall reason make me blest as frenzy did? Reason! Hollow mockery!—false creation of sense, and not the measure of truth, not the circumference of thought and mind! But I am as serene as nature, now.—The fires burn within the volcano, but are not seen without. O, that I could crush all passion into dust and ashes! —But they still cry out—these voices which have no organ—these words of unembodied meaning—and I must obey. Vengeance is all that remains to me. But is it not beneath a rational being? What is revenge? If we kill a worm like ourselves, is it just and good? The laws take life, —they punish, and do not prevent. Should I be acting likewise? Ought I not to have watched over that fair and precious flower?—O, wretch that I am! What avails my intellect, what avails my reason? How vain are all the wise saws of sages to such as I am!"

Thus, like the tempest, which at first exhausted all its fiercest violence, and after it was spent, still howled, ere it expired, the miserable Williamson continued his way. And his face retained no traces of the awful emotions which had distorted it, when the soft twilight stole over the earth, and the pale crescent of the moon appeared. He was on a rising ground commanding a view of the lovely landscape that lay as if asleep in the bosom of an eternity. The winds had sunk to a low, half-mournful murmur, the waters that rolled below, under the sullen rocks, sent up a melancholy sound, and in the heights of heaven's sphered expanse, not a cloud was to be discerned. The strong spirit of Williamson was sub-

dued, and tears gushed into his eyes. How they relieved the oppression of his breast! A *man's* tears, from their infrequency, may afford a vent more potent than woman's; they seem reserved for occasions, when *not* to weep, with those towering passions, and that haughty manhood, must drive the brain to madness.

"Shall I try to forget?" thought Williamson. "What would I not give for that Lethe draught which none have found, except in death itself? Ay, *there*, while the worm fattens on the corruption to which all must sink at last, the heart forgets to throb, the soul to despair. 'To die, to sleep!' We feel not the force of these words, until our only hope is in the cessation of existence.—Give me the endless and the dreamless rest."

Suddenly, as Williamson's excited feelings subsided into that torpor, which is "the vitality of poison," a strain of melody so sweet, so exquisite, unearthly, and tender, met his ear, that he almost fancied some being of another world had come down to comfort him. He raised his eyes, and beheld upon the rocks above, perched on the very verge of the highest steep, a tall and shadowy form, the moonlight streaming upon the white and placid features, and the long dark hair floating over the arms. She stood there for some time, while Williamson remained entranced, and the voice of strange sweetness died away among the rocks —the rocks echoed, and the minstrel vanished.

CHAPTER L.

THE ENTERTAINMENT—THE GUESTS—THE THEATRE—LORD WHARTON AND THE SPECTRE AGAIN—THE FALL.

THE whole was like some oriental drama,—it was a scene of magnificence and enchantment; flutes seemed breathing their magic into the still air, lights danced before the eyes, odours were scattered through the gorgeous chambers within, and all conspired to steep the senses in Elysium. But let me endeavour to describe the splendid pageantry.

It was night, and the lamps of heaven gazed down from their spheres, as if in amazement at the rivalry of earth. Before a splendid mansion of Corinthian architecture, there was a frozen lake of great extent, and tents were erected on it. On this lake were sledges and skaiters,—the latter of the highest aristocracy of England, falling into graceful attitudes, and going through the mazes of a dance. Beautiful women of high rank, covered with costly furs,—ermine, sables, and rare skins of every description—were walking on the ice, or were drawn along in the sledges at a great rate by the gallant skaiters. Tables were strewn with

viands under the tents on the lake, and there the company regaled themselves with champagne and pastry,—laughing and joking in their courtly way. The trees near the lake glittered with snow, and were festooned with ivy, through which gleamed countless yellow lamps, so that the boughs appeared hung with masses of gold and diamonds, for the snow was dazzling to look upon. The clear, frosty air was not disturbed by any boisterous wind, and bore from afar the distant music of gay voices, and all were smiles and gladness. The weather exhilarated the spirits, the scene was new even to them.

The rich are much to be pitied, inasmuch as the things which are novel and delicious to others, afford them no pleasure, because they are no more to them than the coarse fare to the peasant, and are not so much enjoyed.

But on this occasion every one conceded he had never seen anything like it before. And within the mansion itself were assembled nearly a thousand guests, princes, nobles, foreigners of every degree of nobility, and nearly the whole peerage of England with their families. There was an immense room, the roof of which was supported by vast pillars, round which twined hot-house flowers, in which, perhaps, half the company were assembled. Music came from the galleries, in which were invisible musicians, harps, violins, wind instruments playing soft airs from the Italian masters, or voluptuous waltzes recently imported from the Continent. And every face was radiant with smiles,—the coxcombs of the day shook off their apathy, and condescended to endeavour to please and to be pleased. And the ladies were all affability and softness, —they danced, they flirted, they talked nonsense, and fashionable poetry, —sentiment was the order of the night. The dresses were splendid beyond description, and were blazing with jewels. Some wore fancy attire, and many carried on their backs a fortune. Robes, lace, embroidery were everywhere conspicuous, and you would have thought it impossible with all that glitter, gorgeousness, and wealth, there could have been such a thing as nakedness and rags. Laugh on, smile on! What a spectacle for kingly death! In a little time how many of those fair insects shall be wasting in slow corruption in the chambers of the worm—the worm shall feast deliciously!

But where was the magician whose power had raised this fairy-like scene?—At the extremity of the apartment was a brilliant group, towards whom the eyes of all were directed. In the centre of them was a man in a dress most elaborately conceived and tastefully executed. He was handsome, very handsome, without being remarkable for great intelligence of face, or height of stature. But he was five feet ten of perfect symmetry, and his eyes shone with triumph, while each one in his vicinity was eager to pay him some compliment, or to catch a passing bow. And by his side was a princely personage of more commanding form,

and some years the senior, also in a fancy dress, which displayed his powerful chest and commanding person,—which towered over most present—to great advantage. He was conversing with the Earl and Countess St. Clair, by whom the entertainment was given, and he was profuse in his expressions of admiration at all he saw. Within a few feet of the master and mistress of the *fête* stood a slight young man of small stature, and a woman who was indulging in some lively sally at the expense of those present. She was rather pretty, and most exquisitely attired as an Eastern princess. The youth wore the dress of a Sultan, and it became him well.

"I do not see Lord Wharton here," said the princely individual who had been conversing with the St. Clairs, turning to the young man last specified. The Earl and Countess had advanced to meet some new guests, who vied in magnificence with any present.

"I think, your royal highness," was the reply, "I see him, with Mr. Travers. He is my rival—an Oriental monarch."

"It is very warm, Lady Rivers, do you not find it so?" said the Prince to the lady at his elbow.

"Yes; Travers *would* have hot air, though I told him it would be oppressive after coming from the lake. Your royal highness does not dance, I see."

"But if *you* will be my partner, lovely princess, I shall do so.—Sir Algernon, I hear you have become one of my father's servants, as well as being a subject. May I ask my faithful Hussar to seek a partner, and be our *vis-à-vis?* I thank you."

While the Prince was speaking, a manly, vigorous figure, and a slighter and much smaller man approached him. He took one step forwards, and extended his hand.

"Lord Wharton! You are late; but I am glad to see you—the more so that you bring with you one who seldom graces the festive scene with his presence. Mr. Travers, I trust your health is better?"

"I thank your royal highness, I am quite well. Lord Wharton has been delayed by business."

Here a young boy in the dress of a simple page, and a lovely little girl joined Travers. Lord Wharton entered into lively talk with the Prince and Lady Rivers, and Travers, turning to the children, said—

"Why, Reginald, what fair young lady honours you with her company?"

"Do you not know Miss Julia Seymour?" answered Reginald.

"What! Is it possible? My dear, you have grown half a head, since I last saw you. O, here is your cousin, Mr. Sharp."

The lawyer shook hands with Travers, saying—

"I perceive you have brought your son, sir.—I could not deny my

little Julia the pleasure of gazing on this splendid scene.—Samuel, come here."

A lad of about fifteen in the garb of a Turk obeyed the summons.

"Are you not going to dance with Julia?" said Sharp.

"I am engaged to Lady Clara Granby," was the reply.

The lawyer frowned. Travers was talking to Julia, and Sharp said to his son in a low voice—

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Sam. I hope you will not imitate your cousin Algernon—who, I see, has just led out the Duchess of D—. The coxcomb!"

"No, my dear sir," returned Samuel. "I shall always look to the main chance better than Algernon. Lady Clara is a girl you will admire."

"The portionless daughter of a beggarly Irish earl. Stick to the substance, Samuel."

"I always intend to marry Julia; never fear me:" and the lad sauntered away.

"What a sweet creature your little Julia is!" remarked Travers to the lawyer, as the child was led away by Reginald. "She is not like her mother, I think?"

"My aunt, Lady Seymour; no."

"She did not long survive the birth of her daughter?"

"Not many hours;—she was nearly fifty when she was born. She will have a large fortune on coming of age.—May I ask if you received a proposition from the Marquess of ——?"

"I did; and have declined it. I suppose, Wharton will be Premier."

"He thinks so himself," replied Sharp, drily.

"And you,—what shall you do?"

"A few days will decide," answered the lawyer, and he turned the conversation. "Ay," said Sharp to himself, when Travers had left him, "they know what I am now. The low attorney is not the least of those here present.—My son must marry Julia. Yet she is too good for him; but money is power. I feel that every day. Ten years hence I will stand high as Wharton does now."

And he quitted the festive scene to indulge in feelings but little in accordance with the gaiety. Some time elapsed, and now the guests hastened to a private theatre at the back of the mansion in which there was to be a performance, Travers Wharton and Sir Algernon Sharp being the principal actors, and Lady Rivers having consented to tread the stage once more.

The Prince of Wales and Lord Wharton went arm in arm to the theatre, and suddenly the latter started, as if some scorpion had crossed his path. He turned very pale, and muttered—

"'Tis but the coinage of the brain!"

"What ails you, my lord?" asked the Prince.

"Did you see any one a moment ago behind the trees yonder?" asked the Peer in return.

"No; you are not well."

"Yes, yes," replied the statesman, with a writhing lip; "let us in."

There was a spectre in the play, which was compressed, so that it might not occupy above half an hour in representation; and it rose, pale and shadowy, as the Prince and Lord Wharton entered the theatre.

"A pretty ghost, my lord, eh?" remarked the heir to the throne. "It is little Fanny Manvers, the daughter of Lord Manvers, I think."

"She has too wicked an eye for a ghost," returned the statesman. "Ha, ha! I wish such a spectre would haunt me!"

"You are a sad fellow," answered the Prince, in the same low tone he had been addressed, smiling at Wharton. "Why, what makes you shake so?" he added. "I hope you have not taken cold. It might do you harm after being so recently ill."

"They heat the rooms to too great an excess," returned the Peer.

And he suddenly became motionless, his eyes fixed on vacancy, while the performance continued. But the Prince being engaged in whispering to a lady, Lord Wharton quitted the theatre, his brain seeming on fire. The cold atmosphere did not abate the fever of his blood; his shivering fit had subsided, but that species of icy heat (if I may so term it) which we sometimes experience, darted like venom through his frame.

The lake was deserted,—all had crowded to hear and see the accomplished Travers Wharton and Lady Rivers act together.

"I am a madman!" muttered the Peer. "I saw nothing but the outline of a tall female;—and it was my fancy which shaped it into reality, perhaps." But even as the words escaped his lips something rose in the distance on some artificial rocks about a furlong away from the house. "Ha! Do you come even here? Into all this noise, this show, this pageantry!" cried the statesman. "Well, what message have you for me from the depths of Hell? Speak, awful form, speak, I say!"

The Peer remained as if paralysed, while the shape on which his eyes were straining waved her arms, and a low, wild melody was wafted by the calm wind to his ear. He spoke not, he moved not, for some minutes; but when the figure descended from the rocks, he rushed forwards, and uttered a maniacal laugh that rang fearfully through the silent air.

"Ha, ha, ha! I will follow, though the earth should gape and swallow me!" he cried.

The form passed swiftly through an avenue of elm trees hung with lamps, and the statesman sped along with frantic impetuosity. The form reached a grotto, brilliantly illuminated. It stood for about two seconds at the entrance, gazing sadly on the Peer, and then disappeared. He entered, and found that a cave had been cut under the grotto, and this

was also lit up. He descended at the risk of his neck, heeding not the steps which were cut in the earth. On—on he went, but vainly he strove to overtake the figure. He emerged from the cave and continued the pursuit. Still, a hundred yards before him he beheld that form. It ascended an embankment crowned with trees, and at the summit again stood still. Lord Wharton dashed forwards,—his foot slipped, and he was precipitated to the earth from a height of twenty feet. He was stunned by the violence of the concussion for some time, and on opening his eyes, they were dazzled by lights which were held to his face.

"Thank God! he revives!" cried the voice of the Prince of Wales, who was supporting the Minister. The company had quitted the theatre, and the Prince found Lord Wharton lying senseless on the earth. He looked, without seeming to understand anything, at the persons who had flocked around him. "He should be bled," said the Prince. "I hope that horrid fever will not return to him. Mr. Sharp, will you take my place? I think I could bleed him, if there be no medical man present."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the statesman, starting suddenly to his feet, as Sharp, with a peculiar expression of face, was about to support him. "No, no, I say! I am not hurt. But where is she gone? I swear I saw her!"

"He is delirious!" cried several voices in a breath.

"Pshaw! Tell not me!" returned Wharton, contemptuously. "Travers, is that you?—The Prince will pardon me for leaving him—but I, —yes, I must be alone." The company shook their heads. The great statesman stood erect and haughty. He then was striding away, but the Prince laid his hand upon his shoulder. "What would you have with me?" cried Lord Wharton, sternly. "I am not ill, I repeat. My pulse beats as it should. But I must be alone, I say—alone." He was rushing away; when he suddenly started back. His eyes rolled wildly. "Again! I saw her again!" he exclaimed. "There, there!—She is gone! It was her, I say. Think you I dream? O!—Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER LI.

THE TWO RESOLVES—REASON AND PASSION ARE THE ONLY LAWS WHICH EVOLVE HUMAN ACTION;—THEY ARE MIND AND MATTER.

STANDING on the banks of the Thames, where the river is broad and deep, was a towering form, full of manhood, of vigour, and of rugged majesty. Silent and statue-like, the tall man, with folded arms, contemplated the dark waters. The bosom of the river was partially frozen,

and the huge masses of ice shone in the white lustre of the moon. Behind stretched a fair expanse of country, bounded by hills of some height; and on a rising ground at a great distance, was a stately mansion, the trees before which twinkled with innumerable lights. That was the house of the Earl St. Clair.—But all was still where the solitary man stood. He leant against a stunted oak, his head reaching to the withered branches, which were covered with snow. And the faint ripple of the river was the loudest sound to be heard. Above was the starry peace, below was the murmur of the deep waters, which mirrored the brightness of the lamps of heaven. On—on flowed the river, among ice, as if it whispered tales of joy and woe to the deep spirit of the night. For how many hundred years has that old Thames rolled along, while generations have passed away, and those whose eyes have rejoiced in the vision of those banks, those trees,—have hung enamoured on the music of the tide,—have passed away, like shadows, as they were, and been consigned to oblivion!

But a horseman approached from a winding road at a slow pace, his eyes downcast, and a deep gloom on his face. He was of low stature, but there was power and command in his dark eye, in his strongly marked features, and even in his form, though he was shorter by the whole head than the man who stood at the distance of a few yards, buried in such profound reverie. They neither perceived each other. The horseman drew in his rein and gazed on the quiet scene, with all its melancholy beauty, and hushed tranquillity.

"Why do we live?" he murmured. "I must believe that all this solemn loveliness of nature pleases the eye of the Creator better than the fierce passions, the agonizing woes, the vain struggles, the empty hopes, and unfulfilled desires, which make what we call humanity. Thousands of years,—and still the same passionate frenzy, the same unreal dream, the same coldness, fever, and despair. On flows the stream of life, even like this river. Now it is calm, but it is the creeping torpor of the soul, when it seeks the opiate, which though it lulls, poisons the spring of being. O, the lamentation, O, the unrest, O, the misery! Death can alone put a seal upon the heart-ache and the disease! Come, friendly death!—*Thou* the enemy of man! Let fools and idiots talk thus! Thou art the greatest boon of the inscrutable Power of whom we know nothing, but that he *is!*—For, lo! what can greatness do? Dig a grave for greatness!—raise itself above its fellows, and wade through blood perchance to empire. Cæsar and Alexander—what are they now? They live in the souls of men, but they are no more—they are less than the veriest atom of the universe!—Now the river of existence rushes over its banks! Hark, how it roars! And we, poor slaves of sense, gape and wonder at sounds signifying nothing! For love with all its wreathed smiles and thrilling music, for ambition with all its fiery daring and giant energies,

for avarice, jealousy, every passion, every feeling we hug to the spirit, instead of hurling them all away, are but the howling of a wind—howling desolation!"

In his abstraction the soliloquist had raised his voice, and as its deep, passionate, mournful tones died away, the echoes mingled with the low, faint gale and river-murmur, eloquent of human destiny,—a breath, a passion!—another voice, not less deep and thrilling, exclaimed—

"Whose words are these, that seem as if they embodied the whispers of my soul? Who art thou, man of gloom, who art thou wretched mortal?"

The horseman looked up and beheld the tall man, who was still standing at the distance of some paces.

"I think I have seen you before," he replied. "What is your name?"

"I have no name—unless it be Revenge!—Hark you, sir, I am a man without hope,—I am a man caring not for existence, and looking on—a spectator, not an actor. What I do, my heart takes no part in;—I wander about, and I see joys; and laugh inwardly—a bitter laugh. Ha, ha! Shall *I* seek enjoyment? The lunatic's pastime! Men fancy happiness, or there would be no despair. Why should we not live, indifferent to existence,—drag on the chain, without a smile, or tear; and sleep—to wake no more?"

The horseman was some time ere he rejoined—

"This life is an illusion, friend.—I think I know you now. You have learned the bitter lesson we all must learn."

"Ay; would it could be unlearnt! How happy is that poor brute you ride! He anticipates no sorrow, he mourns not over the past, his food is delicious to him, he eats, and drinks, and enjoys refreshing sleep; each sense affords him pleasure, and he dies perhaps in a moment without disease. Now let us weigh the life of the happiest man that ever breathed against that of the horse.—But what is it which makes you my brother in misfortune? Woman?"

"Damn her, yes!" replied the horseman. "Yet, no—a mere child—she was deceived, she knew not her own mind."

"Woman or child, it is all the same. They are all vain, heartless, frivolous; to be won by any coxcomb who will hang on their breath, and worship their rotting beauty."

"You speak as if the gall were in your heart and brain. When I saw you last among the wandering tribe, there was a fine girl with you, whom I know——"

"Be dumb!" interrupted the tall man, fiercely. "O, the strumpet! My love was deep for her!—You knew her! Yes, she was worth looking at! I warrant you, she had dainty limbs,—though they never twined round me.—They were too fine for such a ruffian as I am! Look at me. There is an arm whose every muscle is hard as iron! Shall it do nothing

but wield the hammer! By G— it shall! The sword, the sword, the bayonet and the dagger.—You see that house yonder. It is filled with the cursed rogues, who live on our starvation; who have their carriages and horses, their wives and mistresses, their palaces and their menials. Were it not a worthy act to blow them all to h—ll? Ha!"

"Nay, your wrongs have made you mad. No butchery, Jenkins. If they be the veriest devils that crawl in human form, I say no butchery. If you or I had been placed in similar circumstances, we should have acted likewise. There is no difference in the essence of our nature, and if there be, what then? Who made us what we are? No, no. A philosopher who can calmly sit down, and meditate on the mysteries of being, who is not the slave of prejudice and passion, must forgive——"

"Never!" cried Jenkins, impetuously. "By all yon host of heaven, never, never. Forgiveness! That is what they call a *Christian* virtue. And yet they tell us—these priests, these impostors,—that there is everlasting punishment.—Philosophy! Idle, idle talk. What is philosophy? Come, define it. To sit 'calmly down' and reason, when we are wronged, insulted, trampled on, argues the basest cowardice of a mean, paltry mind."

"The intellect of man is his only friend, his only glory," was the response. "Yet, O! it is a hard task to steel the soul thus in a stoicism, which is not our nature. The doctrine of necessity alone can enable man to feel no rancour. I am determined I will do nothing to avenge my injuries."

"What remains for such as I am but vengeance? If we had not this principle implanted in us, justice would not be done. O, I have read much of that old philosophy of Materialism! Trash, trash! *I* was a Necessitarian once; but now—d—n philosophy! What has it ever done for mankind? What has the vaunted wisdom of Greece and Rome ever effected for our happiness? Men read, and wonder. Theory after theory, and not one stands the test of time."

"True. But rational religion, divested of priestcraft, has done something.—Jenkins, we are both desperate men; but let us not forget there may be a purpose in these afflictions of ours—inscrutable, indeed——"

"O, that vile cant!" interrupted the tall man. "A purpose in affliction! Ha, ha! What can it matter whether we rejoice or despair, sin, or do good, hate or love,—do anything or nothing? You are turning religious, I perceive, in sorrow. It seems to me a dastard's refuge, when he did not love a faith when he was happy, to prostrate himself before the altar he would desert if fortune smiled on him. No, no. For eighteen hundred years this Christianity of yours has been in operation, and look at the world now! Look at the villains who profess religion! Do they comply with its injunctions? No. They would prosecute a man for speaking his mind fearlessly out, as they did honest Tom Paine; and

yet they will fly in the face of every law of humanity and justice, they will outrage decency, they will seduce the innocent, oppress the poor, gorge themselves—and go to church!"

"Practical atheism is certainly more injurious to religion than all the arguments of Tom Paine against it. It is very easy to profess any principles, but another thing to act up to professions. The world wants reformation. I am a reformer,—and were I good enough, I would stand forth the champion of truth and liberty—but you are a destructive.—You marvel that I can speak thus calmly. But your passion tames my impulses. It is a strange thing that we always feel against what is lauded, and for what is abused, when the praise and abuse are extravagant."

"You are a philosopher, you say. Well, he is the best one who can satisfy his soul the best. Now, I am convinced, that if I obey the dictates of passion, I satisfy a larger portion of what I am than you can who want to serve your reason.—But I must be gone. If we should meet again ten years hence, we shall see whether you are happy with your wisdom, and I with my insanity."

So saying, the tall man strode away.

The worshipper of reason watched his towering form till it was lost in distance. He slowly continued his way also along the banks of the Thames.

"Yet," he muttered, "I could not maintain this resolution of mine, if tried severely. What weak wretches we are! That burning, fiery heart of Jenkins will lead him on to every crime and misery. I am glad I encountered him; for it has decided the battle which was fighting in my brain. What an accident fixes our destiny! The mind cannot see itself without a glass, it should appear. The analogy betwixt mind and matter is perfect. It must be so, for they are one. I will try to reason myself into a stone."

He had imbibed wisdom from the sages—that man—and it stood him in good stead.

CHAPTER LII.

PHILOSOPHY—LORD WHARTON—WILLIAMSON—AN ADVENTURE NEAR BLACKHEATH—STEPHEN—ANNA.

ASSUREDLY philosophy is one of the best gifts of God to man. Never believe those wretched dogmatists who tell you it is inimical to the eternal interests of the human race; if it do not stop short at scepticism,—which is but the threshold of the temple,—it must lead the inquirer to

faith and adoration. How sublime is that philosophy,—imperfect though it be,—which teaches man his own heart, and which is not exclusively the province of metaphysicians; but which a Shakspeare and a Jonson have illustrated! If we could only see into our own souls, if we were not wilfully blind to the motives which actuate us, how different would be the aspect of things! The drama and the novel, if they can teach man to look into his breast, are powerful auxiliaries of divine wisdom.

Lord Wharton had quitted the festive scene, and despite all remonstrances, took horse. The supposed delirium which had seized him having passed away, he borrowed a steed, and galloped off, seeming to feel relieved by the swiftness of the motion. He looked neither to the right nor the left, but kept the direct road to London, at a pace of fifteen miles an hour. The mansion where the St. Clairs gave their entertainment was not that where Travers Wharton had been staying some weeks before, and was considerably nearer town, so that Lord Wharton would soon have reached his destination, if he had continued at the rate he commenced with. He was busily engaged endeavouring to exclude thought altogether, when he perceived a person a few roods in advance of him riding deliberately forwards.

"Surely, this is Williamson!" he exclaimed; and he soon overtook the individual who was left at the end of the last chapter.

"*You* here, my lord," was the exclamation of the short man, when he recognised the Peer, who was muffled in a cloak.

"I want to speak with you," said Lord Wharton. "Williamson, I am sick at heart. This game of ambition I will not pursue any further."

"My lord!" exclaimed Williamson.

"I want pleasure; and ambition interferes with the pursuit. Nevertheless I am not going to drop into insignificance," continued Lord Wharton. "No; *that* can never be. But I shall pursue a different plan:—I have been thinking of it for a long time past."

"Do you then desert the course you have hitherto followed? I thought it was your principle to choose your game, and *never* desert it."

"The object; but not the means. Of course, happiness is the pursuit of every man. I am not well to-night; I have been to Lord St. Clair's, and something disturbed me."

"Indeed you do not look yourself, my lord. Your eyes seem starting from their sockets. Are you prudent to be riding?"

"Yes! it will do me good. Williamson, tell me, candidly, are you happy? I want to find out if other men are wiser than I am. I cannot clutch this shadow, because a shadow chases me.—You do not answer my question."

"I *was* happy," replied Williamson, with writhing brow, and quivering lip. "But a few hours ago I thought myself the happiest of mortals. Now I shall not chase felicity. It is an idle dream."

"But pleasure is not. Do you know the charms of wine, women, excitement?"

"I have been like other men, I suppose, though I was not at any time of life a worshipper at the shrine of Psyche. I feel now all is vanity; the only good is peace of mind. But few have resolution to seek the means of procuring it, and therefore it is the last thing we attain."

Lord Wharton groaned audibly.

"I would give all I possess—mind, fame, being, if I could lose this oppression on my soul," he said. "But what has chanced to make *you* unhappy?"

"I will tell you, my lord. I have loved, and have been deceived."

"Ay, that love! Curses on it! What do we want with love? You are a sensible and clever man; why did you love?"

"Has your lordship never done so? We all commit our follies."

"I have loved *once;* and I ruined her on whom I doated. Was not that well? She died—and she haunts me.—Is it to warn me I must soon die?" he added to himself. "If it be so, far better than to live the Helot of an illusion which blasts my spirit, and withers brain and sense at every step.—But I rave. I am sorry for you, Williamson—indeed I am. You are a man, and I respect you, I like you, I am grateful to you."

"I thank you; but you have nothing to thank me for."

"Not for life! No: I want to be *nothing!* Let us ride faster."

They lapsed into silence.

"Greatness is not happiness," said Williamson at last.

"No: it is misery; unless you are a God," returned the Peer. "Passions must be indulged, and I agree with Helvetius generally that according to their strength is the degree of mental power. All is a cheat! Greatness! What is it? What if I had the world chained at my feet, do you think I should be satisfied with *that* greatness? No: I should want to have it *in* myself, not *out* of myself. There is truth in the line—

'Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods!'

It is ever the aspiring beyond self, which is the curse of intellect. I can sympathise with Milton's Satan. A friend of mine was asked what he thought of the fallen Archangel; and he replied—'He was a devilish fine fellow, and I wish he had won!'—No, no. There is no happiness in any greatness, except what is infinite. Who is ever satisfied with what he has done? None but God, I suppose, because all must be imperfect as a part, however perfect the whole. The brutes alone are content with themselves. Instinct in them is unerring, reason in man is erring. I would I had it not!"

"Strange!" muttered Williamson, while Lord Wharton thus poured out his thoughts with unusual rapidity, seeming as if he endeavoured to

escape from himself;—"most strange!—My lord, is it possible that you, with all your fine talents, could be satisfied to live in a purely animal condition? I consider that the reason is our only friend, and will ever be constant, if we desert it not. There is no fidelity in sense."

"I thought you were a Materialist," returned the Peer. "But it is ever thus. Sometimes a man is inclined to one opinion, sometimes to another. No, Williamson! It is only to drown thought, to dig a grave for memory with its spectral shapes, that I fly to the refuge of the senses, now. When a boy I sought to gratify my passions as an end, and not the means to an end; now I experience keenly—

'My way of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf!'"

"And yet you have not reached the autumn of existence. My lord, with respect to sense and reason, they may be the same, and yet how different! I was debating with myself but a very short time ago whether to seek consolation by steeping sense in the variety of delights which I might still enjoy, or take refuge in the intellectual life which is seated in the mind alone. And even as I did so, I encountered one thirsting for vengeance, a man who has been foully wronged, like myself. His madness made me sane?"

"Ay, it were well if we thought more on the insanity of all things! —But can you show me where reason is? No. You do not believe there are such things as ghosts, now, I dare say, and yet, years ago, a man would have been thought mad to doubt the fact. The reason of one age is not the reason of another. There may be that in the universe which must baffle our senses; there may be matter so fine that it is impalpable. Hark! I thought I heard a strange sound then? Was it my imagination only?"

"I think your lordship is nervous to-night. I heard nothing at all."

"I used not to know I had nerves," returned Lord Wharton. "But now they shake and quiver like a woman's. Touching these ghosts, Williamson. Why is it absurd to suppose they can appear?"

Ere Williamson could frame anything like a philosophical reply to the Peer, who was, he saw, in a highly excited state, calm as the surface seemed, he heard the report of a gun, and the horse Lord Wharton rode fell, wounded mortally.

They were passing through a lonely district in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, and as the statesman extricated himself, having been bruised in the fall, several ruffianly-looking fellows emerged from behind some trees which they had passed but a minute previously. Lord Wharton had no weapon but a dagger, which he wore as part of his fancy dress; but Williamson was armed with a sword and a pistol. Before, however, any further collision could take place, the rumbling noise of a heavy

vehicle was heard approaching, and a mail-coach, drawn by four horses, appeared in the distance. The footpads retreated immediately; but Lord Wharton exclaimed—"There is that devil who has thrice attempted my life!" and dashed towards the enemy. Williamson spurred on, and fired at one of the rascals; while the coach rapidly advanced. The highwaymen fled, and would have made their escape, if the bullet had not wounded the foremost in the leg. They paused to assist their comrade, and retreat was cut off, ere they could resume their flight; for two mounted constables came galloping down a road, while Lord Wharton collared the man who had fired at him, and Williamson charged them down. A conflict ensued. The mail stopped, and the guard and coachman, with one or two of the passengers, attacked the banditti. It was a very even contest for a long time; when a party of gentlemen came up, and of course arrayed themselves on the side of Lord Wharton. Then the robbers would have yielded but for him the Peer had seized by the throat; but he cried out—"What! will you lay down your arms to be hanged like dogs? Fight to the death! We can make our way to the river yet!"

Vainly did the plunderers struggle against overpowering numbers;—they were hemmed in on all sides, and were nearly exhausted. But on a sudden a huge man strode to the scene of action. He struck two men to the earth, and wrenching a gun from the hand of one of them, he exclaimed, in a voice clear as a trumpet—"This way! Down with them, lads!"

Those words re-animated the fainting spirits of the robbers, as if by magic. They rallied round their new ally, who performed feats of valour, standing like a tower of strength against the assaults of the foe. He did not fight with fury; but with that stern, dogged, indomitable resolve, which, accompanied with great strength, is so effective. Williamson made a charge on him, and he was obliged to retreat, but he disputed every inch of ground, realizing the exploits Homer records of the heroes of Troy and Greece. He would have afforded a fine model for an Ajax; but there was more fire and more inflexible valour in his face than are described as appertaining to the second warrior of the Grecians. The force opposed to the highwaymen was at least double in numbers, and if they had all been perfectly armed they must have captured them. As it was, the robbers, by great exertions, succeeded in reaching the banks of the river, where a boat was moored. Here, however, Jenkins, the smith, was knocked down, as he fought in the van, and the hero of the field shared a similar fate. The former was secured; but the latter was borne away insensible, by his friend, and put into the boat, which was got afloat in spite of the enemy. As there was no boat to follow, the robbers effected their escape, and the victors resumed their way, Jenkins in the custody of the patrole. The mail-coach rolled on towards London

the gentlemen who had afforded such good help took another road, and Lord Wharton and Williamson proceeded together.

"What a fellow that young man is!" observed the statesman to his companion. "But I did not have him to myself to-night, as I had when you first came to my rescue."

"I did not know it was the same," returned Williamson. "But a few minutes ago I was talking to him about a league hence. It is a pity such a man should be a robber. Why is it that the laws make no distinction between criminals?"

Lord Wharton and Williamson separated as soon as they reached London, the one returning to his home, the other prosecuting some inquiries relative to Rose; for he had heard a person answering her description took her passage in a vessel bound for the metropolis, accompanied by a man.

And Lord Wharton plunged into abstract thought as he rode homewards on a horse furnished by an acquaintance.

"Still, still we chase the phantom power!" he inwardly exclaimed. "It is impossible for the strong spirit to be content with what satisfies the weak.—But I am determined not to gull myself any longer with the pursuit of shadows. I have enough of them without seeking. I will scorn this empty vision, and plunge deeper into pleasure. And for office: let it go for the present. I will lead such an opposition as there has never been before. Thus I shall secure a firmer seat than I should otherwise have; for I foresee, were I to become Premier, I should be involved in perils and difficulties innumerable. They do not know me, hang them!"

On reaching his house, Lord Wharton was informed Stephen and Helen Jenkins had been there. In order to explain this matter, it is requisite to take up the history of Stephen.

A considerable time had elapsed since the escape of the housebreakers. No suspicion of connivance with them having fallen on the youth, as John Jenkins was not found in his chamber, he was of course at liberty to act as he thought proper. John Jenkins must have stolen out of the room a few minutes before the constables entered; and Stephen followed among the crowd and saw the miraculous escape of his cousin. Early the following day he called on Lord Wharton; but he was out, and he resumed his search for the maniac: but with no success. It was singular that the Peer should never have heard of the existence of the insane person, in whom Travers had so kindly interested himself; but his brother-in-law avoided all subjects in which he was personally concerned; and, besides, Lord Wharton was so occupied at this time that he saw no one except on business. But he wrote a few lines to Stephen, and left them for him when he called again, desiring him to remain in town and to bid Nell join him, saying he would have her education attended to, and procure her some sort of situation, if she desired it. Accordingly, at the

expiration of a few days, Nell came up to London, having been met midway by Stephen.

Lord Wharton ascended to his apartment, and was met at the door by Anna, who welcomed him with smiles of joy.

"I did not expect you home so early, love!" she exclaimed. Lord Wharton threw himself on a seat, and seemed exhausted. "I hope nothing has happened, dearest!" cried the mistress.

"No, nothing. Anna, sit down by me. You look lovely to-night in that dishabille.—You deserve to be happy."

"And am I not happy? Yes, when I see that *you* are so.—You look every inch a prince in that fancy dress, Wharton. But what prince was ever what you are?—I cannot help uttering what I feel; there seems a pleasure in speaking the deep sentiments of the heart to the object of them all."

"Do I look pale, Anna?"

"No. Why do you ask me that? Yet there is something strange in your face. That phantom——"

"Ay, damn it, damn it!--You think it an illusion! So do I.—But what is *not* an illusion? We come into the busy world, and open our eyes: all is wonder at first; but soon the novelty wears away, and everything is weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable!—Have you never opened your eyes after some sweet sleep, and sighed to think the actual exists? Kiss me, Anna.—O, that kisses should not retain the freshness that thrills each fibre with joy in youth!"

"But love's delights never pall upon the sense. The eyes never look the same, though they are ever bright when passion animates them, the lips never touch with the same sensation—all is new for ever.—But tell me, where do you think you saw this apparition?"

"I will not talk of it, I will not heed it.—I was saying life is a dream. Yes, the more we know of existence, the more we are impressed with the conviction of its nonentity. I shall take to the abstract before long. Ha, ha! The practical Lord Wharton a visionary speculator! How men would laugh!"

"Visionaries are happy; do you not think so? They shut their eyes to stern realities, and see the beautiful and ideal."

"I know not. Come, we will have wine; that's the way to be happy, or at all events to forget all that preys on the mind, when the world is lit up with the delirium of its intoxication. I am essentially the sensual man. The senses none but idiots and cold-blooded ascetics despise. Wine and woman! O, the gods! I would say with the poet—

> 'If I thought even Heaven were without 'em
> I never should wish to be there!'"

"I think there is happiness beyond what sense can afford."

"No woman will admit the empire of the senses to the full extent. If it were possible the wild raptures of our early life when we wake to passion could endure for ever, would not that content you? O, I admire the religion of Mahomet! I wish to heaven I had been born a Turkish Sultan!"

"But you believe in the existence of a sentiment, without which passion must be incomplete?—Why do you drink that wine? It is too strong."

"I want excitement, and without having recourse to my old practices, how can I procure it? You talk of a sentiment. But can you divide sentiment and passion? You say you can. Now, in my opinion, sentiment is only admiration of the person—passion, desire to enjoy it. When I was a boy I might have thought otherwise, but I acted up to the principle of my maturer judgment. O, how the advance of knowledge withers the verdure of our feelings, and dries up the springs of being! Ignorance is bliss. Look at the history of any man's life. The farther he advances in the science of the world, the more he is convinced of the folly and fatuity of seeking what is not *in* the world. Love! The angels may have it; but we fall down and worship an idea, instead of a substance. O, that the idea had never entered this brain!—Come, we'll to bed now. I've drank enough; for my eyes swim, and my brain whirls. O, if sleep were nothing but oblivion, who would not close his weary eyes, certain of sleeping through eternity?"

CHAPTER LIII.

WHARTON STILL—THE COUSINS—THE INTELLIGENCE—THE PEER AND WILLIAMSON—POLITICAL INTRIGUE.

Poor wretch! And was that all the wish of thy proud heart? To sleep through all eternity! No, it was the sophistry of the intellect, wherewith we so often cheat ourselves. I think it is our beautiful poet Tennyson, who expresses himself, that "it is life, not death, we want." Suppose annihilation were to rise up on the one hand, a blank, dead shadow, an infinite void, and on the other, even this poor existence with its sorrows and wretchedness perpetual and everlasting; if the one sent forth its invitation to the soul, and the other uttered its sad eloquence of tears, none but would fly the shadow and the rest, because that clinging and yearning towards existence is the aspiration of the spirit's life, and is an intimation of immortality. But, thank heaven! We know our home is not below the skies, that we are not chained in this charnel, never to escape from it. If it were so, if we knew we never could die,

even though youth and health might endure,—the same unvarying round of empty pleasures and vain pursuits would make it hell. Almost all are disgusted with earthly being before they half run through the span allotted to us; and were it not for faith and starry hope, were it not for the sweet whispers of the immortal seraph that burns within us, —the hope which dies not while all other hopes are destroyed, the whispers that depart not, while all other sounds perish—the voices of friends, the music, the laughter, and the melody which were blither than the song of the morning lark—I say existence would be a curse instead of a blessing. Prithee, friend, rail not at death. It is the sleep of the tired labourer, not the extinction of light, and hope, and vision.

To resume the narrative, with its little universe of pleasures, pains, and fancies, and agonies. It is meet to moralize sometimes sadly and mournfully—that we may cheer and sustain thereby; for all are sad sometimes, and the bright side of the picture looks dark when we are sorrowful. Never imagine you can cheer a person who desponds with cheerful views of this life; he will shake his head and say—"I am not happy, and what is all this to me? Give me the means of enjoying existence, or else give me death." Be full of *hope* and *despair*.—But I am digressing again. I always write the idea that is uppermost in my mind, because it is pleasant to throw it out at once fresh and clear, ere it has time to wither in the elaboration of thought.

Lord Wharton sat in his drawing-room, reading a newspaper. What a world of influence has the periodical press on the world! Although we rarely find anything profound and original in a newspaper, yet that very circumstance extends the immediate sphere of its operation. For nine out of ten, or more, hate the labour of thought, and are willing to adopt the views of a man of any ability who popularizes the abstract; it is only indirectly the great, deep thinker,—the Aristotle, the Plato, the Kant, or even the Carlyle and the Emerson,—can create public opinion; the masses think them unintelligible. Some such thought crossed the mind of the statesman, as he read a leading article by one of the cleverest political writers of the day.

"Whence are these principles which are in the mouths of all?" he thought. "Is it the spirit of the age that demands an organ, and finds it in the individual, or is it the man of genius who creates opinion, and rules it? Are the many who are weak, collectively stronger than the *one* who is powerful? No; it were as reasonable to say all the creatures of God in the aggregate are stronger than Himself. Genius is as a God, whatever its species."

Here Mr. Travers was announced, and he entered, together with Reginald.

"Good morning to you, Travers," said the statesman. "Reginal my boy, how are you after sitting up so late? Sit down."

"I am glad to see you so well after your illness of last night," returned Travers. "But you must be more careful of yourself!"

"My behaviour was strange, was it not? I can hardly account for it. Some remains of fever hanging about me, I suppose; my ride took it away.—Well, Reginald, have you been studying philosophy of late?—I hate those precocious children!" he thought, as he contemplated the boy.

"I did not intend to have brought him here," remarked Travers in an under-tone to Lord Wharton; "but I was walking out with him, and wished to hear of your health."

"You bring that boy up as if you were his godmother. When I was about his age, and a fag at Eton, I think I knew all the evil I know now. A public school is the place for a boy to serve his apprenticeship to politics: a few months will put more into the head there, than years employed in the study of your favourite theorists."

"A public school may teach politics, but not morals," returned Travers. "Fox, you know, said, 'Whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right.' If you are not a moralist, is it likely you can govern well?"

"Yes; what matters it how we live ourselves in private, so as we punish crime, and administer justice well?"

"I shall never agree with you on that point. Example has an immense influence in the great upon the small. Come, Reginald, we will now go on.—It has been my plan with him to open his eyes myself, and not to permit him to gain distorted views of morality, ere his principles were fixed. A public school *must* do this."

"Pshaw! O, you innovators! At a public school a boy learns to fight, and to bear thrashing, to lie, and to detect lies, to suspect, to cheat, to care nothing for others, and everything for himself; and thus alone can he make his way in the world. Only he must gain a little discretion——"

"My dear Wharton!—Good morning."

And Travers and his son departed. Lord Wharton laughed bitterly to himself, when they were gone, saying—

"Yes, Eton and Harrow against all that trash and twaddle of my worthy brother-in-law. How else should a boy know the hearts of those he must mingle with? How else shall he learn to conceal his vices and indulge them discreetly, to humbug and deceive?"

Strange are the views entertained by some men with intellect and with experience. Lord Wharton was unhappy, he felt his life had been a mistake, and yet he traced nothing to its true source,—to a neglected moral culture. Can a few poor classical attainments, and a little insight into the low and vile in humanity, compensate for the defect which is so glaring in modern education;—though it was the all in all with the philosophers whose works they go to school to be able to study?

Travers and his son had not gone many minutes, when it was announced to Lord Wharton that Nell and Stephen were at the door.

"Let them come up," said the statesman: and the youth and the girl soon made their appearance. "You are welcome," said the Peer, holding out his hand. "I had intended to have sent for you before; but you know I have been ill, and since then immersed in business."

"I was sorry to hear it," replied Nell. "I hope you have recovered, my lord."

"I thank you, yes."

Here some letters were brought to Lord Wharton, and perceiving they were of importance he left his guests, and hastened to his study. A beautiful young woman entered the drawing-room immediately after the Peer left it. She seemed surprised at seeing the youth and the girl. Stephen bowed and Nell curtsied to the lady.

"I guess your name is Jenkins," she said, addressing Stephen.

"It is, madam; Lord Wharton has just gone:—perhaps we had better call again."

"No," returned the lady, "I hope you will not. Lord Wharton is much your debtor."

"No, he has misinformed you," rejoined the youth. "Lord Wharton has kindly offered me employment. You know, madam, the circumstances——"

"Yes, yes. The wretch has attempted his life again. I hope he will meet his deserts."

"What!" exclaimed Nell and Stephen in a breath, turning pale. They were informed of the attack on Lord Wharton the preceding night, and that Jenkins was taken. Nell burst into tears.

"He is still my father," she sobbed, "whatever he is. I will go to him in prison."

"Be comforted," said the lady, kindly. "I can hardly believe you are of his blood."

"He is a wretch, but he has been driven to desperation," returned Nell. "O, I must go to him! Thank Heaven, John is not taken!"

"You will not be admitted to him, at present," said Anna—for she it was who had joined the cousins.—"His life may be spared; but, of course, he cannot be let loose on society again. He seems to have a mortal hatred for Lord Wharton."

A silence ensued. Presently the stately footstep of the Peer was heard, and he entered the room.

"Save my father's life!" exclaimed Nell, imploringly; and she would have thrown herself on her knees before Wharton, if he had not prevented her.

"His fate is not in my hands," returned the statesman; "but I will do what I can; so dry those tears, pretty Helen!—What think you,

Anna? There is a general report, now, that I am mad,—that the fever has affected my brain. Ha, ha! Half the world is crazy, and the other half of it sane only inasmuch as it laughs at the affectations of sanity. Well, Stephen, I have procured a tutor for you, and expect you will make rapid progress under him. Helen, I shall place you with a respectable person who once kept a school, and if you like to learn what she cannot teach you, you shall have masters. Cheer up, my good lass."

It was very generally believed Lord Wharton was no longer of sound mind. People now recollected there had been something strange about him ever since his recovery, for the affair at the entertainment at Lord St. Clair's could be accounted for in no way but that his reason was affected. And the political crisis arrived, and the struggle for power commenced, while many of the nobility who had witnessed the strange conduct of the Peer conceived him crazy. And how did Lord Wharton act? He seemed to have forgotten there was such a thing as place, and all the solicitations of his adherents could not induce him to bestir himself. But he was not idle; he got possession of the secret counsels in the hostile camp, and left no stone unturned to undermine the fortifications. Only all was done so quietly, so rapidly, that no person had any idea of the true state of the case. Never was Lord Wharton so great in intrigue as he was then, and yet he would sit like a statue for hours together, apparently lost in deep abstraction. People looked on his cold, passionless face, and wondered that anything human could be so rigid, they listened to his voice and were struck with the absence of feeling and passion in it; they could not understand the man. Who can read a mind like that? Who can fathom the deep depths of a heart so profound? Lord Wharton was like the ocean, now boiling with fury, now hushed and motionless. And the fury having gone, he remained as if eternity had commenced, and the roaring of billows, the great thunders of human life, the music, the dissonance were lost in the infinite. Yet, O, was all so calm in the soul itself? When the sea is stillest think you that the springs of motion sleep? No; while the creeping torpor of his senses held him enchained to the rock, the intellect was more keenly alive than ever; it did not even dream.

One morning Williamson visited the statesman by his desire, and found him alone, seated before the fire.

"Take a chair beside me, Williamson," said the Peer. "Well, what does the world say of me? Is it still in the same story it has held for a week that I am mad? Public opinion is not usually stationary so long! —But have you found that girl you were in pursuit of?"

"No; I have searched in vain for her. I am going to turn philosopher!"

"*You!* Ha, ha! *You* a philosopher! A shrewd man of the world

never was, and never will be one. I suppose the girl is by this time in one of the saloons."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Williamson, with quivering lip.

"You have borne the stroke well, I must say for you."

"My lord, for my folly in loving a child, say what you please. I *did* love her; but now my heart is as cold and stern as if it were a rock. The delusion seemed to vanish in an instant. I cannot account for the change which was wrought in me. I seem to have exhausted worlds of passion, and then, instead of a gradual change, an hour made me what I am. Assuredly, philosophy is a great humbug!"

"I am glad you have found that out. Glory be to metaphysics! when all the theories in the world will not explain one little movement in the brain, one pulsation in the heart of thought! You were saying you would turn philosopher; but as you admit philosophy is but a chimera, I will put you in a way of cajoling to more advantage.—How we chase the shadows of imagination to the end of the chapter, only happy when most deceived!—And as it appears falsehood is a stepping-stone to felicity, there is no reason why we should not employ it to our own advantage, at the expense of others. People *will* cheat themselves, if we will not do it for them!"

"Your lordship is right: but I'm not ambitious now."

"Never tell me ambition can be extinct; it is only dormant at the most in such as you and I are. We are both unhappy, Williamson; and I like you the better that you are so. We both despise humanity; that is the only wisdom. I like you, and I will serve you, if I can. We must mutually be serviceable to each other; for such is the only bond of union to be relied on. Come, now I have opened my heart, and you shall hear what I propose."

Lord Wharton then communicated to Williamson a design he had laid for permitting his enemies to attain power, and crushing them never to rise again; and offered him a post of importance. Williamson was astonished at the masterly way in which the statesman planned to defeat the machinations of his foes;—and even where he did not choose to make him acquainted with the whole machinery he intended to employ, his sagacity enabled him to gather the depth and brilliancy of the comprehensive intellect he was compelled to acknowledge so superior to his own:—Williamson saw that the state of England was known in every phasis to the Peer, that he calculated every chance, that he met every contingency; but he was persuaded in his own mind that Lord Wharton would fall. And why? Because the man was too proud to stoop, or rather, perhaps, too arrogant to *comply*. This is ever the case, more or less, with such natures as Wharton's. Though they have something royal in them, they are not of the race who soar altogether like the eagle; they stoop too low, they rise too high, and thus they miss their

quarry. And besides, the Peer was a devotee to pleasure, and was becoming more cold and haughty to his compeers than ever. Relying solely on himself, the giant did not foresee that the pigmies he despised would ultimately grow too strong for him. Gulliver was bound fast by the multitudes of Lilliput.

CHAPTER LIV.

JOHN JENKINS—THE "LUSH KEN" AND THE "SWELL"—PRISON-BREAKING—THE MURDER—THE ESCAPE—THE WOUND.

JOHN JENKINS, after his miraculous escape from the hands of justice, found himself in one of those squalid dwellings in the neighbourhood of the Thames which appear as if they would fall with age, and in the company of some of those ruffians he had picked acquaintance with during his stay in London.

They were all assembled together in a low and dirty apartment about twenty feet by twelve, and every one was anxious to do honour to the lion of the hour. The blacksmith's son was admired by them just as a young author who for the first time has achieved a sublime poem or fine play, in the literary circles of the metropolis. One of the ruffians, who had a pipe in his mouth and a brandy-bottle in his hand, addressed John, who sat exhausted beside him, thus—

"I'm blowed, youngster, if you aint the primest cock as I ever clapped eyes on! I seed the business from beginning to end, and when they lagged Black Bill I thought your turn would come. I followed you until you took to the water, and if I could have cotched you, would have given you a hint: but your pins are so precious long, it was no go. So we all of us got into this here boat, to which you owes your escape, and here you are. Wet your whistle with some max: you must have swallowed awful lots of water!—Well, my pal, don't look so down in the mouth after all you've done. Hang me, if I ever seed anything finer in my life——"

"What say you?" exclaimed John Jenkins. "No liquor. I wonder what has become of my father? Can you tell?"

"No: but we shall soon hear; some of our pals are sure to come soon. You must lay snug, old cove."

"If he be taken I must try to rescue him.—And Black Bill too, I will not desert him, for it was a whim of mine to break into that house. They must be saved!"

"Ay, the chances are they would both be scragged. I like you for

your pluck in not leaving your dad and pal to their fate. If the attempt be not *too* hazardous, depend on me for lending you a helping hand. To your health!"

"I thank you. I will now rest, for I am worn out."

And the strong man suffered his head to drop, and slept deeply the sleep of tired nature.

"He's a regular out-and-outer, that I will say for him!" remarked the man who had previously spoken. "Look at his limbs:—my eyes! Did you ever see anything like them?"

And the thieves and ruffians congregated round the sleeping Jenkins, and examined a form which was as near an approximation to that of the Hercules in the British Museum as can well be conceived. How still—how almost awfully still—was that rest! You could not perceive whether he breathed or not: but he remained like a corpse, his huge arms motionless by his side, his features locked, his body which had lately been so full of vigour and energy, without an undulation. The mysterious life of motion,—what is it? Tell me, philosopher, what motion is; and I will acknowledge you are a wise man. To my mind sleep and wakefulness are full of poetry the most exquisite. Imagination contrasts the two states, she sees the sleeper bounding away, swift and strong "to the wind of his own speed;" and then sinking, as it were, into nothing: every faculty seeming suspended, mind and action absorbed into the mystery no less beautiful than activity—the hush, the stillness, the life in death. And that was a scene worthy of a painter. The faces of the low ruffians so eager in examining the being who had lately filled them with such wonder, the sickly light of a filthy candle streaming on the white features of the strong man, from which every trace of recent passion had vanished by the magic power of fatigue; the flickering beams of the moon, ere it sunk in darkness, falling athwart the brutal faces, which, if they ever were in God's image, must have been re-moulded by the devil, and foully too; for "the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman."

John Jenkins, on waking, ascertained that his father had not been taken, and sent a few lines to his mother by a trusty messenger to assure her of his safety. He was partially disguised, and ventured forth the succeeding night to a *rendezvous* he had appointed with his maternal parent. The following day Jenkins joined his wife and son at the dilapidated house near the Thames, and being alone with them, he said—

"Something troubles me much, which I can in no way account for. You will laugh at me, John; but I have seen your aunt, whom we all thought dead, and—but I'll begin from the first."

He then related the whole particulars of his visit to the house of Lord Wharton, and the sudden apparition which had frightened him from executing his purpose, adding that he could not have been deceived, and was still convinced he had actually seen his sister. John shook his head.

"Father," he said, "the strongest nerves will shake the most desperately sometimes. Under all the circumstances, depend on't your senses must have played you false, just as we hear Macbeth's did. There are spectres of the mind—*I* have found that. Let us talk no more of this matter. We fool ourselves with fancies, as babies terrify themselves with phantoms in the dark, and if we suffer these things to prey on us, we become the slaves of superstition."

So ended the conversation.

It was not long after this that Jenkins was captured. John Jenkins was not aware that his father contemplated an attack on Lord Wharton; —though he knew he was out with the ruffians he had associated with,— and for his own part he cared not to wreak vengeance on the Peer. Stung as he had been into madness by his wrongs, and thirsting for revenge, he wanted rather the vengeance of what he considered to be justice, than vindictive hate. He was a man of many crimes and errors, but there was yet something in his deep, fiery heart which raised him above the bravo and the assassin.

Those who look merely at the actions of individuals may consider the cold, calculating rogue who plunders in the orthodox fashion of the world—the extortioner, the aristocratic sharper—less guilty than John Jenkins: but if they went deeper, and examined the secret feelings, they would find those of the Blacksmith's son far nobler; they would perceive, circumstanced as he was, that not one in a hundred would have been better.

The truth between the omnipotence of circumstances, and the omnipotence of free will, is the philosophy we should cherish. Only suppose yourself, O honest man! born among the profligate, exposed to temptation, with fiery passions, and an imperfect education, and then what would you be? Dickens says our government neglects the moral culture of the people, and then punishes them because they are ignorant. Dickens has a fine heart, whatever be his abilities: he is more human in his sympathies,—more *universally* human than Scott, than Shakspeare, and though he may be as a writer but what the novelist is to the dramatist, he is more the man of his age than either of them; therefore do I honour him truly. O, for the time when all hearts will have pity for the erring, as Christ had pity!—Who tries to reform the culprit, and sheds a tear over errors and misdeeds? Away with morbid sympathy for criminals: but he is not a good Christian who has not a generous pity for them.

To return to the Blacksmith's son. The night after that of the attempted robbery near Blackheath, a number of persons were assembled at one of the vilest public-houses in London; and among them might be seen a tall man with a hat which was slouched over his face, and a patch on the lower part of it. He was surrounded by the very flower of

the "Cracksmen," and the professors of the higher branches of the noble science to which we in our ignorance apply opprobrious epithets; but not one of them had broader shoulders, not one of them had a face so full of cool, stern daring, which nothing seemed able to tame.

"Well, what is to be done?" said John Jenkins—for he it was—fixing his eye on one of the group, who seemed to be a person of some importance,—a flashily-dressed man, who sported an immense number of chains and rings, who was scented to what may be termed "stenchification," and was drinking his choice port wine.—What is to be done?" repeated John.

But the "swell" did not deign to vouchsafe a reply.

"Come, my flash one!" cried a burglar of eminence, "give us some jaw! There's not a better hand at a *pannie* than yourself, and you can tell long John how to break through the Stone Jug, seeing you have done so many sharp'uns who wanted to keep you snug."

"Why, you see, my coves," responded the swell, "I can tell you how it is to be done; but I can't tell who is to do it. Mr. Jenkins and my friend Black William are very excellent fellows; but so are all here present, and a neck *is* a neck. I have been in that very Stone Jug twice, and as many times have I given them the slip. But I was not confined where our friends spend their time so pleasantly now; for when I was lagged it was only for simple swindling. Still, if our friend John likes to try, I'll give him every information, and charge him nothing for it, though I've been in the law."

"Tell not me of peril!" returned John Jenkins. "Is it to be done?—Well then this very night I'll make the attempt. I want no assistance: if I am discovered, let it be alone!"

A buz of applause ran through the crowd, whose hearts were warmed and whose imaginations were inflamed with drink.

"So bold, my long hero?" rejoined the ex-lawyer, after he had emptied the contents of his bottle. "I like your independence, lad; but take my advice——"

"I want not your advice," interrupted John, impatiently. "I came here to ask you how to act: for you know I do not want my father to remain a moment longer in that cursed prison than he must. A few hours there is an age in hell!"

"A little more politeness, if you please, sir. I have been a gentleman, and don't consider I am less one now," returned the coxcombical personage, who had just procured a second choice bottle of wine. "I'm an aristocrat, and hate low manners."

"Besotted driveller!" exclaimed John Jenkins, fiercely. "You are drunk, and I waste time in talking to you. Is there no one with a little more intelligence to inform me how I had better act?"

"The 'flash one' is a devilish clever fellow, let me tell you," answered

a fellow near the Blacksmith's son. "There is not a gaol in England strong enough to hold him. He has been the friend of all our eminent cracksmen for the last twenty years!"

"But he is drunk——"

"Don't you cast any such imputations on my character," interrupted the swell in his turn. "I never was drunk until I had taken my three bottles, and sometimes I have swallowed more.—Come, now, listen. Without more palaver I'll put you up to a move."

So saying, the ex-lawyer proceeded to lay before John Jenkins a lucid scheme he had concocted for the liberation of the Smith and Black Bill, and which only required nerve to ensure success. It was quite astonishing to hear how that sot met every difficulty in the way of John, what wise counsel he gave him, how cool was his judgment and admirable his tact. He was the most expert prison-breaker of his day, and had achieved an immense reputation for cunning and self-possession among his associates. And yet he was a man of no intellect, he had not a single quality superior to his fellows; but he had had experience, and profited by it. Two desperate fellows, who were staunch friends of Black Bill, declared their intention of accompanying John Jenkins on his hazardous expedition; and they all three set forth about midnight, a heavy fog having fallen, and promising to grow yet more dense.

"Well, then," said one of the adventurers, as they left the public-house, "we are to gag the dubsman, take his keys, and let out Black Bill and Mr. Jenkins. We shall easily scale the wall; but the bars of the window will hold us a tug. But this little instrument of mine, I think, will do the job."

The three men then proceeded in silence, but looked behind them every now and then, fearful lest the watch might notice them; but they nodded to each other and continued their way. It was bitterly cold, and a wind had risen which seemed to pierce the very vitals, but those fellows were the hardiest of mortals and heeded not the icy atmosphere.

"The only thing," observed the man who had before spoken, once more, "against us is that our fingers will be so frozen we shall hardly be able to cut through the bars."

"There is the prison, yonder," said the second enterprising gentleman in a low voice.

It was a huge, dark pile of massive architecture, and one of the securest gaols in England: but they had foreseen every difficulty, and provided against it. The fog was now blinding, and they could hardly distinguish the prison walls at the distance of twenty paces; but the darkness was in their favour. Perceiving nothing to prevent them proceeding with their operations, they produced a coil of rope and succeeded in attaching it to a tree which grew within a dozen feet of the outer wall of the prison. The wall itself was of stone, and almost as high as the

tree; but they had no difficulty in mounting with the aid of the rope. The business, however, was only begun. A deep ditch intervened between the outer wall and the prison, and it was filled with mud, so that it was impossible to go through it without the danger of suffocation. The rope again was put in requisition. It was thrown across the ditch, and fastened to the stump of an old elm which had been cut down.

"Hist!" said John Jenkins, "do you hear a noise?"

"The dubsman going his rounds, that's all!"

They saw a light in the prison for an instant, and then all was again thick darkness.

"Now, then," said John, "I'll go first. It is arranged that only one of you goes with me, so the other will hold the rope. Put your foot against that great stone. You are a strong fellow:—so!"

And John Jenkins taking hold of the rope, worked his way across the ditch, which was about fifteen feet in width,—a feat not very easy to be accomplished without the aid of aught but the hands. He succeeded in crossing, however, and was followed by the man who it was agreed should enter the gaol with him. This done, they were within six paces of the prison. About ten feet from the ground was a window with iron bars of immense thickness, and it was indispensable to sever two of them ere an entrance could be effected. John Jenkins mounted on the shoulders of his companion, and with some difficulty clambered up to the window, in order to attach another rope to one of the bars, as there was no sill on which to sit while they worked. They were obliged to stand on the rope doubled, and hold on with one hand, while they filed at the bars. All being still, they set to work, and in an incredibly short space of time actually succeeded in effecting an entrance.

"Now, then, we'll take off our shoes," said John's companion in a whisper. "I know where we shall find the dubsman."

They gently descended, and groped their way for about twenty paces. They then paused at a door and heard a mighty snoring within. About half an hour had elapsed since the gaoler went his rounds, and it was just one o'clock.

"How many turnkeys are there?" whispered John to his comrade.

"Only six: but there are two soldiers on guard, so we must not—— Whew!—We must hide; there is some one stirring."

And stealthy footsteps were heard advancing. The adventurers concealed themselves—no very difficult matter in that darkness; and discerned the outline of a figure, which made towards the gaoler's door. Presently, the person, whoever he was, opened it, and closed it after him. There was a momentary scuffle inside, succeeded by a faint groan.

"O, Christ!" exclaimed John's companion, "one of the prisoners has got out, and is murdering the dubsman!"

John shuddered.

"What is to be done?" he murmured.

"Nothing;—ah! he is opening the door again, and has got a lantern in his hand.—Why—surely—it is your dad!"

And Jenkins, covered with gore, came out of the unfortunate gaoler's room, a bloody knife in one hand, and a lantern in the other. His eyes were wild and bloodshot, his cheek blanched, contrasting with the sanguine marks upon it, and his black hair streamed over his brawny neck—also crimsoned. He did not see his son, and was examining an enormous key, when John stole up to him and cried in a low voice—

"Father! Why have you done this?"

"I was obliged;" returned Jenkins, when his astonishment at beholding his son had subsided. "He woke as I was taking the key!" John shook visibly, but he said not another word. "And now for Black Bill," said Jenkins. "Do you know where he is?"

"*I* do," whispered John's companion. "Come along, quick. I wish you hadn't split the dubsman's winny."

With these words they proceeded to a distant part of the gaol, and at length stopped before a thick oak door, which they opened, and found the man they sought. They then all stole back in silence, and reached the window through which John had effected an entrance.

"It was lucky for you," remarked Black Bill's friend to Jenkins, "you met us; for you could never have made your escape. If you had gone out at the great door, you would have found a sentinel."

They passed through the window and made for the ditch.

"I go last!" said John Jenkins. "Black Bill first!"

The ruffians crossed, and John was about to follow, when there rose a cry.

"My God, John, make haste!" exclaimed the Blacksmith.

Here the sentinel fired his gun. The two companions of Black Bill, and that individual also rushed to the outer wall.

"Go, go!" cried John to his father, as he worked his way desperately across. Lights flashed from the prison. A moment Jenkins stood irresolute. "You will be too late!" said his son.

The smith looked at his bloody hands, and then fled. Favoured by the fog, Jenkins and Black Bill with his allies got clear off: but as John mounted the outer wall a momentary gleam of light revealed him to a guard, who instantly fired from a distance of thirty paces. The bullet entered the body of John, but he heeded it not. He leapt down, and proceeded a few yards,—then fell insensible to the earth.

CHAPTER LV.

LORD WHARTON—WILLIAMSON—THE TORY AND THE DEMOCRAT—TO HAVE NO TRUST IN MAN IS POTENTIAL ATHEISM—SOLOMON.

"So then," muttered Lord Wharton, as he sat at breakfast alone, "this fellow, Sharp, has actually got into the Ministry! I cannot fathom that fellow. That he hates me, I am certain: I suppose because he feels I am the only man he has to fear. Who would have thought of his aspiring so high? Hang him! He is the cleverest rogue in England: I had no idea of his talents, formerly."

"My lord, Mr. Taylor is here," announced a servant as the statesman concluded his monologue.

"I will see him," said the Peer; and Williamson in another minute was in the room. "Good morning!" cried Lord Wharton to his confidential agent. "Will you take some breakfast?"

"I thank you, I have already done so. Your lordship's hours and mine are very different."

"I was up late last night; there were stormy debates, and I spoke for three hours—not a common thing with me; for I think the substance of a thing is better expressed in a few minutes. That fellow, Sharp, put me on my mettle, and I think I gave him a broadside he'll remember for some time. You have heard he is to take office?"

"Yes, I was quite astonished so important a post should have been assigned to him. I have seen him already this morning, and he appeared to feel your lordship's oratory."

"He must—the rascal, if he be made of flesh and blood."

"As I was coming along I heard the particulars of a frightful murder which has been committed at —— prison, where, you know, the villain who attempted your life was incarcerated. He has made his escape, and either he or his son—who has been taken—cut the throat of the gaoler from ear to ear."

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear it. The girl I have taken under my patronage, Helen Jenkins, was here yesterday, and I promised to try and save her father's life. But, of course, the gallows cannot be cheated of their due. I see no reason why we should spare the lives of any scoundrels, in fact, and if I were an absolute monarch, I should be another Draco. That stuff of your humanity legislators! There are too many in the world, and when we get a few out of it who are good for nothing, we are conferring a boon on society."

"Don't you think it is rather an atheistical principle to hold that God

creates more than the world will contain?" rejoined Williamson. "It seems to me, sometimes, that extremes lead to precisely the same results."

Lord Wharton laughed.

"I once tried very hard to be an Atheist; but I could not for the life of me," he said. "With regard to what you say on the creation of more people than the world will hold, I would ask you to tell me what plagues and wars are sent for? It is precisely on the same principle as I observe all the economy of the universe is based, I would govern mankind. Whenever there is a redundant population, I should consider it perfectly just and wise to plunge into war. Whenever there is disaffection at home, I would say with King Henry—

> 'Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels.'

To the devil with the humbug of philosophy. All is stern, inexorable necessity in nature, and there is no other wisdom than to rule with a rod of iron, repressing every thing that is calculated to create a thirst for freedom and knowledge among the people. Look at that d—d French Revolution! Do you mean to tell me it would not have been far more humane to have had a despotism, than suffered discontent to grow into civil war? If to prevent a greater evil we suffer a lesser one, I say—so do the just Gods above!"

"I deny that my fellow-worm has a right to create evil under any circumstances."

"Surely he has," rejoined Wharton, "if by so doing he prevents a larger amount."

"What if the people whom you oppress adopt the same principle, and say, 'We know it is a crime to kill these governors of ours; but we will do it, because we think it will prevent despotism hereafter?' Such was the cause of that effusion of blood in France, and it appears to me, until a better system be adopted, the same animosity, the same revolutions, the same brutal ignorance—inevitably leading to guilt—will continue to desolate the face of the earth. But if, on the contrary, the principle of polity be love, shall it not breed love?"

"You are getting quite a moral character," snæered Lord Wharton. "Well, enough of this."

"I have been stricken, and I feel my life has been one great blunder. Do you not wish you could recal the past?"

"It is very likely I do; but if I could, ten to one but I should act it all over again. Regret is but the sentiment of a madman. No sane person indulges in what is useless."

"But if you were able to make others happy, to find the whole world adored you for your beneficence, to diffuse all the blessings of liberty, of science—"

"Nay, my good fellow, prithee no more of these suppositions. Make the whole world happy to-day, and it will curse you to-morrow. I know it all, and be hanged to it! and will never live to serve the old rotten carcase, but make it serve me. It were as wise to take care of a corpse, and neglect the living, as to be one of you would-be patriots, who do not perceive that you are worshipping an idea, and not serving a *thing*. Now let us to business."

The preceding conversation is detailed to give the Reader an insight into the political being of Lord Wharton. Having no faith in man, and no dependence on God, he considered apparent expediency the only rational principle of government, and would not have scrupled to sacrifice the whole world, if by so doing he could contribute aught to his own good—his own selfish interests. No bad man can by possibility love God or his neighbour, and therefore the real and most sacred interests of humanity will never be advanced by those, however high their intellect, whose grovelling spirits,

"Like the eyes of Mammon, ever downward bent,"

cannot retain a firm reliance in humanity amidst all the sad convictions of evil and corruption with which it abounds. *Practically* Lord Wharton was an Atheist, and so is every one who hates his brother.

Blessed be that divine spirit who intimated the eternal truth that there is no adoration of the Creator which does not evince itself in love of the creature; and as for the wretched fanatics who controvert the words of the only being who never once spoke false, I believe they are far more distant from wisdom even than the sceptic himself. Thus, O man, seek truth wheresoever it is to be found! Where it is buried among those who do not hold the opinions we do, hesitate not to receive it; let no narrow prejudice enter your hearts; and if you are sincerely in love with the pure and the holy, the soul within you will not fail to bring down that fire from heaven which will separate the genuine from the baser metal. Ask your soul, "Is this thing true?" and you will never be greatly deceived.

Williamson informed Lord Wharton that he was going into the country again that day, and might not be able to return for some time. He thought he had got a clue to Rose, and he still hoped he might restore her to her poor old father's arms, and then he would bid her a final adieu. Grief was doing its good work in the heart of that man, and though much remained to be accomplished, he was no longer the desperate individual he was a few weeks before. Lord Wharton, with his keen mind, could not but perceive this, and he smiled bitterly to himself, utterly sceptical as to the permanency of anything but selfishness in the breast of mortal.

"The man means to reform," said Lord Wharton, when Williamson was gone. "Poor fool! Shall *I* do likewise? I cannot, on principle! Were I to try the experiment of reformation, how do I know but that I might become worse than I am—for every experiment is hazardous. Even were I to effect all things for the satisfaction of my conscience, I should only satisfy a part of what I am, not a whole conscience! Bah! what care I for conscience? Is this conscious brain to obey the phantom which custom sets up? Where is conscience? Find me a standard whereby we can test the actions of all. I may not be doing wrong after all. Solomon—he is my master; and he was divinely gifted! Am I doing worse than he did? Where is my crime? Answer, thou fearful voice out of the deeps of darkness! Thou everlasting torment of my existence, damned spectre! O, I am mad, mad, mad! To believe in what I know cannot exist? I will act in diametrical opposition to the dictates of this conscience; so shall I get a better one. . . . . That girl Nell! If I were a Sultan she should be one of my wives. What earthly reason is there we should tie ourselves to one, or two? It is said that Luther and Milton held polygamy was lawful!" Again he smiled darkly.

CHAPTER LVI.

WILLIAMSON—THE BLIND MAN'S DEATH—THE LAKE—ROSE—A SCENE —REMORSE AND LOVE—SIR ALGERNON AND WILLIAMSON.

It was the hush of evening: twilight was nearly gone, and the cold, white moon shone through the frosty atmosphere, attended by one solitary star.—That bright one! How it seems to love the serene planet, with what pure brightness it worships her lustre (even as a bridegroom hangs enamoured on the dreams of her who is all the universe to him) as though it would share with her, by gazing on whom its radiance grows—

"One life, one death, one immortality, and one annihilation!"

Shall we hereafter know the history of that star? O, it must be *all* of love; its music must syllable the words which only love can utter, and which only love can understand!

But he whose face was turned upwards, had long, very long outlived those ideal joys of the poet: he was old and weary. There he sat, his white hairs shining in the moonlight, which streamed over his venerable form. How soon time passes away, and with it all those illusions without which this "common hell" of life would be all-miserable and gloomy

at the best. The imagination is allied to heaven, and may belong to it: but let us see nothing but what is real, and we shall be in poor Hamlet's mood:—"And indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air,—look you, this brave, o'erhanging firmament, fretted with golden fire,—why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours."

But the lonely and blind old man was neither alone, nor sightless: for eternity was in him. He had left time behind, before his spirit sought the stars. Not a limb moved, not a sound escaped his lips for the space of many minutes: but at length his thoughts found utterance, and he said, in a low but fervent voice, his dim eyes seeking the heaven that shone above—

"I hear Thy voice, O, Everlasting One! I see the glory of Thy face. I am happy, now; and only ask to depart in this peace of mind—full of the assurance of immortality!—Forgive my child; and take her to Thy bosom! I am old and blind, and but for Thy goodness, O how desolate I should be! I want to sleep in the soft light of Thy smile, Father of all mercies! Let me leave this poor dream of Time, when I have suffered as much as may purify me for the eternal!—And I feel as if death were already nestling to my heart, and taking away the bitterness of grief! 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'" He was silent a minute again, and then said—"Yes, I feel as if Life were only in Him who is Life and Love! Mysterious and incomprehensible being! How us poor worms of a day walk in the shadow and the gloom, hearing tones of thrilling joy, and beholding shapes of unreal splendour, and listen not to the melody which thou dost utter, the tender words of compassion and of comfort, that cannot deceive. O this brief dream of sorrow! Let it pass, and all is light!"

Thus did the pious man commune with the Creator, and he was happy. If atheism were true, what prop in affliction could it afford like unto this? It may be all very well for the sceptic to talk philosophically when he is well and vigorous; but if reduced to the state of poor old Richards, let us mark his fortitude and resignation.—And who ever escapes calamity? Who ever passes through life as if it were a joyous race without a cloud or speck? Ye who have done this hitherto, whom pain and grief have not ameliorated and elevated, look around you, and confess there are woes incapable of alleviation on earth. O strive not to take away the immortal hope until you can substitute something as good in its stead. Suppose it even to be a mistake, and what then? Is it better to believe in what conduces to felicity, or to exist under the shadow of annihilation?

It often appears to me that ere a philosopher sits down to write a work, he should not neglect to ask himself the question, "Will this do more good or evil, as enunciating principles for human happiness?" If he

sincerely believe he can add aught to the good things of the soul, let him write. There are some works the errors of which evolve eternal truths; but the writers did not intend they should do so: Byron's "Childe Harold," with its scepticism and darkness, will illustrate what I mean.—To proceed.

As the blind man, who had outlived every earthly hope, was deducing from the afflictions of this mortal state a deeper faith and assurance in a state of blessedness, while rapt into the worlds where every Elysian gale tells of the holy and the divine, he heard not a footstep approaching, nor was aware he had a visitor, until he felt a strong hand placed on his arm.

"Who are you?" he cried. "I see you not."

"I am he who was to have been your daughter's husband," was the reply. "I left you in a state of frenzy; but I am calm, now. It seems as if there were not room for a passion here."

"My friend," returned the blind man, "God has heard my prayers, and comforted you. But still you will wander over the earth, if I know you, dejected, though not desperate. I shall soon quit the unrest and the night around me, and expatiate in the regions of infinitude. Thank God for all. There are some men whose faith is weakened by trials; but mine has been strengthened by them. I question if there is any thing more than theoretical faith before it has been tried and purified in the fire.—Be a good man, I beseech you; and you will be amply rewarded for the attempt to rise above your nature.—I would pray for you; but my breath is nearly spent, and the torch of life is flickering in my heart. Farewell, my son."

"Excellent old man! What an example of heroic patience do you set me? What hero is like to thee?"

"I am no hero," returned the old man; "but God is in my soul!"

"O sublime heart of the believer!" murmured Williamson.

"Who exalts it, think you?" asked Richards, overhearing the last words spoken. "There is no sublimity in man which is of himself. Yet he is sublime beyond conception, too." There was a short pause; when Richards again spoke—"I feel a light in my darkness!" he exclaimed, standing perfectly upright on a sudden, and pointing to the firmament. "If I could take my child now——" He left the sentence unfinished, and sunk back again into his seat. The other man answered—

"Yes, she will repent, and will be forgiven!"

"Hark, Williamson!" cried the blind man. "Who spoke then? The angel of the Lord is with me; and lo! I see a multitude of the heavenly host up there—far, far above mortal ken!—My spirit bursts the chains of time and sense, and goes to mingle with its fellow spirits. Are they not happy?"

Another silence ensued. An awe crept over the heart of Williamson, for when he looked into the countenance of the blind man it shone "with

the brightness of an angel." But the hand he grasped grew cold—he heard a faint sigh—no more: and was convinced he gazed on the face of the dead.

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"O, to die thus!" said Williamson. "His faith must be pure and lofty who can leave existence with such a smile on the lips. I have seen many die: fanatics, sceptics, men of the world, warriors, priests, and others; but none like this. What is death? Pale mystery! How beautiful thou art in corruption so sublime as this! I can hardly believe I gaze on nothing more than clay. What sculptor shall imitate that face? It is radiant with heaven still!—O, to live and die thus is more than to be the greatest spirit that ever flashed its glory on the world!"

So saying, he placed the corpse on a bed, and covering it with a cloak, left the house of death.

There was a lake at the distance of half a league from the abode of Richards. It was frozen over, and several persons were skating on it at that late hour, appearing to enjoy the exercise. Among them Sir Algernon Sharp was not the least conspicuous. A carriage stood at a short distance from the ice; and in it was a female, closely muffled. She gazed listlessly and mournfully in the direction of the blind man's cottage, while gay laughter was borne on the faint breeze from the lake. But she could not see the dwelling of Richards where she was, and from some motive wishing to do so, she got out of the vehicle, and walking about a furlong, her form was hid by some trees. Sadly and tearfully did she gaze on the humble cottage, and burying her face in her hands, she sobbed aloud. Poor child! What feelings of remorse and regret burthened her breast! But a few weeks before she knew no sorrow.

"Rose!" exclaimed a deep voice in a low tone. She started, and would have fled; but a firm hand was laid on her arm. "I will not hurt you, misguided girl!" said the man who had spoken with smothered emotion. "But O, I beseech you, leave this life of infamy! Come with me—come to your father's cottage."

"Will he forgive me?" sobbed Rose in agony.

"He has forgiven you," replied Williamson, solemnly. "Come, my horse is here. I will gallop with you in five minutes!"

Without waiting for permission, he lifted the girl on to the saddle, and dashed away. Neither of them spoke a word, Williamson's eyes being fixed, and not an emotion visible externally, though the conflict within was deep, and Rose averting her face, and endeavouring to stifle her sobs. They were soon at the cottage, and Williamson, still preserving silence, took hold of the girl, who shrunk away.

"He will not upbraid you," he said, and opened the door.

Rose murmured "Father!" and fell on her knees at the threshold.

"Here he is," said Williamson, lifting up a cloak from the bed. "Look how he sleeps!"

And Rose knew not it was death; but a vague sentiment of awe crept over her. She arose and knelt down again beside the bed.

"He is very cold," she said with a shudder, as she put a withered hand to her lips.

"Yes; for him," returned Williamson, "no more tears; for him no more the frenzy and the despair; he, even he who rests so calmly here on earth, is in the bosom of his God. He is dead; if that be death which is the cessation of motion——"

"O, *I* have done it!" shrieked Rose, understanding all; and the conviction scorching her brain like lightning. "I am a parricide! O horrible! My God! I cannot bear it! Take me away, or kill me, thou whom I have wronged so foully!—In mercy;—ha, ha! It blasts my sight, beautiful though it be! Dear corpse! to whom I owe life. Revered father!—He was so kind to me!—And I, like the scorpion.—O, misery!"

"Poor wretch!" said Williamson;—then relenting, he would have covered the body again, and led Rose away; but she would not suffer him to do so.

"And he forgave me with his dying breath?" she cried. "O, he had no gall in his nature!—But he knew not all: I was deceived!—Even now he promises to marry me."

"And you believe *that?* Go to! You try to believe the villain who has cheated you out of the jewel virtue, to excuse yourself to your conscience!—Rose, you are here in the presence of the dead! The corruptible is no more; but the incorruptible is looking down on you from heaven! Here then promise——"

"Promise nothing!" interrupted a voice;—and the diminutive figure of Sir Algernon Sharp,—who missing Rose on leaving the lake, followed with all speed to the cottage—entered the room. Williamson confronted him.

"Was this your doing, young demon?" he demanded, sternly, his keen eye searching the soul of the youthful coxcomb. "Look here, then, until your sight be blasted! Murderer!"

Sir Algernon shuddered, on beholding the placid face of the corse. Rose uttered not a syllable, but stood now motionless and tearless close to the body of her father. Williamson proceeded—

"I know you, Sir Algernon Sharp: you think yourself one of the great ones of the world: but as you stand here—in the sight of God, and in the presence of the dead,—you seem one of the most loathsome reptiles that crawl the face of the earth. You are yet a boy: but the manhood of such a wretch must be stained with all that can disgrace humanity. Begone!"

"Not without Rose," returned the baronet. "Come, love; I swear I will fulfil my promise to you."

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried the girl. "I have murdered him;" and she wrung her hands in agonised remorse.

That one so young should be afflicted for her sins so awfully! There was the white-cheeked corse; there the stern and dark face of Williamson; the shrinking form of the baronet, withered beneath the calm indignation of the man whose hopes he had blasted; and there the weeping orphan. It was a melancholy picture, but full of impressive morality. Did you ever know a seduction which did not produce misery? The error of hot youth, misled by passion, may be forgiven; but a heartless, cold-blooded seduction, like that of Rose, is one of the foulest crimes out of the Decalogue—murder is hardly more cruel.

Williamson advanced a step, and his hand was on his sword.

"Ah!" shrieked Rose, guessing his intention. "Spare him, or plunge your weapon into this heart. I alone have been to blame."

That strange, devoted love of woman for him who has so irreparably wronged her! She seized the hand of her former lover.

"Stab *me!*" she said; "it will be kind of you. I am unfit to live, having destroyed such a father."

"I am willing to give you satisfaction, if you demand it, whatever be your rank," commenced the baronet: but he was interrupted by Williamson, who cried—

"Satisfaction! I want not your reptile life. What satisfaction would it be? Can that foul blood wipe out the wrong you have done? Can it restore the dead to life, or innocence to the guilty? Vile boy, once more I say begone! Well is it for you, I am not what I was, or I would have killed you like a dog. It is a pity to let you loose upon society,—you, who have violated every law of humanity: but I am not an executioner, and the pangs of your conscience will be some punishment."

"Low ruffian!" exclaimed Sir Algernon, recovering his effrontery. "I condescend too much, in listening to you. Rose, will you remain with him, or go with me? I repeat, I will marry you—instantly, if you wish it. I will sacrifice every worldly prospect for your sake, love!"

"I must stay here, and die!" was the answer of the young girl.

"I will permit this no longer in the chamber of death," said Williamson."

"No; leave me," cried Rose; "it *is* profanation to remain here."

"Will you desert me, then? Ruffian! I command you, hold off your hand." But as Sir Algernon thus spoke, Williamson hurled him away with a giant's force.

He was stunned by the fall, and lay insensible for a minute on the ground. Rose instantly flew to his side; but she was seized by Williamson, who exclaimed sternly—

"*This, this*,—when that sacred dust lies there, vile wanton? Go, then, and see how deep a hell you can sink into. He is not hurt."

"But must I lose him too?" returned Rose, in despair. "What would you have me do?"

"Make your peace with Heaven: choose what you will."

"You will not leave me, Rose?" murmured Sir Algernon, recovering, and wishing to revenge himself on the man who had treated him so roughly.

"Peace, sir!" said Williamson. "Girl, choose your course. Do you wish to live more foul than corpses in a charnel, or return to the pure being which is life in the everlasting? What! will you not leave that slave? Then go: no more! Taint not the air with your breath. Let the dead rest."

Rose did not offer to move, but stood stupefied and irresolute.

"Are you not my wife?" asked Sir Algernon, glaring at Williamson, half fearfully and half fiercely, knowing how vain it would be to contend by force with one so powerful. "Dear Rose, why should you upbraid yourself as being the cause of the old man's death? Years carried him off."

"Liar!" cried Williamson; "he would have lived, but for her you have made your harlot. Enough, weak child! Go with your seducer; and when he sends you forth to rot in the streets—to drag on a miserable life, by selling those charms which have been so fatal to you—"

"Never believe him," interrupted Sir Algernon. "I love you as my life!"

Rose threw herself into the baronet's arms, and sobbed on his breast.

"Go with your paramour, or the dead will start to life to curse you!" said Williamson. "You are unfit to breathe the wholesome air of heaven while you thus expose your shameless wantonness. I will cast you forth, if you persist in refusing to leave this cottage."

"Hear me," ejaculated Rose.

"I'll hear nothing. Will you stay, and repent; or go with him, by whose accursed arts you have lost the brightness of your soul, and murdered your aged father?"

"I cannot leave him: he is my husband in all but the name," returned the misguided girl; and she tottered away, supported by her lover.

She cast one gaze of anguish at the corse, and vanished.

"I loved that painted piece of dust!" muttered Williamson. "Well—it is over now. Oh, thou dead and venerable form! thou art looking on me with that solemn smile, as if to win me to repentance: and I will do it. Thou that art in the habitations of the just, record my vow. From henceforth my every thought shall be towards virtue and righteousness. I will devote myself to the sacred cause of man. I will circumvent the designs of the oppressor; and be content with an approving conscience, without seeking for joys which do not exist on this side eternity!"

CHAPTER LVII.

LORD WHARTON IN THE COUNTRY—NELL IS SAVED BY STEPHEN—THE PEER QUITS ENGLAND.

It was the month of joyous melody—happy, lovely May!—

"Old winter was gone,
In his weakness, home to the mountains hoar,"—

and Nature sang her hymns, exulting in her beauty! Blessed be the Spring! when the heart bounds lightly, and the blood courses swiftly through the veins, and we feel as if we were in a new being. We worship the blue skies—we hang delighted over the verdure—and listen breathless to songs of happy birds. The flowers gladden our senses—the smiles of all around imbue us with sensations too delicious to pass away and be forgotten: they live in the soul! and we recur to them in after life with mournful fondness. Yes! there is a Spring in the Spirit which meets the Spring that objects itself to the eyes. The soul is renewed, and shakes off the lethargy which bound it—springing elate to heaven! Then every star in the deep blue space—then every sound of sweetness in the waters and the air, seem full of the light and melody which angels cherish. Those pure, ethereal stars, hanging like golden islands in an Elysian atmosphere—*they* know no spring; *they* change not: but *we* change; and we pant to soar to those bright worlds, where the radiance and the harmony may be divine for ever. *Here*, alas! the spring melts in the embraces of the hot summer; and the summer, too, fades into the sere autumn; and every loveliness is withered, every charm is desolated! The spring will return: but it will not be the same. How many idolized hopes will have been destroyed! how many aspirations, created by the buoyant spirit of youth, will have been dispersed, when another birth of glory shall fill us with wonder and delight!

Seated in an arbour, on as warm and bright a morning as ever smiled on England at the commencement of this fairest month, was a man, in the prime of life, who was turning over the pages of a book with a listless air. The prospect before him was beautiful, and the air was perfumed with violets and wall-flowers. An extensive garden, beautifully laid out, was bounded by a river, on which the sun poured all its radiance, kissing the ripples on the smooth surface, and turning them into gold and diamonds. The water mirrored the serene blue skies, and the willows on the banks—full of grace, and exquisitely green; and the verdant hills, which rose on the other side, were reflected also. At the distance of several hundred yards from the arbour was a house of elegant architecture, though not very large, and situated on a rising ground; but it was almost

hid by the towering and luxuriantly clothed trees that grew in clusters on each side, leaving a passage from it, but intertwining their boughs so as to form an arch. Far as the eye could stretch, not another habitation could be seen, and the loneliness of the landscape enhanced its charms. The prospect was not so extensive as may sometimes be met with, even in our little island; but there was not a single feature without something of romance and picturesque beauty. A bird was singing close to the arbour—now wildly, now softly; and he who sat in it, would listen to the strain for a moment or two, but apparently wished to shut his ears to every sound that might assail them. Two swans were sailing with extended wings down the river, and were the only objects in motion, save the gorgeous insects in the air; and towards these the eyes of the person in the arbour wandered.

"That is a pleasant life!" he said. "What can we boast to equal it? Our intellect is but a curse to us; and those swans live, and love, and die!"

While he thus spoke, a light footstep approached the arbour, and a girl of sixteen or seventeen was about to enter; but seeing it was occupied, she would have retired.

"Nay, come in, fair one!" cried the person who was seated in the pleasant retreat. "I want to speak with you, Nell."

It was Lord Wharton who thus addressed the Blacksmith's daughter. Five months had elapsed since the girl found a protector in the Peer; and during that time she had made a marvellous progress in mind and beauty. She was taller than when first seen by the statesman; and her voluptuous figure was displayed to advantage by a plain but tasteful dress. Half sad, half joyous, the expression of her face was singularly winning; and Lord Wharton thought he had never seen but one so near his ideal of what a woman's countenance should be.

"I sent for you to keep house for me while I am out of London, because I thought the country air would benefit your health," said the Peer. "Fear not, sweet Helen; your brother will escape the extreme penalty of the law. If I were in office now, I might procure his free pardon."

"Your lordship is very kind," said Nell. "How shall I thank you? Alas! I have nothing but my thanks to offer."

"Perhaps you may have more," returned Lord Wharton, with a meaning smile which she did not observe. "Sit down, my girl! I hear an excellent account of you from your masters. You have made especial progress in French—so you can read that book."

He put the volume, the pages of which he had been turning over, into the maiden's hand. It was one of the most immoral works of Rousseau, and illustrated with prints calculated to excite the passions. Nell glanced at the work, and put it down, with a heightened colour, but said nothing.

"I am fond of Rousseau, sometimes," remarked Lord Wharton;—"perhaps you do not know his writings? When I was a boy, I idolized them: they search the secret depths of the passions more than any with which I am acquainted. Do you know, Helen, I sometimes fancy I could write a book, if I had a mistress glancing on me with eyes like yours, which would thrill young lovers' hearts profoundly. Love!—what a mystery it is!—how full of more than extasy! Every vein vibrates to the touch!" (he took her hand;) "and the vibration speaks to the heart with eloquence beyond words. But the lips!—ay, the lips!—You have been kissed, sweetest!" Nell attempted to withdraw her hand, blushing deeply. "Nay! you may trust your hand to me: I am your friend, and will ever remain one. I love to look on your bright face, my Helen, and think I see your generous soul written in fair characters on its every lineament. Is not this a lovely scene? Come, you can be poetical: let me hear your silver voice—it makes me young again, when it gladdens my ear."

"My lord, you must not speak thus to a humble girl as I am. Whisper your flatteries to the high-born ladies, who live but in the false breath of adulation. For me, I do not like to hear praise, except my heart responds to it: *then*, indeed, it is a grateful tribute: it is a voice sweeter than that within the breast—a voice musical with God's utterance."

"Talk ever thus!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, passionately. "Oh, that I could find one like thee, to discourse such high and noble sentiments to me: but I know not one to whom my heart can do homage, among the courtly throngs of the butterflies I despise. The vapid nonsense,—the eternal sameness of those women of fashion;—put them in a scene like this, and endeavour to extract something of nature's lofty poetry, and they are dumb! But thou, sweet Helen—lowly as thy birth—hast something divine in thy heart." He ceased.

"My lord, excuse me, but I have household matters—"

"I will *not* excuse you. If I had possessed such a girl as you are, I should not have been the libertine I was: but I never found one who could sympathise with me. The freshness of your nature can alone enchain such a soul as mine; for out of the abundance of your spirit there ever gushes something new and lovely. Your being, Helen, is like yon stream—perpetually changing, perpetually musical and glorious. Bright one! I swear I could worship your beauty to the end of time: for the fine mind, for the fervent heart irradiates it."—

"My lord, my lord, *I* must not hear you speak thus. Pray let me go: it neither becomes you nor me."

"Well, Helen;—do not leave me, and we'll talk of Nature—it is a sublime thing: but though it excites the imagination, and arrests the senses, there is something within us which eternally aspires beyond Nature. The adoration of Mind is the loftiest felicity of man! Have you

not felt, when some swift spirit flashes on your brain a subtile thought, that you could worship the source of what has given you such pleasure? I know you have. Mind! What is mind? Behold the passions—the feelings, the thoughts, the actions, which make us what we are. The passions are our only real friends. To revel in their intoxication is the chiefest rapture we can gain. Out on the cold, dull slaves, who tell us the passions are to be governed and restrained! Why were they given us—for what possible use?"

"My lord, release me! I cannot, and I will not stay. I suspect you, Lord Wharton!" and the girl fixed her bright, keen eyes on the excited face of the Peer.

"Suspect me, my angel? Then here behold me at your feet. Will you be mine? All that I have shall be yours. I will devote my life to you. Nay, look not so indignant;—smile on me, fairest! There is a heaven in the light of that smile! Turn not from me: you know not how I love you."

"I thought it would come to this," said Nell, bitterly. "Lord Wharton," she added, with a majesty which for a moment awed him, "I would far sooner that my life were spent in a dungeon—that I were diseased and deformed—that I were without the common necessaries of life, than share the pollution of all your splendour!"

The statesman threw his arm round the maiden's waist.

"Hear me, Nell!" he exclaimed vehemently; "I am pursued by a demon which glares damnation into my soul, save when I leave myself; and, by Heaven! I *will* possess you. Your screams would be unavailing: you are an infant in my grasp. Yield, then, to love; yield to my passion, and you shall never repent it. What avails all this struggling, when there is no one at hand, and I hold you thus?"

"Oh God!" cried Nell, as Lord Wharton attempted to embrace her. "Help, help!"

"But let me press these lips—richer than luscious fruit!"

With a concentration of her strength, Nell sprang away; but the Peer prevented her from getting out of the arbour. Suddenly she drew a dagger from her breast.

"Now," she said, "I defy you. I once showed you this dagger, and I said I should not hesitate to use it. It is a coward's act, Lord Wharton, to attempt thus to obtain that which force only could wrest from me. Advance one step farther, and I will plunge this weapon into my heart."

"You have learned this silly stuff from romances," cried the Peer. "What is it that I ask of you? Think you it would impoverish you?"

"Ay, make my everlasting soul as loathsome as your own, bad man!" cried Nell, with haughty dignity. She proceeded in a strain of impassioned eloquence, the bitter invective of which stung him to the quick.

"Oh, it is a noble act, for one like you to commit violence on her who saved your life, though by so doing she endangered her parent's existence! My lord, my lord, you who have raised your voice in the senate, and commanded the attention of the wise and the great, listen to me. If I could coin my heart's blood into words, they would rush from me in such a torrent that they would overwhelm you, and crush the foul lust that rages in your breast. Are you a man? No, no: there is not a *man* in all the world who would act so like a devil. Begone! lest God's lightning blast you where you stand."

So glorious was the flashing of that face turned upon the statesman—so fervid the appeal, so august the dignity of the humble maiden,—that, for an instant, he felt abashed: but recovering himself, he said—

"By Jove, Helen, you *have* a spirit! Such an one as you have I long sought in vain. You are fit to mate with the lion who woos you to his embrace. Hear me, girl: I *will* have you. I am desperate—I *am* a fiend—and I care not for all the menaces of hell, which sends forth the dead—ay, the dead!"

There was madness in the eye that gloated on the fine face of Nell. She shuddered. The report which had prevailed of his insanity once reached her; and she was inclined to give credence to it, when he proceeded in these words—his features distorted, and his eyes rolling wildly.

"As I have lived, I will yet live. Without woman, I should go mad indeed—as I have been. Yes, yes,—it was madness. But I speak incoherently. I love you; and thus—thus I win you to my passion!"

He rushed upon her ere she was prepared, and wrenching the dagger from her hand, hurled it away. Once more he clasped her in his arms, and uttered a laugh of exultation, while she screamed for aid.

"No one is in the house, or in the grounds," he exclaimed. "Now you can weep as well as scold: I care not. Let the demon prevail over all pity!"

"Spare me!" interrupted Nell. "Oh, have I ever harmed you? Man, man, have you a heart? Can you treat a helpless girl like this? Ah, wretch, desist! Help, help!—I faint!—Oh Heaven help!"

"A heart? No: I have no heart. I feel transformed into an incarnate devil!"

His lips were upon hers—the hot breath seemed to stifle her. She was as a child in that Herculean grasp; and her brain grew dizzy. One moment more, and the foulest and most unmanly act that can be perpetrated on a defenceless woman would have been accomplished, when a voice came hissing into the ear of Lord Wharton; and a hand, which fury armed with resistless might, dashed the strong man away.

"God be thanked!" screamed Nell, recovering. "Stephen?—*my* Stephen!—Ha, ha!" And she fell on the bosom of her cousin, and joy bereaved her of sense.

Moll rescued from Lord Wharton

"Villain!" exclaimed the youth; "dastardly villain!" He stood towering like the statue of the god, in sublime wrath—his height seeming to increase, his form to dilate, his muscles to swell, until he appeared a giant. So blasting was the brightness of that face, so withering the power of its scorn and indignation, that even Wharton, raging as he did, shrunk into nothingness. Stephen had picked up the dagger, and brandishing it aloft, cried—"Now, wretch, you are in my power! One blow, and I might rid the world of a monster unfit to live; and, by the Great God of Heaven, there is that within me now which you may well fear. My Helen—my beautiful—he has not hurt you, sweet? If his damned act had been permitted by the Eternal, as I live—if he possessed a hundred lives—I would not leave him the tenth part of one. Devil! How like a devil you stand stricken there!"

"Touch him not, Stephen," said Nell, once more reviving, and clinging to her heart's beloved. "God and his conscience will punish him. Let us hence."

How terribly sublime appear these passions when thus excited! With white cheek, with foaming mouth, with clenched teeth, the statesman glared on Stephen, whose face was now also blanched and now crimsoned—unutterable emotions on his quivering lip. Putting the maiden aside, the youth advanced towards Lord Wharton, whom he had hurled to the extremity of the arbour, until he was within a single pace of him. He spoke with preternatural calmness.

"And this was why you sent me into the country, *noble* sir? From my heart, I thank you. You would have honoured my poor cousin too highly." Then throwing away the bitter irony, he continued: "I leave you unharmed and uncursed: there is One who alone can punish and avenge, and He is looking down upon us now, or I might use this dagger. I leave you, Lord Wharton, to the pangs of the worm that never dies. Repent, repent."

He was departing; but the Peer exclaimed—

"Insolent boy: this to *me?*"

"If you were monarch of England, or emperor of the world, I would say it to you," returned the young man sternly. "I despise you as I do a venomous serpent, and more. You have no sting left."

The mood of Lord Wharton changed.

"Stay!" he cried. "How like he now looks to *her!* You love that girl: I see it now. I did not think of that. What amends I can make her for this outrage, I will. You will leave me, I know. Take, then, this purse, and I——"

"No, never!" cried Stephen, with flushing brow. "I would not take a crust of bread from *you*, if I were starving." And taking Helen's arm, he moved away with her with a princely grandeur—the princeliness of honesty.

"Thou hast done well, Thomas Wharton," muttered the Peer to himself, when he was alone. "It was bravely done. What a wretch I seem to myself! And the fires which burned like molten lava in my breast have gone, and all is cold as ice. I have lived too long. Shame on it! I never acted thus before. They say I am mad; and I begin to think so, most seriously. I am possessed with a fiend it is in vain to wrestle with. Poor girl! Oh, it was villanous! Am I grown into such a ruffian? I am no longer Thomas Wharton: impossible.——So, they are gone. The boy I could have loved, because he is like Harriet; and the generous, brave girl! They honoured me, and I basely took advantage of their confidence, and——No more! why have I these passions? I never asked for them. Why does Heaven form us after this fashion of darkness, instead of in the image of Light?"

Long and bitter were the meditations of the statesman, which lasted until past noonday. Then he arose, and returned to the house. He sat down and wrote two or three letters, which having sealed, he mounted his horse, and rode towards London. The metropolis was not at a great distance from his villa, and he reached it before nightfall. He avoided all acquaintances, and instead of going to his house, in —— Street, he proceeded to a coach-office. In the course of half an hour, he quitted London; and to the amazement of every one, it was found the following morning he had embarked for the Continent;—and this, when all his political schemes were on the eve of accomplishment, and in a few weeks he must have succeeded in breaking up the ministry, and stepping into supreme office. Various were the speculations afloat on the subject; but all confessed they were unable to account for such conduct, unless Wharton was mad.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE COUSINS—STEPHEN'S TALE—THE GIPSY KING—THE WOMAN—THOMPSON DISCOVERS STEPHEN.

Stephen and Nell quitted the grounds of Lord Wharton by a garden gate, and walked away, hand locked in hand, looking those passionate things which words are so weak and inadequate to tell. It always seems to me, that the profound feelings of the heart must ever want a vehicle to express them; not because there are no words significant of the substance of the sentiment and feeling, but because, to the affection conveyed by looks, there is a spiritual and mystic meaning lying buried in the deep ocean of being—holy and unearthly. Believe the soul, when it tells you all the common things which men call reality, are but the shadows of a

far more glorious Life: that this is *not* the true existence—fettered by sense and matter;—but that in the immaterial and immortal mind is the breath of beauty, of music, and of love: and those who embody them best, can only do so by those shadows of the infinite, so subtile, that they elude sight. Heaven is not defined to the Christian as it is to the Mahometan: and why? Because ours is the religion which is in the abstract, —to be conceived only by Faith in the invisible; while the other is full of the gross, the sensual, and actual. . . . . " All love," says the eloquent Jean Paul, in his fine way, " believes in a double immortality:" and as Stephen gazed earnestly and intensely into the face of his adored cousin, he felt the force of the sentiment: he knew, by that which was in him, that Love cannot die, because it is LIFE. He felt as if that which is so pure, it partakes of no earthly alloy—must be necessarily indestructible —and that while passion perishes with the things of Time, the holy and divine Idea commingles with Eternity. He bent down, and kissed her, while tears trickled from her eyes to his face. Oh, they were so happy: God bless them! But it was necessary to consider what course they were to pursue.

" Where shall we go?" asked Nell. " I am content to live in a desert with you."

" Thank Heaven!—we will never part more, dearest! Thank Heaven, you are saved! You will be my wife, Nelly. Even if that miscreant had succeeded in his fell purpose, proudly would I have taken you to my arms. But I have something to tell you, love!"

" What is it, Stephen? You look troubled: you fear we shall starve; but there is that good Mr. Travers——"

" No, no—listen. You know that vile Lord Wharton sent me, a few days ago, to Mrs. Smyth's; and I bethought me that her house was that mentioned to us by poor Mrs. Thompson, when she asked me to see little Jem righted. I was resolved not to let the opportunity slip: so, as by Lord Wharton's request I was permitted to sleep in the house, I last night, when I thought the family had all gone to bed, imprudently proceeded to examine a cabinet which I had made up my mind might contain papers that would substantiate the claim of Jem to the property lawfully his. Unfortunately, that man, John Thompson, whom I suspect bears no good-will towards me, returned yesterday from London. He heard me, I suppose, stirring, at midnight, and his suspicions being aroused, he stole upon me just as I had opened the cabinet with skeleton keys, and was about to examine the papers."

" Ah!" gasped Nell. " Go on. Oh, my brother's life is in danger!—and if *you* should share his fate!—Mercy, Heaven!"

" Be calm, my own girl. Well, Thompson stole upon me; and looking up, I beheld him. It would have been useless, or worse, to conceal the truth, and I simply stated to him my purpose. He answered with a

sneer, it was very likely I should be so disinterested; adding, 'I should find what I was looking for, no doubt.' Unhappily, the cabinet contained bank-notes to a large amount: the circumstance appeared to criminate my motives."—

"Imprudent generosity!" cried Nell. "Why were you so rash, love?"

"I thought no ill could come of it;—but to continue. What think you, Nell, the low-minded rogue promised?—On condition I would resign all claim to you, to be silent on the matter. Resign *you!*—not for ten thousand worlds. I defied him to do his worst. 'Very well,' he said; 'then here we remain till to-morrow morning, when I shall reveal the whole transaction.' My evil demon possessed me, as he prevented my departure, to seize and gag him. I succeeded in doing this; and had hardly done so, when I heard some one stirring in the house. I fled; my only thought being to see you. I thought you might be in that villa, though I was not certain you were there; and I wished to get unseen to you. Accordingly I scaled the garden-wall just as you uttered a shriek. For the rest, I am grateful to the Creator, who has preserved your innocence from that unhallowed lust; and I fear not the worst that Fate can do while you are with me, life of my being! But I think I had better conceal myself. I should like to meet the charge that will be brought against me, boldly; but for your sake, I would avoid the prison and uncertainty."

"Oh yes, yes, Stephen: I should die if I were parted from you. Poor John suffers deeply from confinement; though he has been so ill from his wound, that, until within the last few weeks, he could have made no use of liberty. I will be your wife, dearest, whenever you wish it." And the girl threw her arms fondly round Stephen's neck, and kissed him.

They sat beneath a hedge, about two leagues from the villa of Lord Wharton—his arm pressing her form to his heart—his lips pressing on the willing lip those pure, warm kisses, which only love like theirs can feel the full transport of. All confidence and passion, the young girl clung to him, smiled when he smiled, and chased every shadow from his brow with her endearments.

Ah, wherefore is it love may not be ever thus, without guile, without a taint of aught impure,—so human and so divine! Tell not me of impracticable Platonics, nor of brutal lust: the one is for spirits, the other for animals; and in man, the spirit and the animal together create what is less celestial than the one, but infinitely higher than the other; tender and beautiful, full of all the poetry of the gushing affections, full of splendour, even though weak, full of radiance, even though overshadowed and rarely crowned with joy. It is through tears and imperfection, the mortal passion puts on the immortal adoration. Think not this master feeling of existence is all for earth! No: if it be happy, it raises gratitude to God; if it be unhappy, earth is left behind, and the bereaved one clings to that blessed hope which none but gloomy fanatics would destroy.

O, let us all believe with an earnest faith that our lost ones will be restored to us, never to be separated from us more; and though we live "as the angels of heaven," though love will be universalized, still the sacred and ethereal seraph will never be taken from us (nothing so bright can ever be annihilated); but purified breathe the empyrean of bliss.

But even such affection as that of Stephen and Nell for each other will not sustain the poor wretched body, and they found that all they possessed in the world was a few shillings. What were they to do? Stephen was inclined to go to London, and try to obtain some employment, which he doubted not he should be able to procure, having made a rapid progress in his education during the few months he had been studying under a tutor. But Nell strenuously opposed this course.

"You acted so very hastily in that unhappy business you have mentioned to me," she said; "that John Thompson's evidence (and I know the man hates you) would, perhaps, make you a felon; and in London you would certainly be recognised. Let me see," and Nell rose as she spoke, "which way had we better proceed now?"

Casting her eyes beyond a little stream which fed a broad river, visible in the distance, the girl beheld some gipsies seated under a cluster of enormous trees, and behind them at a considerable distance were tents in the midst of a common.

"I think those are the very people with whom poor John used to associate so much," cried Nell. "Suppose you were to get them to disguise you? You would make a noble-looking gipsy."

The youth smiled.

"I hardly know if we can trust them," he replied. "But I know one man among them who is a very fine fellow, should he be there."

While thus speaking, an aged man, greatly bent, but not apparently weak, came towards the cousins. He was nearly eighty, but the fire of his large black eyes was not dimmed. Formerly he must have been nearly six feet in height, but now he was greatly below the ordinary stature, as he walked along leaning on a staff, his long white hair and beard descending over his shoulders and chest.

"That is the King of the Gipsies—the person I alluded to," cried Stephen, and advancing, he cried, "Ah, George! I am glad to see you."

"Stephen Jenkins!" exclaimed the King of the Gipsies, "what brings you so far from home? It is long since I beheld you."

"Where have you been that I have not seen you with the tribe?"

"In Egypt," replied the old man. "I wanted to see that mighty nation ere I died. It is a monument to eternity. I have drunk inspiration there from the stars which look down upon the pyramids. I have read the fate of worlds in the mystic mazes of the bright planets which I could not comprehend in this cold air. You know my history? My father was of your people, and a cunning physician—what some call an

empiric—for he despised the common, vulgar science, and believed in the Elixir of Life. My mother was descended from a line of kings—of the pure Egyptian blood; and from their union I gained wisdom in the life they gave me. For you see, Stephen, from certain marriages certain souls are made:—not only certain constitutions. That was a principle held by my father, and that was why he married the gipsy. I have seen him, who is dead in Egypt, and he revealed great things to me."

"Surely the man is crazy," thought Nell, who had been listening to this conversation, and saw that the old man's eyes sparkled with a wild light.

And he *was* crazy in some respects, though he retained such method in his madness, that he sometimes appeared almost inspired. But Stephen had never seen him in one of those mystical moods before; for he commonly was reserved and taciturn. That man had taught some of his wild notions to Fanny, who eagerly adopted them: and there was often a show of science mingled with his extravagance, which he had acquired from "the cunning physician." His real name was George Alleyn, but he went more commonly by the name of Hermes the King. It was said that he really possessed much skill in medicine, and was acquainted with secrets for which modern practitioners would give their ears.

Stephen introduced his cousin to this extraordinary personage, who surveyed her with much interest. He took her hand, and examined the lines in it.

"I am not so subtle in palmistry, as in the knowledge of the stars," said the old man; "but I think the maiden's lot will be happy. I will cast her nativity to-night, after I have been out to gather the herbs, which must be plucked in the light of the new moon."

As the King of the Gipsies thus spoke, a woman, in whom Nell recognised the female who had paid her a visit in the cottage she inhabited a few months previously, made her appearance.

"Great Hermes!" she said, "your presence is requested yonder on matters of import."

She then turned to Nell and nodded to her, while the good astronomer continued to converse with Stephen, without noticing the interruption.

"I want to ask your advice—for I have a great opinion of your judgment;" said Stephen, in a low voice to Hermes—"how you think I should act. I know not," he added with a smile, "if your knowledge penetrates my secret: but if it does, you are aware, perchance, I am in a predicament——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the old man. "I know it all:—Sybil! (to the female who had addressed him) say I will come anon.—You had better remain with us, Stephen, for the present—you, and the maiden. You will be safe with us. You believe in my gift of divination? You

are a wise lad, and I will impart such knowledge as I can to you. Knowledge is a sacred thing, Stephen, and is to be worshipped by gods and angels. It is to be approached with due reverence; and when you are on the threshold of the temple, you must not be arrogant, but believe implicitly what is told you—not trusting to your ignorance. Many a secret has been lost through presumption, and found by faith. The Sphinx is unriddled not by reason, but by a power beyond reason. Do you believe reason is fallible? You must. Well, then, to be initiated into the Holy of Holies, you must contemn the old world, or rather that wherein you live, and let your intellect be abased before the majesty of the Abstract and Invisible. I could tell you things, if you were prepared, which would blind your soul like the face of Deity, with their effulgence. And you may yet learn them; for the stars favour you. Oh, the solemn mysteries of the universe! What wisdom can fathom their immensity? There seems to my imagination a starry Giant who imparts knowledge of the planets to the aspiring and devout mind. Is he not adorable? Is he not a God? Verily, the depths of things are in his soul. What a world it is, Stephen!" continued Hermes, suddenly changing his tone of awe, and speaking as others do,—his whole face changing in an instant. "So credulous, and yet so incredulous; humbugged, befooled, and blinded by imposture!"

"True," answered Stephen; "but there is nothing in the world which, to one who has thought and felt much, is matter of surprise."

"To my mind, it is *all* wonder," rejoined the Gipsy King, quite with the air of a philosopher. "*What* is not wonderful? The passions: Surely they are profoundly so! Who shall tell how they start into existence, who shall trace their source and predict their meanderings and tortuous windings? Sometimes, when I look upon a party of rustics at dinner, I amuse myself with trying to look into their spirits—if they *have* spirits—and speculate curiously in my odd fashion about them. Do you think *that* can be of the same essence which is totally distinct from another? There is one of the poets, I think, who says—

'Some live to eat, while others eat to live.'

Now, the soul is the source of all action, and it follows that there must be a sensual and a spiritual organization."

Here another messenger came to the old man with a request that he would repair to a tent in order to communicate with some delegates from another encampment, and bidding this individual to take care of Stephen and Nell, the eccentric monarch left them.

The cousins entered a tent, where they were supplied with meat and vegetables, and not having tasted food for many hours, they partook of them. While they were thus engaged the Gipsy King again came to them.

"I see you love savoury viands," he remarked. "For my own part, I have not touched animal food for half a century, because I hold that those who devote themselves to science should forego all artificial stimulants, and subsist on bread, and fruits, and water.—Now we will talk over your concerns."

And he sat down familiarly beside the lovers, and discoursed with sense and shrewdness. He agreed with Nell that it would be politic for Stephen to wear a disguise; and speedily metamorphosed him into a middle aged looking gipsy, with grey hair and beard. None would have known the fine, handsome youth so strangely transformed, and Nell could not forbear laughing at his appearance, in spite of all they had undergone.

"I remember when I was even such a lad as this. About his height, his make, full of vigour and elasticity. Now I am bent and wasted. But the soul is still the same. That can never change. I worship the unchangeable in my being. What avail these muscles and sinews? In a few years of this enigma, time, they shrink and lose their power. But in the immortal intellect there is no mutation and decay.—How beautiful this evening!—Let us walk forth and watch the stars as they come into eternal life and glory. I have a powerful telescope, which you may like to look through."

And they all three went into the air, and the aged man conversed eloquently almost on his favourite topic of astrology. It was plain he had made it a deep study; and he was also no mean astronomer. Nell was delighted with him, and he appeared to take an amazing interest in her. He once said something which was not very intelligible, but Nell thought he alluded to one he had loved in his youth who resembled her.

"Your voice, O maiden!" he murmured to her, "is like a remembered music!" And he sighed, and left them.

The cousins slept in each other's arms as innocently and as fondly as when they were children, and did so. How happy and beautiful they looked—cheek pressed against cheek, and hair intertwined, their arms thrown around each other's neck! The curtain of their tent was drawn aside about midnight, and the bending form of the Gipsy King stood before them. The moon streamed through the opening full on the faces both of the astrologer and the lovers. The silver hair of the one contrasted with the ringlets and the glossy locks of the others; and it was a lovely contrast, such as Raffaelle would have delighted to paint.

Mildly and affectionately the old man contemplated the sleepers, and a tear stood in his dark eye. "May your stars be propitious!" he said. "Yes, she *is* like her I loved, the maiden of high degree, whom I worshipped as I would some divine world in the highest heaven of vision! Alas, it is not ordained that affection like theirs should be always blest!"

He stood thus for half an hour, watching the sweet slumbers of the youth and his beloved, and then slowly moved away.

He had not departed many minutes ere a very different figure came and opened the tent. It was the woman who had spoken to Nell a few hours before. She gazed on them with a malignant scowl, and observing the disguise of Stephen—the wig and the long coat and beard having been laid aside—she muttered, "I wonder what it means?" She thought for two or three moments, and an idea seemed to strike her. "It must be so," she inwardly ejaculated. "So, Master Hermes, I should like to spite you, as you have often spited me. You would not let me beat that wench Fanny, and took her from under my care." She moved away, and closed the curtains of the tent. She had paced about a hundred yards from the encampment, when she descried a man on horseback, riding along the road which skirted the common. She thought he was a person she knew something of, nor was she mistaken.

"Ah, Mr. Thompson," she cried, "how are you?" The horseman stopped, and nodded to the female. "Don't you remember," she continued, "you asked me, after you left the girl Helen Jenkins, and she refused to become your wife, to try and work on her superstition. Well, what think you? She lies in yonder tent sleeping, with a youth who I am convinced is hiding."

"Indeed!" cried Thompson, "I should like to see them. I am in pursuit of a young rogue who would have committed a robbery last night."

"Come with me, then," she replied, "and you shall see them."

CHAPTER LIX.

THE APPREHENSION—THE CONDEMNATION—JOHN JENKINS AND STEPHEN IN PRISON—THE ESCAPE.

Stephen and Nell rose with the dawn, and the former donned his disguise, and accompanied by the maiden sallied forth to enjoy the pure air of a spring morning. The air was delicious, and they felt so invigorated, and their spirits so buoyant, that no cloud could oppress their bosoms. The ardent youth poured forth the poetry of his impassioned heart, and described in glowing colours scenes of future rapture, while she hung upon his accents, "and with a greedy ear devoured his discourse." How ten times beautiful every object seems, when spirits like theirs, full to overflowing with fancy, feeling, fire; so high and so congenial, so bright and free from aught mean and selfish, commune

together! But even as the lovers were felicitating themselves on their condition, and dreaming of years of happiness to come, three men approached, and one of them exclaimed, "That is he!" They rushed on Stephen before he saw them,—so intently was he occupied in looking into the eyes of his beloved, which reflected his,—and collared him.

"Oh, heaven!" exclaimed Nell, raising her head, and perceiving Thompson and two constables.

"We'll trouble you to let us take off that wig and beard," said the short man. "There, you see," (addressing the officers), "just the description! Five feet eleven, dark hair, muscular—take him away. You have your orders. He is to go to —— Gaol."

"Where is your warrant for this?" demanded Stephen, calmly.

"We'll show you our warrant, young gemman," said a constable. "Come, we must clap the darbies on! You'll—"

"Nay, I submit," cried Stephen. "Farewell, Nelly, and all good angels preserve you!"

"They shall not part us," exclaimed the girl. "Oh, sirs, you will let me go with him? He is the only friend I have on earth—my brother, protector, universe! You will not, cannot part us!"

"You can go with him to the Gaol, I 'spose," returned one of the constables, "but *that* isn't far off; so you may as well say good-bye at once."

"My God! my God!" sobbed Nell, "Thou knowest he is innocent! But I'll go with him—will they not admit me to the prison? Stern, cruel hearts—before he has been found guilty, to tear him away. Wretch, you have done this! John Thompson—heartless villain! without one spark of humanity—"

"Tush—we waste time," here interrupted the short man. "Away with him—he will be formally committed to-morrow."

"Cold-blooded serpent," said Nell, "if you had your deserts, you would stand in my brave cousin's place. I go with him as far as the gaol, at least."

"Come along, then," returned one of the constables, and they departed.

The whole affair was most ill-starred for Stephen. He had acted, in his hot zeal for the interests of little Jem, with a rashness he would never have been betrayed into, save from a generous feeling for the poor orphan; for he was not in general an unthinking and imprudent youth. It so chanced that his trial came on very quickly after his committal to prison, and he was unprovided with counsel—but, even if the most able lawyer had undertaken his defence, he would not have suffered him to mis-state the case. Stephen expected he should be found guilty of having opened the cabinet with a felonious intent; but Nell would not allow it was possible. She thought that all must see with her eyes, poor heart!

She knew not the cold, dull, ignorant fools who compose a country jury, who are always disposed to see things in the worst light, or with an obstinate prejudice not to admit the possibility of guilt at all; while those with a little more intelligence, finding it vain to contend with such dolts, and not being desirous of fasting a day or two, concur in the verdict they feel to be unjust, rather than forego their dinner. But certainly the case against Stephen was strong; and, though he made a clear, forcible and manly statement in his defence, the jury were prejudiced against him, and it was evident his fate was sealed, before the trial had concluded. The jury retired for five minutes, and returned with a verdict of "Guilty," without any recommendation to mercy. A stifled shriek was heard when the verdict was pronounced, but no one saw from whence it came. The *lenient* sentence was that the criminal should be transported for fourteen years; and the learned Judge, remarkable for his *benevolence* and mercy, told the prisoner that a few years before he would have been sentenced to perpetual punishment for such an offence; indeed, at one time he would have lost his life. Savage and inhuman laws! which make no distinction between the vilest wretch that ever disgraced the form of man, and the imprudent being who offends for the first time.

Alas, for wisdom; alas, for virtue and humanity! How many centuries have passed, and still do we behold the same sad scene of strife, bloodshed, anarchy, and hatred! Oh, for a few drops of warm, human love between the rich and poor! Oh, for a willingness to share all things which a bountiful Creator has given—knowledge, plenty,—and even labour! Let us be friends indeed: monarch, nobleman, gentleman, and peasant: and I will not quarrel for *forms* of government. A little time, and the cycle of human destiny will—*must* be accomplished, and the divine Equality of Mind (the only rank in the sight of Heaven,) receive acknowledgment. I have written fervently, but not with ill-blood: to ridicule the ridiculous, to declaim and reason against all that is unjust and irrational, are the only weapons we possess for the destruction of bigotry and error. Those who would employ other arms, are yet more insane than the slaves of custom.

To return from a digression, which I hope may not be useless, to the narrative it in some measure illustrates: for by this time my readers know my object is not *merely* to amuse them.

Friendless as the cousins were, what hope was there for them? I say, for them; because the fate of one was that of both;—misfortune united them yet more closely. It was beautiful to contemplate the devoted love of Nell to poor Stephen: it solaced, it strengthened him: and he displayed a high, manly resignation, such as none but the virtuous can attain unto. The girl, however, would not despair: she would not believe it possible Heaven could desert *her* Stephen, and resolved to endea-

vour to procure the remission of his sentence. For some wise purpose, inscrutable to us, Providence permits the good to be punished; but yet their punishment is—oh, how light, compared with that of the guilty! Heaven never abandons those who cling to the dear hope of reaching its beatitude. The Inscrutable never punishes, save by *conscience*, in this world: and in that which is to come, *therein* will be the imperishable worm and the quenchless fire. It is always self-punishment—and bitter as gall it is,—the vile endure. In the soul, where conscience sits enthroned, are the eternal heaven and hell. But what was Nell to do? How was she to procure pardon for her adored cousin? Even if Lord Wharton had not offered such an outrage to her as he had, no one knew where he was; and Travers was also out of England, having gone to Germany with his son. Another circumstance added to her grief. Her brother John, who had been found guilty of being an accessory before the fact, in the murder of the turnkey, after having been reprieved, was now left for execution, and in three days it was expected the sentence of the law would be executed. By a singular coincidence Stephen was sent to the prison in London where John was confined, previous to embarking for Botany Bay. Nell was almost distracted, and knew not what to do: —whether to go to London, and endeavour to see some person of high authority, and work upon his feelings to save Stephen, or induce some one to obtain his escape by other means. In vain she racked her brain, until she was mad—mad. Can human thought conceive a situation more fearful,—to be torn for long years from her heart's idol and to know he was to be subjected to every privation and misery? While she was in this state of agony, she was visited by John Thompson. She turned from him with repugnance; but his words soon excited an intense interest in her soul.

"Helen," he said, "you must not blame me for having acted as I have done; I had no alternative. No one could believe the defence set up by Stephen. But I will save him even now on one condition. I am certain I can do it."

"What do you say?" asked Nell. "Save him? How? O, tell me!"

"On one condition, I will procure a remission of his sentence. If I save him from transportation, will you become mine?"

"I would rather go down to my grave," answered Nell, with deep indignation. "You are a villain—without one spark of feeling or human pity. You know the facts—I am sure you do—relative to your young nephew; and yet you will not attest them. Go! Think not, to save Stephen's life, I would sell my eternal spirit to a devil! I know you, man—I see your black heart."

"You will repent this," replied Thompson, coldly; and without waiting to say another word, he took his departure.

Stephen was sent on to London, and Nell followed on foot. She was

to see him once more, and then to part. Her very heart-strings cracked at the thought of that cruel separation. Never more to look on that beloved face, to hear that voice which thrilled her being's life with such passionate music. Oh, heaven! what a trial was that to her whose every thought and hope was centered in the love she cherished like the faith in immortality. She went forth lonely and dreary. She looked upon the beautiful earth, full of all light and melody; she looked up to the azure sky, radiant and serene, she heard all that is sweet, she saw all that is exquisite in this glorious world, and all seemed like one vast tomb full of corruption and of corses. Then she wept, hot, scalding tears: but they relieved the dead weight on her poor breast, and she glanced upward and prayed. And a divine peace fell upon her spirit—a solemn, ethereal peace, like nothing upon earth.

It was past noonday, and the long shadows of the trees upon the grass, as the young girl walked like one in a dream, assumed shapes which were not their own, to her imagination, and visions came thronging on her,—those indefinable visions of waking life, none can comprehend the nature of,—when the senses are not the faithful inlets of the external, but are the slaves of the imagination. But as the young girl was walking, she saw a vehicle in the distance, and—she knew not wherefore—connected its appearance somehow with the fate of Stephen: for there are some states of mind, when every sight and sound tell but of the one,—utter but of the absent. They are voices to bring the lost back from the tomb in which he would otherwise be buried, and make him present to the sad eyes.

It was a carriage drawn by two ponies which approached, and Nell perceived there were two persons in it—a large fine-looking man, and a young girl, of exquisite loveliness. They had almost passed her, when the gentleman, who was driving, dropped a small parcel, in arranging the cushion of the vehicle, and Nell picked it up, and cried to him to stop. When he turned his face to the girl, it instantly struck her she had seen him before, and it flashed upon her that he was the Prince of Wales.

"O, sir," she exclaimed, "are you not the Prince? I saw you once getting into your carriage at Lord Wharton's door."

"Well, my pretty lass, I *am* the Prince. I am much obliged to you for picking up this parcel."

Nell suddenly fell on her knees, and clasped her hands. "Oh, sir," she cried, "this is a Providence! I never knelt to any but the King of Kings before: but now behold a wretched suppliant, whose brother, whose beloved cousin, are condemned—the one to death—the other to transportation. Mercy, royal sir! If I had words, I am sure I could win you to grant pardon,—but I am heart-broken, and I can hardly find language to express myself. I am left alone in the world—worse than

an orphan,—for my parents are no longer such to me! O, hear me—do not turn away your face! Madam, you'll join with me to win pity? What is so beautiful in woman as mercy?"

"Surely," said the girl in the carriage, "surely that must be the sister of John Jenkins—though I have never seen her before. Yet the likeness—"

"Yes, madam, yes! You know my brother is condemned to die, and one even yet dearer to me—"

"Condemned to die!" interrupted the other, turning pale. "I had not heard of this! But I have lived in such seclusion nothing has reached my ears. Your highness will listen to the petition of this poor girl?"

"Indeed, Fanny, I cannot.—And I have no power."

"But hear me," cried Nell, "hear my sad tale, gracious sir? Some months ago, Lord Wharton came to my father's smithy—and I saved the life of that great, bad man.—You will not listen. Do you not think, O Prince, that when you stand before the dread tribunal, you will want One there to listen to what you can urge in extenuation of your earthly errors? Gain me a hearing, lovely lady! I see tears in your bright eyes! Let them plead for me. My sick brain whirls—and I can hardly see—but go not. Oh!" A sudden faintness came over Nell, and if the Prince had not caught her, she would have fallen.

"Listen to her," said Fanny, "I beseech your highness. Her brother was once my lover, and—" here a crimson blush spread over her face—"I wronged him foully. Ah, the young girl has fainted!"

Sudden and violent emotions, acting on a frame worn out with want of sleep and agony of mind, had indeed deprived Nell of consciousness, and she lay inanimate in the Prince's arms. He contemplated her fair, wasted cheek and faded charms—the lines of grief already in her forehead—and the mute appeal of one so young and wretched, as she lay thus helpless, touched the human spark still left in the royal sensualist's bosom.

"But what can I do?" he said to Fanny, as Nell slowly recovered.

"Let her speak for herself. Her simple eloquence contains more than all the reasonings in the world."

The maiden opened her eyes, and gazed wildly around. "Thank God! It is no dream; and he is not gone!" she exclaimed. She told her artless tale, tearlessly and briefly. With what intense, agonized earnestness she looked to see what effect her words had on the Prince, who was more than once really affected by them. Poor Nell! How she pleaded, how she persuaded! Every argument for mercy her ingenuity could invent, she urged with a passionate fervour, a trembling anxiety, that none but a heart of stone could have resisted!

"What I can do for you I will," returned the Prince. "I'll see you to-morrow, if you come to —— House."

"Now, angels bless you!" sobbed Nell, overcome with transport. She pressed the Prince's hand to her lips, and bedewed it with the tears that now fell fast from her eyes. "For this," she added, "whatever sins you may have committed, if Heaven hear my prayers, you will be forgiven all!" Thus ended the singular interview between the Blacksmith's daughter and the Prince of Wales.

Scarcely had this scene come to a conclusion, when another individual, who exercised some of the privileges of royalty, advanced towards Nell. It was the King of the Gipsies, whom she had not seen since the night preceding Stephen's capture. The gipsies had shifted their encampment, and their tents were visible afar off. The old man did not recognise the maiden directly, but when he did so, his greeting was cordial. He turned back with her, as she was proceeding towards London, and made her relate all that had occurred since he last beheld her. And there was something so kind and winning about the old Astrologer that she poured out her heart to him as she would have done to a valued friend. In affliction the breast is more susceptible to sympathy than at any other time; it is then we feel the worth of those sentiments and feelings which in the heyday of existence we are apt to slight, and the human love which gushes from a warm heart into our own, seems to create a revivification of hope, and to sustain the sinking spirits like the whispers from a better world.

Nell placed much reliance in the promise of the Prince, but Hermes shook his head when she expressed her conviction he would procure a pardon for Stephen, and a mitigation of the sentence of her brother.

"But," he said, "do not droop, maiden; they shall be saved. I feel for you as I would unto a daughter, and both your brother and your lover are my esteemed friends. I say, do not droop if the Prince is not able to serve you. I know there are those at work now who may set John at liberty, and then Stephen may easily be released. I do not often engage in things of this sort, but for old friendship's and your sake, I will risk something!"

The Prince was as good as his word; but he found there was a strong feeling against John Jenkins; and when he examined the case of Stephen, like most men of the world placing no trust in the goodness of a motive, if the action warrant the supposition of guilt, he thought he merited his sentence. He did not see Nell the following morning, being called away to Windsor, and so all the poor girl's airy hopes fell to the ground. But she procured admission to the prison which contained her brother and her lover, and went first to see the former, who had but two days to live.

John was much altered; but the same stern and tameless characters of resolution were stamped on his lineaments. Nell flung herself into his arms, and sobbed bitterly and long. The criminal was moved for a moment, but he mastered the emotion, and said—

"Do not weep, Nell! A little while, and I shall leave a hated life, and know whether there be one beyond the grave where we may rest in peace. They sent their priest to me: but I would not hear *him*, with his prate of perdition, and senseless dogmatism. But I have seen that man Williamson, who now goes about to the prisons trying to comfort the victims of bad circumstances, and I listened to him. I think there *is* a future state."

"O, believe it, John! It is my only consolation in despair!"

"Yes," continued the prisoner, "if there be a God, he must be just, and there is no justice here on earth. I have not seen my mother, Nell: but she sent a message to me," he added in a low voice, "to bid me be of good cheer. My father is of course lying hid. That was a bloody deed of his! And Stephen—poor lad! I have heard of him. They are going to let me see him to-morrow. He is a fine lad, a noble lad!—Oh, Nell! The bitterest pang now left to me is to know how desolate your fate will be! Poor child! But die rather than become a wanton!"

"A hundred thousand times," cried Nell firmly.

"That's my own sister! You are greatly changed, dear Nell! They would not let any one visit me until my fate was fixed. You cannot imagine what it is to be deprived of liberty! I—I never thought I should have submitted,—that I should have dashed my brains out against the wall! But here I am. A stony apathy has come over me. I want to say so much to you; but I forget it all."

"My poor brother! When I heard you were ill I wanted to have come to you; but I could only gain permission to see you once, when you were delirious. Then both I and Stephen came. You knew us not. Lord Wharton——"

"Ay! that villain! I heard you were under his protection. But I am glad I did not kill him!—Nell, there is something in my brain I do not understand. I am quite indifferent to death—to all things. There is a kind of vitality in nothingness within me. All things seem most unreal—life, death, existence! After all, the whole may be an illusion! Why not? What do we know of existence? There may be no earth, no body, no mind, no universe. Empty cheat! Wretched mockery! I shall leave it for ever."

"These are wild words, dear John! Come let us talk of those sweet and holy things which are embalmed in the heart of hearts, and are eloquent of hopes and smiles immortal."

"No more of that!" returned the condemned man in a hollow voice. "Hopes and smiles! What are they? Shadows that come we know not how, and sink in the dark void of dull immensity! The light of this our being is a false and miserable glare, for there *is* no light, no substance! Is it not strange that I who once deified matter should have grown thus sceptical of its existence? I have been thinking more deeply than I ever

did upon the subject, and what is the end of my reflections? There is *nothing!*"

That is a singular phenomenon in the philosophy of mind, that when a person is on the verge of the grave, in the possession of all his mental and physical faculties, the intellect is prone to doubt all the principles which it adopted previously, unless there have been an earnest faith as well as a conviction in them. For the higher reason is never satisfied with the deductions of the lower mind—the soul is not the understanding; but is continually panting after what is not in intellect, but only in belief. Therefore when a sceptic meditates on the hereafter, vain is the support of philosophy; for he has no faith in himself. How can he have it, if he have none in God?

Nell left her brother and repaired to her lover. The sun of a bright May noon streamed upon his pale, calm features, and his fettered limbs; but O, how different was his appearance from that of John! He rose to meet his beloved with a joyous smile, and seemed as happy as if he enjoyed every blessing of existence.

"Sit down beside me, my Nell!" he exclaimed. "We must soon part, dearest? but the time will come when we shall meet to part no more! The tyranny and injustice of man cannot reach to those radiant worlds, where not a breath of sorrow, where not a sound of grief, where not a thought of fear can visit the liberated soul. What is this life, my love? A feverish dream, but for the blessed hope it contains, the last, best gift of Deity. But now we will recall the scenes of our childhood. We will live over the past once more; and sweet voices shall sing to us of Elysium —where I trust we soon may be. I am so happy now, dearest! While I look into those loved eyes I behold a reflection of the sweet soul—I see the Paradise which is beyond the stars!"

Thus the lovers beguiled their hearts of the misery that oppressed them—thus they threw off the mantle of darkness, and saw only brightness and beauty. They talked of the past; they talked of the future—and were blest. What were the dungeon, what the chains and gloom to them? I tell thee, O man, and I believe there is something more than mine own poor truth in what I say, 'this world is a dungeon, these senses are the chains which confine us unto it; but this ethereal soul, divine, eternal and unchangeable, is the liberty, the light, the glory and felicity which shall *outlive* this universe of dust!' But the lovers were not torn asunder: God forbid such love should have been divided by aught save death.

The following morning it was discovered that John and Stephen had both escaped. The gaolers had been seized with a heavy drowsiness, and it was supposed their liquor had been drugged. But how could any one have entered the prison unknown to them: for it was quite evident such had been the case. This ever remained a mystery to them: but at some

future time it may be cleared up to the reader. Suffice it, the two criminals were no where to be found. Far and near they were sought for; but in vain. Nell had also disappeared, leaving no trace behind her. All puzzled their brains to account for these things; but no person could satisfactorily do so. And as time flew by, all was forgotten, and the very existence of the actors was scarcely remembered even by those to whom they were known. Long years rolled away ere they were again seen by any who retained a recollection of them: and then how were they changed!

CHAPTER LX.

TIME AND ETERNITY—A DISPUTE BETWEEN A MAN OF THE WORLD AND A BOY.

TIME has rolled onward! Mysterious Time! Living, we know not how, in the subtile brain, and counting the pulses of the great Universe! Who hath seen thee, gloomy power? Who hath ever known the depths of thy cold heart, and sounded the dim and silent immensities of thy being? Ocean of all things! profound abyss! with thy burthen of human passions, woes, and tears! Majestic, mean, joyous, and miserable Time! Thou never *art*, and yet where art thou *not?* Lo, the dark billows—lo, the sounding tide! And yet all below is hushed, is still! Not a breath, not an undulation! O mockery of being! August shadow! Crowned King of idle specks and visions! How the stars shine down upon thee, and the solemn hours wait in thy train? What said the Poet of the Idealists?—

> "Unfathomable Sea, whose waves are years,
> Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
> Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
> Thou shoreless flood, which in thine ebb and flow
> Claspest the limits of mortality!"

Flow on, O monarch of the dominion of Five Senses! What have *we* to do with thee,—*we*, who are eternal? We, who take measure of the immeasurable; and as the noisy waves dash at our feet,—laughter and storm around us,—smile at the prodigious hubbub made by some atoms in infinity,—grains of sand, scattered by the winds, bubbles and shadows! And when these fleshly bonds are burst asunder, and the stupendous hum of this busy world is like the cry of a poor mouse that crawls in the space of a few feet of earth, when millions of miles of azure space are to

us no more than a step across the threshold was in this same worshipped Time,—oh, how we shall wonder that we have been these reptiles,—shutting out the beam of immortality, and fondling the history of corruption!

Standing in the deep embrasure of a window, one starry night in summer, was a man of haughty aspect, rapt in stern thought. He was between forty and fifty years of age, with strong lines of reflection and mighty passion in his noble countenance. The hair had in some measure deserted the vast temples, and was sprinkled with grey; the form, always large, had spread to a great size, but was not unwieldy, and seemed so strong that years could never crush the vigour of that lofty manhood stamped on it. And yet how soon that great frame must lie and rot! Six feet of earth, and not a quiver of the iron muscles! But now there was fire, there was pride and indomitable daring in that dark and piercing eye; there was power, there was passion, there was splendour on the majestic and commanding brow; in the mouth and the powerful jaw a world of strength and sensuality. But presently his mood changed, and an icy sneer came over his face.

"Ambition," he muttered, "thou dost befool us, as if we were thy tools, and thou not *our* instrument! What a giant thou art! And we, poor pigmies, look up to thee, as to some planet millions of millions of miles away, and fancy we have got thee fast,—chained under our feet! Ha, ha! No, the honest senses still say I! The brave senses! If they lie unto us sometimes, what then? They serve us well, take them for all in all. I'll not desert them, while they do not desert me! Sardanapulus was a wise fellow! D—n the slaves of this queer soul,—whatever it be,—some folks prize so highly! It never gave me any pleasure, and never will! . . . . So, Thomas Wharton, thy youth hath left thee! Thou art growing old! But what abounding life there is still left in this deep heart! I'll not exhaust it, I'll not squander its riches in the wild fever of ambition. What, Reginald, *you* here?"

A towering form had entered the apartment while the soliloquist was speaking, and stood with thoughtful brow before him at the distance of two or three yards. The new comer was not in reality more than nineteen; but the extreme, the intense thoughtfulness of his lineaments, and the great height of his stature made him look of mature age. In spite of a slight stoop from the shoulders, he stood considerably taller than the person opposite to him, who was not much less than six feet high. His forehead was exquisitely formed, and not less high and broad than that of the man, in whom the reader may have recognised Lord Wharton: but it was less imperious, more full of the soul-light than the radiance of passion. No one would have thought of calling him a *handsome* youth: there was something so strangely uncommon in his aspect, that a word will hardly supply its expression: but the features

were delicate and of Grecian mould, the cheek pale, the eye extremely fine and bright, but its full power was rarely seen; for it denoted that deep, eager, inward communing which may be seen in the portraits of philosophers of old, tempered with a mildness seldom witnessed in orbs so full of radiance. His hair was of a light brown, and the down was just visible on his cheek; his form was slight but dignified, and yet he never appeared to think how he moved: it was the grace and majesty of Nature, not of Art. But more than the outline of Reginald Travers I give not.

"It is a fine night," observed Lord Wharton. "I suppose, under its inspiration, you will compose half a volume of your poetical philosophy. O, my dear boy, those d—d German metaphysics have ruined you! Why could not you be content with sticking to common sense?"

The young man smiled. "What *is* common sense?" he said.

"I am not going to get into an argument with you, which would last until to-morrow morning," was the response. "I can enjoy my time better than by being deluged with transcendentalism, to hear Kant, Berkeley, Fichte, and Plato, until I wish they were all endeavouring, with their disciples, to convert the devil from materialism."

"I am not so fiercely idealised as all that," returned Reginald, laughing: "but yours is the philosophy of the Garden, which I think is an immense humbug—pardon me for saying so. My dear uncle, what reason is there in clutching the things of sense, when the sensual is necessarily out of you, and you cannot keep it fast?"

"*Out* of me? Bah! where are my eyes, ears, nose, tongue?"

"I do not mean to say that they exist *without* your body. But you must have food for them from matter."

"Well, Reginald, as you will. You like a serene state of mind; so do I; but how the deuce can you get it? By gratifying the passions; by exhausting your feelings. Hang it, lad! why don't you make love to the girls? At your age, I blush to think of my achievements. I had half a dozen mistresses; I had *liasions* with half the fine women in London. I should find it a bore *now*."

"I am a cold-blooded fellow, I suppose. But passion without love exhausts, and does not satisfy. Oh, that divine one, that passionate dream, brightening with God's smile into immortal beauty! Can such love as *you* seek give half the rapture which mere nympholepsy affords?"

"I don't understand you, lad. Nympholepsy?—what a word! Oh, stars of heaven, come, give me some light!"

"You may laugh; but who has ever lived without such visions of the infinite and everlasting? Who has ever gazed into the ethereal heavens, and not felt Love is there?"

"I never saw it there. But you have keener eyes than your old uncle. Do you mean to say that fat-faced old moon, now, that looks so bewitchingly on us, contains the spirit?"

"Ay; the mystery—the deep, burning mystery: the holiness that gleams through the veil of light, and manifests how beautiful is Life. For love and life together make the soul: it cannot *be* without them: it were a corpse if you destroyed the one—it would be motionless without the other."

"But what does all this fine talk come to? Nothing; absolutely nothing. You young men of genius want to make out it is possible to live as man never did,—free from sense altogether: but when you are more advanced in life, you'll be wiser."

"I hope I shall be. Each day adds something to the store of spiritual wisdom, and shows the absurdity of loving the gross forms we idolise—to break! But there is no iconoclasm in mind. You, who worship the matter your body is made of, shut out the effulgence from on high—close your eyes against the light of eternity, and walk in the shadow of darkness and the valley of death. All thought must live *out* of Time; all sense *in* it: therefore, if thought stoop to sense, instead of sense bending low to the majesty of thought, unreason dims the hope and faith."

"That sentence will do for the new work you are going to write. That was a good essay of yours, which you published the other day, on 'The True Ethics of Life;' but excuse me if I say I thought it a little green."

"Pray give me your candid opinion of my first literary offspring which has seen the light. I meant it *should* be *green* with the poetry of youth: but you think it folly. Tell me what you think the great object of this life?"

"The proper use of our senses; not the annihilation."

"I never said they should be crushed: we cannot do it. Man being placed midway between the angel and the brute, should cultivate the moral and physical; but always bear in mind, that the cultivation of the latter is only the means to an end, while that of the former is an end in itself. Virtue is the only happiness; and if we neglect it, what wonder if we live and die hopeless?"

"Bless my soul, Reginald! a saint at nineteen will be an awful sinner at thirty. Virtue!—oh, that cant and humbug! How *can* there be virtue? We always do what we like best, in the end, whatever struggles may have preceded the consummation: therefore *I* do what is most pleasant to me at once, without going a mile round to no purpose. Are you silenced? Let me hear an answer."

"Well, if in the end we act as we like best, what then? That does not prove there was no virtue in the *struggle*. I maintain, that the *effort* to do well is the true virtue."

"I think I have you now, my young philosopher. Why did you make the effort? Why; because you preferred to do it."

"Certainly: and the *preference* to virtue is the essence of it all. We have no such thing as absolute goodness in us."

"What splendid logic! I don't think they reach Oxford in that particular, at Gottingen. I don't profess to know anything of abstract philosophy; but I thought that all which is not absolutely right is relatively wrong. How now?"

"We have no absolute goodness inherent in us, because it would imply the attribute of an infinite being. As we are finite, we can only act relatively: but if that relative action be to absolute goodness—if it refer to the one perfect and divine,—it has no relation whatever to evil: it is good, as far as it goes, entirely."

"That is a clever distinction without a difference."

"It is not a mere distinction. Relation has nothing in common with the absolute: but must refer to it."

"Hold, enough! You are the better man. If I were to knock you down myself, or knock you down with my cane, I cannot see that the action would not be the same, though the means might be different. But I am going to sup with the celebrated courtezan, Madame L——: if you like, I will take you with me. We shall have splendid wine, and see some fascinating women. You won't? Your principles, I see, are in the way. Your father has destroyed you, boy. You have really extraordinary talents, if you did not soar so much into the clouds, where they can be of no use to you."

"My objection to the society of those women is certainly on principle. I think our passions are quite strong enough, without being inflamed by the delirium of such scenes."

"Have you ever been into one of them? If you have not, you can form no notion of the freedom, the wit, and beauty of a woman—who, without being entirely a wanton, has no reserve in her conversation. A plague on all prudes and prudery! But our youths are so reformed!"

"I am sorry to say, I *have* been seduced into such a scene, when I was a wild German student, two years ago, without the firmness to follow the steady principles of morality—sceptical, and outrageous in my love of liberty. And still I do not conform to many of the opinions of the world: but the moral standard, based upon the immutable principles of faith in the spiritual, cannot be too high. Good night, my dear uncle."

He departed.

"Wonderful!" said Lord Wharton to himself. "A parcel of nonsensical, metaphysical humbug and follies. When I was nineteen—my Jove!—then—ay, then, what was I? How different! But we are all dissipated at some time of life, if we are worth anything. That boy rebukes me not; and yet—I hate him! That *he* should set himself up as virtuous—he, with his creeping blood!"

CHAPTER LXI.

REGINALD TRAVERS—THE SLEEPER IN THE STREETS—SHELLEY AND REGINALD'S OPINIONS ON HUMAN DESTINY.

How Lord Wharton erred in his estimate of Reginald Travers! But it is the common practice of worldly and sensual hearts to endeavour to believe all corrupt and depraved as themselves. They cannot, or will not, perceive how fair a *soul* may be. Reginald was, in fact, a young man of violent passions—an enthusiast, with deep, burning, fiery thoughts, he found almost irrepressible: but he was conquering, if he had not conquered. All thinking men have their period of doubt; but he had left it behind, ere the generality have commenced it; and he adored virtue as the abstract likeness of Deity.

He walked along the now deserted streets with large strides, meditating as a Carlyle and a Jean Paul have done, combining poetry and philosophy: and his large, serene eyes would kindle ever and anon with the high and profound thoughts within him, into living life and splendour. The young man reached a street, dimly lit, and commanding a distant view of the river; and paused to contemplate the scene. "The spirit," he thought, "which hangs over this sleeping universe breathes but of peace and beauty. Who would think there could be pain and guilt in a world so fair? Mighty mystery of Evil! How vain the reasonings of men upon thee! But were there not exceeding Good, we should not be alive to it. Every respiration is full of joy and health, and every object can infuse a purer and more intense being into us. The stars from their thrones in space speak with a solemn music to our hearts of the immensities in the upper regions, wherein the bright spirit may live by faith in the invisible. Poetry, beloved poetry! Thou alone hast a voice in this stillness and serenity! It realizes those surpassing lines of my friend Shelley—

> 'How beautiful this night! The balmiest sigh,
> That vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
> Were discord to the speaking quietude
> That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
> Studded with stars unutterably bright,
> Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
> Seems like a canopy which love hath spread
> To curtain her sleeping world.'

Marvellous Shelley! Alas, that thou shouldst be what thou art, with such transcendant imagination and high soul! Thou wilt exercise mighty power on the rising generation."

Thus thinking, the youth was passing onward, enjoying the beautiful and placid night, when he noticed some person lying against a railing, apparently asleep. Reginald was one of those humane persons ever on the look-out to be of service to his fellow-creatures, and accordingly, supposing it was some houseless wretch, who had not wherewithal to procure a night's lodging, he crossed over to offer relief. But to his surprise he perceived, by the dress worn by the individual in question, that he was evidently not in want, and on looking into his face he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

He was a youth of about his own age, with that dreamy, thoughtful, and melancholy face, full of intellect and imagination, which usually denotes the poetical temperament. He was beautiful; but not with a beauty such as captivates the outward sense alone: but a world of spiritual radiance was stamped on the calm brow, and played over the delicate and beardless face, and around the fine mouth. He was not altogether unlike Reginald, but perhaps there was less power in his countenance. And he slept, gently, sweetly, it would seem, out in the open street, on the hard ground. That being of delicate nurture, of slight, boyish form, slept thus under the starry vault in the great city. There is always something lovely in such serene sleep—Death's image beautified and etherealised,—but Reginald thought he had never seen aught so composed, so tranquil as that sleeper looked,—the moon streaming upon him.

"My dear Shelley!" he exclaimed. "How is this?" But the youth moved not; he only murmured a few wild words, as he was dreaming perhaps among the planets. Reginald contemplated him sadly. "In years to come," he inwardly ejaculated, "this visionary boy will shake systems and worlds to their centre. When his mind is matured, and his genius strengthened, what may not the author of 'Queen Mab' effect? What; Shelley!" he cried. "I hardly like to rouse him—he looks so happy—and yet there is a shade of sorrow on his brow."

It was indeed that extraordinary being who has not even yet accomplished all he *will* accomplish, who in his hatred of despotism ran into a wild extreme and would have overturned the whole fabric of society, who lay before Reginald Travers.* With all his errors and misdeeds, there was something in that unfortunate poet which must excite our sympathy and admiration. Loving with a deep overflowing love the human race, driven out of the pale of society by the boldness of his opinions, with his enthusiasm, his rare and astonishing poetical powers, the eloquence wrung from his spirit is so full of passionate sweetness that it captivates us, like the voice of some angel lamenting a lost beati-

* This incident of the Poet being found asleep in the open streets at night, is not fictitious, however strange it may seem.

The Poet Shelley and Reginald

Pag

tude. We cannot read a page of the emanations of his mind without being struck by some new and startling idea, something which he was ever struggling to articulate, and could only express at all by wild metaphor and shadowy allusion. Peace be with him! He was a great man, and not a bad one. Compare a Lord Wharton's practical, and a Shelley's theoretical, atheism, and Oh! how vile the first doth seem. There is no unbelief so vile as that of a corrupt heart. Reginald shook the sleeper's arm, and he started up exclaiming,

"The world shall live anew, false fiend!" The dreamer's eyes rolled wildly, and he did not instantly recognise his friend; but the mists of sleep still hanging over him, he added, "It shall live like the stars in harmony, in universal peace!"

"Do you not know me, Shelley? Reginald Travers."

"Ah," cried the Poet, "it is all fantasy. Reginald Travers, I am glad to meet you. But I have had such visions! Alas, that we cannot dream for ever!"

The two young men stood hand clasped in hand. Both enthusiasts, both poets, both lovers of liberty, their views were different, and their characters very opposite. But Shelley had no such father as Reginald, he had less judgment, less command over himself. They were both precocious: but the discipline of the German student's mind had been severer than that of the Oxonian's, or the quality of his imagination might not have differed greatly from his friend's. Precocious talent was a curse to poor Shelley, but the intellect of Reginald Travers was disciplined to aid his moral being, and had left the point to which the poet's had attained two years before, at Gottingen. Those were stirring times, full of intolerance, hatred, dissension and warfare, party in religion and politics ran high; but Reginald was no longer a partisan, for he had imbibed a spirit of pure charity and moderation to temper his ardent zeal. They walked on together. How different was the conversation that followed between them from that in the last chapter between the uncle and the nephew! Shelley spoke first.

"We fall asleep strangely," he said: "but what is *not* strange? This waking life is full of wonder, only it has grown so common, men gape and pass on indifferently. But to me the universe is all wonder and mystery. Do you not think, Travers, there is perpetual poetry in the senses? There are realms in the silentness of them all."

"Sense is incomprehensible, and therefore we assign to it powers it does not really possess. But you idealise the material, and make the earth musical with harmonies not her own."

"Not so. Hark! The low wind rises like a solemn dirge over beauty passed into oblivion! It seems to melodize our souls, and sink into them with starry love! Each sound might mingle with the purer life we gain

by aspiring beyond ourselves into the infinitudes of space. Idealise the material! What is matter? Is it not a divine thing?"

"No: in the mind it is: but out of it, behold desolation."

These words were not lost on the poet, who at that time was wavering between the philosophies of Sense and Reason. It was impossible, indeed, a Shelley should ever be really a Materialist. No imaginative person is so; and there never was a being so wildly the child of imagination as he was.

"How can we live above these senses?" Shelley inquired.

"We can live above sense by doing nothing except what reason approves. For the necessary demands of organization, while they enchain us here, do not in any way impair the power of the spirit to soar beyond. Indeed, to my mind, the triumph of reason over sense is the loftiest poetry we can conceive. There is no poetry except in virtue, and those who have pandered to the sensual—(Moore in modern times, and Ovid in ancient days)—are false to their high vocation. *You* have begun well, and will end better."

"I shall never *end*," returned Shelley, with a sigh. "Oh, that we had life to outsoar the shadow of this Night of Time; to grow into what we *would* be, if we *could!* Yet to die young is well; before one well-spring of the soul is exhausted, before we ebb into the dark sea of despair, and lose the fiery shadow of life's hope. I was dreaming that a Voice told me wondrous things; but I cannot utter them! We want a language *without words!*"

"Yes; and do you not find it in the secret echoes of the unfathomable soul! A voice more eloquent than all the tongues of this huge world, with their frenzy and vanity! I have found it through faith, which has led me out of the dark abyss into the light of eternity. You smile!"

"What can faith do, except create superstition, friend?"

"It can do all things," replied Reginald, loftily. "Without faith what dare you attempt? If you have no faith in man, freedom is a chimera. And we want much faith in him, Shelley! Sometimes I am sceptical thereon; but I look up into the burning stars that glorify the stupendous firmament, and I say to myself—'Do not these orbs perform their mystic mazes through the pathless heaven? And is not Man diviner than they are?' *You* say that he *is* and that he is *not*. If he be of such stuff as even those bright ones are, I should have no hope."

"We are of matter most refined and subtile," rejoined the visionary. "The stars, and light itself, with all that is most exquisite in Nature, what are they to the brightness of thought? You are right. A man is better than a star, Travers."

"Nobly said, dear Shelley! So my creed teaches me to believe you are not an Atheist, if you really believe what you say."

"I am half inclined towards Pantheism. But we should not *b* to sudden in changing our opinions. *You* have done so."

"Yes, I was not happy as a Sceptic. Tell me, are you so?"

"I am an Infidel! Happy? No! I should be, if man were such as I wish him to be."

"There I have the advantage," cried Reginald. "Man must become better than he is; but how shall that be effected? By himself?—How by himself? The natural tendency of matter is downwards, that of mind upwards. All matter decays and perishes."

"Yet it is indestructible. But do you think that progress is a law of development? I have my misgivings even *now*. All seems to run in a vast cycle for ever."

"The life of things," returned the youthful philosopher, "with all their mutation, never returns to that which has been; but must continually undergo death and revivification. Now if nothing can endure, and nothing can return to the same existence, it follows that change must be either for the better or the worse: and surely our condition is better, far better than that of those who flourished centuries ago."

"But may there not have been worlds, hundreds and thousands of centuries ago, infinitely better than this world: and having arrived at the highest point of civilization, must there not be a retrograde movement, since there is no state which can last?"

"Surely, no. I speak to you as if I were of your opinions: but granting the possibility of worlds having passed away, and not a single vestige left of them, it is impossible to return to what has been; but there must be a difference in relations. Therefore the same cycle is not evolved for ever. A cycle implies a change only in degree; and, consequently, as it widens, degrees must extend proportionably. Evil is not in the greatness of its own essence, but the smallness of good: therefore, extension of the cycle must lessen evil, until at length it cease."

CHAPTER LXII.

REGINALD AND AN ADVENTURE—CHARITY AND KNIGHT-ERRANTRY —SHARP AND JULIA—THE BIRTH OF A POET'S PASSION.

O MAN! hope on for ever! Change is never for evil in the hands of Providence. All creation has a voice of progress, the very *strata* of the earth must improve, the institutions of man must ultimately be more benevolent and wise. We who believe in existence beyond the grave must not despair of that preceding it. With all our social and political evils we are better and happier than were those who lived in the noblest days of Rome.

The conversation between Percy Bysshe Shelley and Reginald Travers

is inserted as tending to illustrate the age in which they lived, as well as to throw some light on the character of the latter, and the society he loved. To reason, to imagine and to feel strongly, finely, and deeply, were the objects of Reginald's existence; and the elements in which he lived had served to draw out his originally exalted character, and to endow him with energy and high resolve. Having escaped the shoals of scepticism by dint of hard and continuous thought, he looked on reason as the best friend of man, and carried it into all things. A Rationalist in religion, but not an unbeliever—an Eclectic in politics, and not a partizan—a Transcendentalist in philosophy, without being a wild Idealist, as Shelley afterwards became—Reginald Travers lived in charity with mankind, in tolerance with parties, and above the transitory and the sensual.

He parted from the poet at a late hour, a world of ideas having been raised within him by the suggestions of that ethereal mind. It is indeed wonderful what a potent whetstone intellect is to intellect! Who has not felt the powerful impetus given his soul by the exchange of ideas with a person of rare abilities? And this is not the want of high original capacity, but for the most part proceeds from a generous emulation, a desire to elevate the being up to the standard it admires. And now to proceed with the narrative, which has been arrested in its more stirring progress in order to develop a character of importance in our drama.

The quarter of the town through which Reginald was going was not remarkable for respectability. But the inhabitants were not discernible, having retired to their squalid beds; and a chance passenger hastening homewards, after visiting one of the theatres, with the exception of himself, alone disturbing the quietness of the locality with his footstep. But as he was turning out of a narrow street, Reginald noticed a man in wretched attire, but yet with some sort of dignity in his appearance, leaning against a wall. He was about six-and-twenty years of age, and was of tall stature, his countenance intelligent, but haggard, his vigorous frame attenuated, so that his clothes hung about him; and it was evident he wanted food to support him. Reginald saw at a glance that he was not one who had reduced himself to distress by drunkenness, and drawing a coin from his pocket, accosted him, saying,

"You are out late, friend—may I offer you this trifle?"

The man raised his eyes to the fine face of the stranger in surprise. "I thought," he said, "there was not a generous heart left in this great city: but God reproves me."

Struck with the voice and sentiments of the unknown, so far above his apparent station, Reginald rejoined, "There are many generous hearts everywhere. You look sick and ill. Come to me, to-morrow morning—there is my address." The youth gave his card to the man; but the moon having withdrawn, it was too dark to read it.

"God bless you, sir," cried the poor fellow, fervently. "That voice has more music for me than I can express. My wife! my poor wife! I go to her!"

There was something in the tone in which the object of his bounty spoke, which Reginald thought was not unfamiliar to him: but the man darted away; and disappeared instantly, as the moon broke forth again. But the youth could not recal when and where he had heard those accents, and pursued his way pretty briskly, when he observed a dark form some yards in advance of him; and immediately afterwards a carriage came rumbling down the street; and turned into a road between two high walls, at the distance of a dozen paces from the spot where he was. The person in advance of him followed the vehicle, and ran after it stealthily. The suspicions of Reginald were roused; and the Quixotism of his nature never being asleep, he also pursued. Nor was he deceived in his surmise as to the object of the dark man,—for he jumped up behind the coach, knocked the driver down suddenly from the box, with a bludgeon, and then threw open the door of the carriage.

"You villain!" exclaimed some one inside, and a female voice screamed "Help!" Reginald rushed to the scene of action, and found an old gentleman struggling vainly with the daring robber, who was uttering awful threats and imprecations. Even as Reginald arrived he struck his opponent insensible to the earth, when he was unexpectedly seized by the young man.

"Oh, *you* want it, too!" ejaculated the ruffian, and he raised his hand to fell his new opponent.

"Wretch!" cried Reginald, attempting to hurl the rascal down: but his immature strength availed not against the brawny ruffian. It would have fared but ill with the youth, if no assistance had been at hand; for the coachman and the old gentleman still lay insensible,—but a towering form advanced, and as the robber was about to strike his antagonist, caught the uplifted arm. The conflict was now doubtful, Reginald and his new ally uniting their strength against the robber: but he had the muscles of a giant, and their united efforts were inadequate to overpower him. The coachman, however, recovered; and seeing he was about to attack him, the footpad extricated himself from the grasp of his opponents, and with a curse, hastened down a lane; nor was he pursued. The old gentleman was recovering, and Reginald advancing to the carriage saw the figure of a lady in it. She sat pale and breathless, like a beautiful statue, not being able to stir; for excessive terror benumbs the faculties like the effect of nightmare. Reginald saw she was not hurt, and turned his eyes to the elderly gentleman, who had risen, and was supported by the man who came so opportunely up. And for the first time Reginald recognised the individual he had relieved, in the latter personage, as he exclaimed—

"Can you be the son of Mr. Travers, sir? My name is Stephen Jenkins, and on glancing at your card—"

"Is it possible?" cried Reginald, grasping Stephen's hand. "Oh, I recollect you perfectly now. I have often searched for you, but in vain." Then some thought seemed to flash on the youth's mind, for he whispered to Stephen, who shook his head.

"Julia, my love," here said the elderly gentleman, stepping back to the vehicle, "I hope that accursed villain has not injured you?"

"No—no," murmured the lady, "and you are safe?"

"Ay, thanks to this gentleman," turning to Reginald.

Stephen was gone; and Reginald, addressing the elderly gentleman, said, "I am rejoiced I was in time to render you my trifling aid. I think I have seen you before, sir, years ago, but—"

"Pray what is your name, may I ask?"

"Travers," answered Reginald, "and you are Mr. Sharp."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the lawyer. "Come, let us get into the carriage. You remember my little Julia? She has grown a tall woman, you see. Coachman, drive on! I'll have that scoundrel hanged who stopped us, when we can catch him."

Reginald had now time to scan the face of the young lady, who frankly extended her hand to him when she heard his name. There is always something pleasant in a cordial greeting,—much more so when it is from a lovely girl, whose eyes speak such eloquent gratitude as the fair Julia's did to Reginald. She was strikingly beautiful, with a queen-like grace, tempered by modesty and softness. She was returning from a fine entertainment to which her guardian had accompanied her, and was dressed splendidly and with exquisite taste, so that what with her recent alarm, and unequivocal delight at seeing the youth, her charms were irresistible.

"What a mysterious power beauty exercises over us," thought Reginald. "There must be something more than the mere outward lineaments in it." And when he heard the music of that voice, so rich, so varied, so thrilling, a chord vibrated in his heart which had never been touched before: it was the first note, harmonious with the faint beginning of love. The ideal of the poet-philosopher was realized. What an epoch in life it must be—in the life of mind—when first those master-feelings are excited, and admiration is imbued with the germ of a sentiment which ultimately becomes adoration! Reginald parted from the lawyer and his ward at the door of a magnificent house in Portland Place, where Sharp now resided, promising to call on them on the morrow. And Julia, as she bade him good night, added—

"I have not forgotten what you *were*, Mr. Travers, when we were children together: and what you *are* I am not ignorant. This very morning I read your noble essay."

Reginald thought he was indifferent to literary fame, but somehow the subdued enthusiasm of Julia, as she spoke of his maiden effort, penetrated his secret spirit, and he inwardly exclaimed—"Oh, I will do better things!" Is not love, or the dream of love, the hidden and deep inspiration of authors' hearts? "A poet without love," says Carlyle, "is a physical and a metaphysical impossibility." But Reginald as he returned homewards, mused, "Can love gift the intellect with strength? In its universal sense it may: but when isolated does it not fetter the lofty thoughts? No:—for the solitary passion diffuses new being over creation, and the love grows wisdom *by the faith it creates!*"

CHAPTER LXIII.

LOVE IN ETERNITY — SHARP AND HIS COGITATIONS — TRAVERS WHARTON—THE MANIAC RECOVERED—A STORY.

LOVE has no archetype in time; but in its purity necessarily breathes in eternity: it blends duration with succession; the passions, feelings, sentiments which mark its progress are ultimately fused into one existence, the time and the eternity are blended. But take away our earth, and love is all divine; there is not a portion of its being but might mingle with its celestial source. And when the pure Spirit, so human in affection, so superhuman in its majesty, told us that above "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage," he merely reproved the wretched materialism which would take earth up to heaven. For the spiritual and the holy in us are indestructible.

"Julia," said Sharp, as they stood together in a large drawing-room before they went to rest—and there was a tenderness in his manner he seldom allowed himself to betray; "bless you, my child! To morrow you will be eighteen! How happy are the young! May you ever be *eighteen*, dearest girl!" Julia threw her white arms around the lawyer's neck and kissed him fondly. He had been a father to her, in spite of his worldliness.

"She is too good for him!" muttered Sharp, as the girl glided out of the room. He stood in deep thought for some minutes. Years had done their work upon him, and the grey hair had grown white, the forehead was deeply furrowed, the eyes somewhat sunken; but yet there was strength and energy left in both mind and body. Men like Sharp do not feel age as others whose minds are less devoted to a passion do: he was still the same astute, cold, keen, impenetrable Sharp. Age is the death of young feelings, and not of years.

The lawyer proceeded to his chamber, but not to bed. He opened his window, and gazed out. A clock tolled the hour of one.

"So," he thought, "another syllable is uttered in the march of Time! The solemn march, with its banners, its trumpets, its pageantry and terror! Majestic Time! What an army thou hast! There is youth with its flush and pride, so beautiful, so vigorous! There is stern manhood with its haughty passion, its power, and high resolve. And around are the wrecks of nations, over which the chariots of war are driven. Hark! to the battle! See, how the squadrons charge! What courage, what confusion! The strife of man to the goal!—And when it is reached, behold infirm old age—disease and death! The battle-field is strewn with the dead—with the powers and the splendours perished for nothing! All gone for ever!—And there are the solemn stars looking down from their thrones in space, and wondering what all this tumult means! O, strange!"

There is in every mind something of the poetic and the lofty: and those who most carefully repress the ebullition of the ideal aspirations in public, oftentimes experience them the more profoundly in solitude. The lawyer was not an imaginative person: he was too logical to be so: but had he been placed in different circumstances, he might not have been incapable of writing poetry. People would laugh at the idea of Sir Robert Peel turning versifier: but it is quite possible, if he were not the statesman he is, he might be a Campbell or a Rogers. Why, Talleyrand himself had doubtless the elements of poetry in him, and the old Duke could not have been devoid of fancy. Why might not a poet be a hero; a statesman, a poet?

"What am I now?" continued the lawyer, his thoughts gliding imperceptibly, by the law of association, into other channels. "Driveller that I am! What have I done? I am one of the richest men, perhaps, in England; but I scorn wealth, save as a means to an end? What is a million of money? So much dirt that we would chuck away from our thresholds, if it could not purchase enjoyment. That Wharton,—hang him! How pleasantly he seems to live; with his inexhaustible passions, his damned genius, and his cold and yet fiery heart! I am twenty years older than he is; but I cannot reach him yet. Hum! These tools of ours grow rusty too. They will not work well; and the oil which we have in plenty is vainly expended on them. Yet I will humble his pride still. Somehow I think he has an eye to Julia. She will have a large fortune, and he is greatly in debt. *She* marry him!—I would rather see her in her coffin. But she does not love Samuel; and I do not wonder at it. I am ashamed of such a son, with all his prudence and worldly sagacity. I wish that young Reginald Travers were my child.—By the bye, Travers has got his shoulder to the wheel. I did not think he would have taken so active a part in the business of life again. He made a brilliant speech last night. I wish I could gain him. That young Reginald has great influence over him: and I must secure

his friendship. Some day, *he* may strengthen my party. But how to do it?—Julia! Yes, she might draw him hither: but then she must marry Samuel. O, how it will mortify Wharton that *he* should carry her away from him! Glorious! How I hate him!"

It will be seen that age had not impaired the vindictive feelings of Sharp towards Lord Wharton. On the contrary, they appeared to increase as he approached the age which is allotted to man. Incomprehensible human heart! How we sicken and recoil when we see its moral anatomy! And yet how few in the great masses of the world, take them for all in all, are one *iota* better than the lawyer!

He retired to rest, and lay for hours meditating how to crush his enemy. He saw not that if he had succeeded—the great object of his existence accomplished—he would have nothing left to do. Thus it is we blunder through life, confusing the objects of desire with fruition, "walking in a vain shadow," and seeking the unrest and the disquietude, instead of the peace, the calm, and sleep. Happy he whose passions are his servants, and not his masters, who has nothing to conceal, and all to hope for!

The following morning Sharp went forth at an early hour, for though he went to bed late, he was never known when well to indulge in repose beyond a certain time; and it was wonderful with how little rest he could do. But the secret of being able to take so small a quantity of sleep is, that in proportion to its brevity is the profundity of its re-invigoration: and those who doze away half their life do not know the sweetness of such slumber. The lawyer took his way towards the suburbs of the town, and wherever the rich man was recognised by industrious merchants and others going to business, he was greeted with bows and smiles. It should seem that people think they are elevated by knowing a *millionaire*, as if the ingots and bullion could better their condition. O, Mammon! Sharp sneered to himself as he returned the salutations.

"If a change of fortune were to come to me to-morrow," he thought, "and the rich attorney were declared bankrupt, I wonder how many smiles and bows I should receive. Ha, ha! I know their value."

Here he was accosted by a person the last in the world he expected to meet.

"How d'ye do, Sharp?" said a gentlemanly-looking and exquisitely dressed personage of elegant figure, on the verge of forty, who had just emerged from a handsome house in the vicinity.

"What! Colonel Wharton at this hour of the day?" ejaculated the lawyer.

"Yes, I've not been in bed this morning, having played rather deeply. Confounded be the dice, say I! I am going to marry, Sharp, and want some money. If you will lend a thousand pounds, I will give you twenty per cent. interest, and my commission shall be security."

"It is true, then, that Lady Rivers is about to change her condition! I wish you joy. If you will come to my office in the afternoon, I will see whether I can lend you the money. How is Lord Wharton? I have not seen him in the House for some nights."

"Oh, I believe he is very well:—he has the devil's own constitution! I say, Sharp, if you should ever want a vote, come to me. To tell you the truth, I am quite sick of Lord Wharton. Sir Algernon and myself are both going to leave him: but don't you say so."

"Two votes are worth having in the present state of parties—so evenly balanced," returned the lawyer. "But I will not pay too high a price. Was not Sir Algernon your rival with Lady Rivers, may I ask?"

"Yes, and we had a d—d hard amicable struggle. He had youth, but I had experience. These women of middle age prefer young fellows: but then, you know—"

"Colonel Travers Wharton can never grow old!" cried Sharp.

"Surely not. Good morning."—With these words they parted.

"If he marry Lady Rivers, she will take good care of her thousands," mused the lawyer. "He knows that, or he would have made her his wife years ago. Yes, he is worth securing! He is in favour with the Prince Regent, and can do anything with the women—who, in fact, rule the larger half of the aristocracy." He increased his pace, and was soon out of the busy streets, and in the country.

It was the month of June, and the foilage of the trees was rich and glorious. The birds sang blithely, the flowers were sweet and fair, and all was redolent of love and joy. The lawyer paused for a moment to contemplate the landscape. "It is a beautiful world," he said; "but it contains all rottenness and misery. A few weeks, and where will be these bright leaves and painted flowers; where the fragrance and the melody?" Continuing his way, in the course of half-an-hour he reached a picturesque cottage embowered among trees and covered with ivy. A garden was attached to it; and there, watering the flowers, Sharp beheld a tall and graceful form, and he sighed deeply. She was a woman of great stature, with all the remains of exquisite loveliness. Her age might have been six-and-forty, but she hardly seemed so old. She was dressed plainly but elegantly, and wore a cap, beneath which might be seen some beautiful hair slightly mingled with grey.

"I am glad to see you thus employed, Harriet," said Sharp advancing, and holding out his hand to the female.

"You are very kind to come and see me," she replied in a low, sweet voice. "God bless you for all you have done for me! Is not this garden pretty? And my roses—look at them! I make friends of my flowers. Heaven is very good to give us these beautiful things, erring creatures as we are. Will you sit down in the arbour?"

So saying she led the way to the place she had mentioned, and they

seated themselves in the grateful shade, while the sun streamed on the verdure around them, and the air appeared filled with sweetness as of blended music and odour. They were very unlike each other: but still the expression of the lawyer's face at that moment was not dissimilar to the woman's.

"Reason is an inestimable blessing," she observed fervently, "and we only know its true value when we have lost it for a time, and regain it as I have done. What a mystery it is—that madness! I recollect scarcely anything of it now. I hope I shall never be mad again! You do not speak, my valued friend! Oh, you have been such a benefactor to me, that my life could not repay such services! I who wronged you—"

"Do not speak thus, my dear Harriet!" interrupted Sharp. "Your bettered condition is my ample reward and delight. Would I could have persuaded you to accept more."

"You *could* not give me more; for what are riches to one like me? Here I have my books, my quiet, my flowers, my stars—my God! I look up from earth, penitent and grateful, and heaven smiles in my spirit! Oh, the peace which passeth understanding! It enters from every gale into the recesses of our being: it lives in the dancing light and in the waning day. Each season is replete with it, and as we decline in life, the hope grows more immortal, the faith far more divine. Blessed be the God who forgives such poor wretches as I am, and makes them happy."

There were tears—actual tears—in the lawyer's hard, keen eyes, and he turned away to conceal them. Harriet took his hand, and pressed it to her lips.

"O," said Sharp, "how blessed we might have been! Dear children might have been growing round our hearts and irradiating the autumn of our lives!—But I must not think of such things. They make me mad. That villain, Wharton! Damn him, damn him!"

"No, no," cried Harriet, earnestly, "not so. We are commanded to love our enemies: and if we do not pardon those who trespass against us, how shall we hope for pardon? May he repent and be forgiven. I pray for him fervently."

"*You!*—Well—you are an angel! But I will never forgive him, so long as the breath remains in this outworn being!—But you promised to give me a little history of yourself. My poor Harriet! What you have endured! O, God! was it just that she should suffer such things?"

"I rejoice exceedingly it has been so, friend. What is earthly evil that we should repine at it, if it promote our heavenly good? Behold, this being is as a speck in infinity!—The world wherein we live an atom in vastness! Religion has opened the eyes of my soul, and I see into the sublime spaces wherein it moves, as from a window, and I know all is darkness inside that window; but without, ineffable light.—I promised

to tell you a history. I will do so: for the pang will be of service to me. But first I must pause a minute. What I have to say will dig up the memories which make the vitality of earth so bitter." There was a short silence; when Harriet pointing up to the blue sky, said gently, "I have learned to live there now: my clay is here, in corruption: but my being is in incorruption. The mists have passed away, and I see God's face. —That the spells which Lord Wharton wound around my heart were potent I need not tell you: they fettered every faculty of my existence: I had no thought but in him. And I woke not from that dream of hell until repentance was too late: the eternal darkness of sin encompassed me, the gates of heaven were closed;—and but for *one* they would never have been opened. I know after I quitted him I wandered about with my child—poor innocent fruit of guilty passion!—but I have no remembrance of what became of him, at all—whether he died or lived. Vainly I struggle to recal the events of that period: it seems as if there was still something wanting in my poor brain. Yet I sometimes think he is not dead—that I have seen him. Once, indeed, I am almost certain of it—and, if I err not, it was when Mr. Travers——"

"Ha!" interrupted Sharp. "That lad's name was Jenkins. He was like you—very like you, certainly; but it seems improbable——"

"O, that I could find him!" murmured Harriet, passionately. "And God, I am assured, will one day restore him to me. Ah! how we cling to the endearments of this wretched world, instead of thinking of the love of Angels and Christ! You saw him, then—that very boy—like me, you say?"

"Yes, he saved Lord Wharton's life, and became his secretary. But I lost sight of him for some time, and then I heard that he was condemned for theft. He could not have been your son.—But it is very singular."

"And what became of him—this boy—know you?"

"He escaped from prison, and was never heard of since."

Harriet wept.

"That is a bitter thought," she said, "and obscures my felicity. But God's will be done. I will proceed.—I retain some confused ideas of things that are past, but I cannot separate them from each other;—they are as dreams, without shape and substance. But O, I remember well the first waking to consciousness in that mad-house! Methought, one night, an angel came down from heaven, and removed a veil from between my spirit and my brain, and the vision of the mighty world burst on me, as if I had just been created, and fair faces shone upon me with beauty inexpressible. There was a music in every tone, there was a glory in every shape, and I thought some God had come down to beautify existence with his own! The wild phantoms of frenzy were gone, and all was truth, all was radiance.—But, then, after the waking came

the memory and the tomb! We have all started from some Elysian dream and wept to think it was not: but I discovered that my Paradise had been lost long ago; and I had no right to it. So then I saw but briars and thorns at every step, and had no hope, no solace. Then you came and tried to comfort me. Alas! where is comfort? The Comforter is not of this life, and I thought he would never come. It is now nearly eight years since you gave me this pretty cottage: and I should have been a poor stricken wretch, even now, if the good and superior woman you induced to live with me had not opened a new world to my view. I have lost her now—she has slept for many months in yonder old churchyard: but the wisdom she taught me remains: my intellect, my heart, my soul, were all exalted by her; and now I can lay my weary head at the Redeemer's cross, and the world has no pang for me He does not heal."

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE MOTHER AND CHILD—POVERTY—THE LANDLADY—STEPHEN—REGINALD AND JULIA—SAMUEL SHARP—THE CONVERSATION.

RETROGRADING a few hours from the last chapter, let us enter the miserable garret in yonder dilapidated house near the Thames. The time is night, and pressing a young child to her bosom is a female in the prime of life, with a countenance of great intelligence and sweetness, but with deep melancholy imprinted on it. She was not more than five-and-twenty, her form was of middle size and gracefully moulded; but she seemed to have recently recovered from illness, and looked pale and thin.

"Sleep thee, my baby," she murmured, with sorrowful fervour, "sleep thee, my pretty one! Thou dost not know, poor dear, the horrors of anxiety, and pain of mind! Sleep thee, in the light of heaven's bright sun, fearful of nothing, ignorant, and happy. O, that I were a child!" She was silent for some minutes, and then continued. "Yet would I not the past could be recalled. My own Stephen—have I not *him?* And God will not suffer us to want long. All will be well." She smiled radiantly, and as she did so, the infant—which was about a year old—awoke, and tried to obtain its natural nourishment. "Alas! alas!" exclaimed the poor mother, "my breast is dry! Hapless child;—and I have not a farthing to procure food for thee, nor a rag that will sell. O, I must beg a morsel for thee, sweetest! Do not cry, my sweet one!" She rose from her seat, but was so weak, she could not walk with the child. "Where is Stephen?" she thought. "Merciful Heaven! I feel sinking into the earth—and my child is perishing!"

That thought nerved her with factitious strength. What cannot a mother's love in desperation? She staggered along and descended the creaking stairs with difficulty. All was still in the old house, with the solitary exception of a clock. That clock kept ticking on perpetually, like a human heart; the same monotonous sound proceeding from its dull being whether the bosom were wrung with anguish, or elated with joy. Who has not heard it—watching by the bed of sickness; and feeling each stroke like a knell—so chilling and mournful? And the young mother listened to it with beating heart, endeavouring to summon resolution sufficient to solicit alms. Such persons as she was would almost rather starve than ask for charity: but when a beloved child is concerned, pride has no place in the breast. But she well knew the stony feelings of those she was about to appeal to, and nothing but desperation could have induced her to do so. She tapped faintly at the door; but was obliged to repeat it ere she was told to enter. With a trembling hand she turned the lock of the door, and presented herself before a coarse, vulgar-looking woman, who had "Landlady" written on her broad, red face.

"Well, and what do you want at this time of night, Mrs. Jones?" demanded the landlady, crossly, as she finished the contents of a mug which she had been holding to her lips. The applicant answered—

"If you please, ma'am, my poor child is starving—and I have no milk," answered the mother, stifling the sobs which rose to her throat, but without raising her eyes.

It was a fine picture, but a sad one. That deep and quiet sorrow, that gentle humility in the face of the one, contrasted strongly with the brutality so strongly depicted in the forbidding lineaments of the landlady. Such scenes are of every-day occurrence, but they are not the less touching and full of pathos.

"The old story of you all," replied the amiable female to the suppliant—for accustomed to deal with low and vulgar beings, she did not discriminate.

"It is no story," returned the mother, patiently, but oh, how earnestly! though her white cheek flushed at the insinuation of her falsehood. "I never told a lie, ma'am—and indeed I have not tasted a morsel today. But I only ask something for the poor child!—I will work for you—slave for you: but oh! give me enough to satisfy the cravings of my little one! You cannot refuse me—*you* have been a mother!"

"But I've got nothing for the child—unless you like to take that crumb of bread. I can't be bothered to get anything for the brat—which I don't think will live long. I shall expect you to help me wash soon."

"I thank you for *that*," returned the poor creature, "when soaked in warm water it will make a meal for my little one. I will work as much as you like—and he will not die—I won't believe it."

She hugged the baby to her bosom, and tears trickled fast down her fair cheek. And yet that besotted landlady saw nothing beautiful and true in that quiet tenderness, she would have been more moved by obstreperous grief. With difficulty the poor thing regained her squalid room, and having fed the baby, hushed it to sleep.

"O, he will not die!" she said. "Great Father of all, take him not from me! For though he would be happier among thy cherubs—I cannot spare him. He is so like his earthly father—bless him. My pride, my joy, my idol!"

Here the door of the chamber opened, and a tall figure entered. She was clasped in her husband's arms.

"My own Nelly, I have got money and food for you," he said, passionately. "Brighter days are coming!"

"My prayers have been heard!" cried the wife. "Our boy will not die. Look at him; he is quite rosy, and smiles. Stephen, where did you get that money?—You did——"

"No evil for it! No, I did not even beg. But I had stood for hours watching the faces of those who passed me; and none looked kindly on me.—But I have seen the son of that good man, Mr. Travers, and he will help us, love."

"It is a Providence!" was the rejoinder. "In every calamity, if we have but faith in futurity, how soon the shadow leaves us, and the sun shines without a cloud! We shall be *so* happy, Stephen, now! We have been *always* happy, dearest, even in our tribulation. How the heavens are smiling on us! It was on such a night I became your bride, more than seven years ago, when you were a boy, and I a girl. They say that love decreases: but *we* have not found it so: it grows more pure and deep with years, more like what it will be above."

Stephen kissed Nell again and again,—passionately kissed her for reply, and she wept on his bosom. This is the depth of human transport;—the oneness, the chastity, the intensity of such a passion can hardly be known save in wedded love. And they contemplated the sleeping infant, and then gazed into each other's face, their lips moving, but no sound escaping from them. They were invoking a blessing on the child and themselves.

The following morning Stephen went to call on Reginald Travers; but not having appointed any hour for doing so, found him just gone out. But a small packet had been left for him by Reginald, and on opening it, he found that it contained a five pound note, which at that time seemed to Stephen the riches of worlds.

The young philosopher was gone to the house of Mr. Sharp, and was admitted: but the lawyer was from home. Julia rose to meet him with unequivocal pleasure, and held out her snowy hand as he entered the room which she occupied.

"I am glad to see you looking so well after your alarm last night," said Reginald, seating himself beside the beautiful girl: "How is Mr. Sharp to-day?"

"I thank you—pretty well. I have just received from him a little library of books,—which you see there,—for a birth-day present."

"Is this your birth-day? Many, many happy returns! And if your fate be as blessed as you deserve it should, you will be *most* happy.—I feel towards you, my fairest friend, as if the years we have been divided were a vision, and I beheld you suddenly transformed from childhood to womanhood! The beauty has become the glory!"

"I thank you from my heart. I wish I were able to express myself with that fine poetry you have at your command; but I am only a silly girl.—Would you think that my guardian could hit my taste in books so exactly as he has done? Here are the works of Spenser, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron. Of course you admire them all? Byron you like?"

"Yes, he has done great things; but may do greater. He wants concentration on a subject worthy of his powers. Coleridge I have studied a great deal; but he is not what he should be. These men have not a sufficient motive to put forth the greatest in them. There must be a passionate love to excite genius."

"Yet here is Wordsworth—who is now appreciated as he ought to be, nearly—without any passion."

"Do you think *he* has no passion? Yes, *his* passion is for nature: it is his adored, he feels himself in the profoundest heart of her mighty being. Therefore we find his eloquence comes rather like some summer gale into our souls, instead of proceeding as from a wild and fiery life, full of the intensity of burning ardour. If you will abstract yourself from the world, if you will imagine yourself in the solitudes and the mountains, O then this Wordsworth is passing eloquent, is passionate and of thrilling power! He is a great poet and a fine thinker."

"I like your criticism: but may I ask if what you describe is passion at all?—Only don't be too hard on poor me, who have not a bit of the philosopher."

"Do not fear it. Indeed you overrate my powers. But what is passion? What but a fierce sincerity, if I may express myself so? What but an intense and ebullient love mingling with the elements of things? This is the passion of Wordsworth: and it is a sublime passion—it is godlike and ethereal, appearing to descend from heaven rather than to ascend to it. If there be passion there, it will be like that of Wordsworth."

Here a rather well-looking young man, with a bright, piercing eye, and a shrewd expression of face, entered, much to the annoyance of Reginald, and perhaps rather to the chagrin of the fair Julia, who had been listening to the poet-philosopher's criticism as Desdemona listened to Othello. There was freshness and originality in both their minds; but

Julia never felt a man's strength so much as she did then :—and women do not envy men's intellect, and therefore enjoy its mightiness. But the new comer effectually stopped such conversation. Julia introduced Reginald to Mr. Samuel Sharp.

CHAPTER LXV.

SAMUEL SHARP—REGINALD—THE VISIT OF LADY RIVERS AND SIR ALGERNON—THE WONDER AND THE MYSTERY.

SAMUEL SHARP, without very extraordinary abilities, had already secured an extensive practice as a barrister. The great wealth of his father, which had increased immensely within the last few years, and the business he was able to put into his hands, aided by consummate assurance and a fair knowledge of his profession, promised to raise him to the pinnacle of fortune. He was not a vulgar man, he was not a disagreeable companion, yet there was something about him rather repulsive to persons of taste and feeling.

"Charming Julia," he said, having bowed to Reginald, "if I possessed the imaginative faculty, I should have presented you with an Ode on your natal day: but as it is, you must accept the poor prosaic tribute of my admiration, and believe how sincerely I wish you many happy returns of this auspicious day, and that each succeeding year may bring with it an increase of felicity to you."

Julia hated set speeches, and thought Samuel Sharp's excessively absurd and unpleasant on that occasion; but young Sharp piqued himself on speaking accurately, and always conversed as if talking from a book. He had read a good deal, and thought a little, but out of his profession he did not shine. Few persons can make themselves liked in society, without they are content to be frequently in the background; but that did not at all suit the pushing barrister.

"Mr. Travers," he cried, turning to Reginald, with a half-patronizing air; "I hear you have studied at a German University. I suppose your education is finished now? I left Cambridge at your age, made the tour, and then studied for the bar."

"I left Germany about a year since," returned Reginald.

"I don't like the system of education pursued there. Julia, I have not congratulated you on your fortunate escape last night. We will have the rascal, who so daringly attacked you, hanged. Thompson will ferret him out. He is a monstrously fine fellow, in his way."

Here there came one of those thundering knocks at the street-door which none but a London footman can give. A handsome carriage,

drawn by two splendid horses, and driven by a burly coachman with cocked hat, two tall footmen in state liveries behind, was at the door.

"That is Lady Rivers," cried Sharp. "I suspect, after all, Travers Wharton will not carry the day with her."

A servant announced Lady Rivers and Sir Algernon Sharp, and a little woman, painted excessively, and in full dress, leaning on the arm of a diminutive man attired in court costume, with whiskers unequalled, and moustachios the most superb, entered the apartment.

"My dear Julia," exclaimed Lady Rivers, advancing, "I could not deny myself the pleasure, before I went to the Drawing Room, of calling to wish you many happy returns of the day. I wish you would have allowed me to present you! Stoop down, you tall creature, and let me kiss that ivory brow! Mr. Sharp, how d'ye do? If I do not mistake, I see Mr. Reginald Travers, whom I met abroad lately." Reginald bowed, and Lady Rivers began talking to him. "I hope Mr. Travers is quite well? He has been electioneering lately, I believe. He is a great man."

"I expect my father in town again to-morrow: but he went yesterday morning into the country," was the reply.

Reginald would have shaken off the coquettish Lady Rivers, but she would not suffer it. Women of fashion think they can always patronise young men of not more than nineteen. "You must come to my *soirée* to-night, if you will excuse the shortness of the invitation." Reginald was about to decline the honour; but he changed his mind as the voluble lady continued—"My sweet Julia, my dear Sir Algernon, your uncles Lord Wharton and Travers, and, above all, the Prince Regent, have promised to come. I have some hope of Lord Byron, too—do you know him? He is the divinest creature! You are a literary man, I believe? I adore genius of every kind. Will you write some poetry in my Album? I have two Albums,—one for my common-place acquaintance,—and the other for such writers as you are. Algernon, dear, what are you talking about to Julia? Oh, that new singer, or actress, or dancer, about whom all the world are mad. She is patronised by the Prince, and by every one, I believe. But it is so difficult to see her."

"Pray, how is that?" asked Reginald. "Is she on the stage?"

"Have you not heard of her? She performs in a beautiful little theatre which is not open to the public, and the *entrée* is as difficult as Æneas found that of the Shades. I have coaxed the Prince to give me a ticket; but you have no idea of the difficulty of procuring one. It is quite a distinction to have seen her."

"She is as fascinating as a Houri," remarked Sir Algernon Sharp. "She looks very young, but I believe is older than she appears. She was offered a thousand pounds by the Duke of D—— to perform for one night in his private theatre; but refused. I shall see her again to-morrow. Every one is boring me to get them tickets: but it is impossible. The Prince himself is obliged to refuse hundreds."

"And may I ask the nature of the entertainment she gives?" said Julia. "I own my curiosity is excited now."

"Some people affect to wrap up what they have seen in mystery," returned Sir Algernon; "but I will not be so tantalizing. First, the theatre itself is quite a gem. It is of a circular form, and contains perhaps five hundred at a cram. It was built under the directions of the Prince. The paintings of the ceiling are exquisite; being figures of the Grecian gods and goddesses. The gilding and carving are most elaborate, and the hangings of crimson velvet. The boxes are ornamented with purple and gold devices, and the curtain contains an immense mirror in the centre of it which reflects the superb chandeliers and the lovely faces of the audience. Odours are scattered profusely through the place, and festoons hang the Corinthian pillars, while flowers are distributed to the ladies. When you have feasted your eyes with these things, suddenly you hear soft music which proceeds from invisible musicians; and then the curtain draws up, and you behold a scene in Arabia of gorgeous beauty, and the presiding goddess is seen lying on a bank among roses. She is beautiful beyond description; but she is supposed to be dumb, and alone in a desert."

"What a poetical description!" cried Lady Rivers. "Remember, Algernon, I must have it in my Album."

"But a spirit descends from the stars," proceeded the Baronet, with a gracious smile, "and is enamoured of the divine Arabian. This spirit you do not see in bodily form, but a roseate light is before the face of the exquisite Arabian; and she falls in love with the light!"

"That is an enchanting idea!" exclaimed Lady Rivers.

"She worships the light passionately, but vainly tries to catch it. Then she would address it, but cannot, and her dumb show is perfection. She dreams—and in her vision goes up with the light to the favourite star, and hears the music of fountains and of the bells of Paradise. On a sudden her intense delight bursts the fetters on her tongue, and she expresses her rapture in her sleep in a song so thrilling, so sweet, so soft, it is utterly indescribable. I have got the words of it; but I hardly like to repeat them, for they would be remembered by you. Perhaps I may consent to whisper it to Lady Rivers to-night. But when the dumb girl awakes, she cannot speak, the light has left her,—it was a false spirit, and having enjoyed her charms as Cupid did those of Psyche, leaves her. The mystic feelings of the Arabian she embodies by types which she finds in flowers, and she builds herself a bower with them. The scene that follows is the most exquisite of all. The spiritual meaning of the drama is developed thus. The soul is dumb before Love flashes on it; but when it has done so, then it has music of heaven. But Love deserts it, and all is gloom. Then the soul seeks for the ethereal in the earthly, and constructs an Elysium out of the fading things of time. The bower is

completed and shines in the liquid lustre of the Moon: and then strange melodies are heard, the flowers, the bower, the soul which the Arabian typifies dissolve, and a weird light overspreads the stage, and the curtain falls. It is said that the mysterious being who excites such profound curiosity and wonder imagined the whole of this beautiful allegory in a sort of waking trance; and those who have conversed with her declare she is full of fine genius and fancy. But—I suppose to keep up the mystery—she goes veiled; and while she is on the stage there is a gauze curtain between her and the audience, so that you see her but indistinctly. After the performance one or two ladies get their fortunes told by her. They send her presents of jewels; and if she accepts them, the same is signified by a black mute who brings some curious tablets. The lady fortunate enough to obtain the distinction of having her fate communicated, then proceeds to another apartment, and a few of the company are permitted to hear the result. There is an immense marble statue, and the oracles are delivered in the same manner as were those in the temples of the heathens. There is delicious music all the time, and another scene of enchantment is made by the skill of the Mechanist to tell the lady's fate. I have not been present at one of these divinations; but I have heard startling things are revealed. The priestess is not seen, but her voice is heard singing:—she improvises the poetry."

Sir Algernon paused, exhausted with this lengthy description. Even the cold Samuel Sharp was excited by it, and Reginald left his philosophy behind.

"And by what name," asked Julia, "is this wonder known? I must see her, if I can make interest enough to obtain a ticket. I suppose money will not unlock the doors?"

"O, no! But in a few days I may be able to serve you," answered Sir Algernon. "I will put your name down in the book which is kept for that purpose. The Mysterious One selects a few whom she will admit; and indeed no one can enter until she has approved the list submitted to her inspection. We cannot find out a name for her: but in the gold-lettered programme we obtain at the theatre, and of which it is said she is the author and painter (for it is designed and coloured with consummate taste and represents the scenes of the drama), the Arabian is called "Etherea," and we speak of her by that name."

"Has she dropped from the clouds then?" asked Julia. "Or what is she, or where is she supposed to come from? Is she an Englishwoman, or a foreigner? And the song you mention? What is the air to it?"

"I don't think she has dropped from the clouds," was the response. "I don't know what she is, or whence. No one does, unless it is the Prince. And there is the secret of the *rage* she has excited. She has not a foreign accent; but yet she hardly speaks as we do. For the song it is the *intensest* thing you can imagine. It is of her composition, and of unearthly harmony."

"Well, we shall be too late for the drawing room," cried Lady Rivers. "I shall see you all at my house to-night: and don't be later than ten o'clock, for I intend to have a concert. Mr. Travers, if your father should happen to arrive to-night, bring him with you. Good bye, Julia, good bye, good bye!"

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE MYSTERIOUS BEING IN HER TEMPLE—HER BOOKS AND PURSUITS —RESTLESSNESS—THE PRINCE'S VISIT—FANNY'S REPROOF.

THERE was a house, at the period to which this Chapter refers, which raised the interest and inquisitiveness of all the gay world. It was not in a very fashionable quarter of London, and the exterior was not remarkable. The walls were high by which it was surrounded, and it stood in the centre of a garden amid tall trees: but on entering it, you were surprised at the taste and elegance with which it was fitted up. And it only contained three people; a female, a deaf crone, and a black mute. It is to a small apartment at the back of the house our readers must carry their imagination. It was of a quadrangular form, and hung with tapestry of antique workmanship, the light of day being mellowed by crimson curtains and Venetian blinds. A square table of solid oak stood in the centre of the room, on which lay books and MSS. There was a library, containing works of imagination at one end of the chamber, there were two or three pictures at the other, and a piano, harp, and other musical instruments, with a sofa and chairs, constituted the furniture and ornaments of the place. And seated at the table, her soft cheek leaning on one of the smallest and whitest hands imaginable, was a woman of strange, wild beauty. She was reading a work on Astrology,—a huge ponderous tome; and a pile of letters lay beside the folio. No one would have thought it possible that exquisite creature could have numbered twenty years, though she was really not far from thirty: but she was so tiny and sylph-like she seemed almost a child. Her hair was of great length and descended in natural ringlets over her shoulders, down to her waist, and contrasted with the dress of spotless muslin she wore. Her attire was somewhat fantastic, but made her look yet more of the fairy than she would otherwise have done. It was not in the prevailing fashion of the time, but so well became her that the taste which adopted it could not be called in question. A few diamonds glittered in her hair, and a simple braid was passed over her snowy brow: but she needed no jewels to adorn her person. Indeed it may be said that the ordinary alone should wear them; for the beautiful can need no pearls or rubies,

and the plain had better not excite invidious observations. The female rose from her seat, and paced to the window. A bird was singing on a fine tree that grew near the house.

"Sing, O Spirit!" she murmured. "Thou art happy, thrice happy. O, that I were a bird, to cleave the liquid air,—to sip ambrosia in the upper atmosphere! I have seen eight-and-twenty earthly years, and yet my soul cannot soar! O that I could put off the clay which prisons my being, and rejoice in immeasurable freedom! What is not better than a poor mortal, with immortal yearnings? The heart beats so vainly against its cage, and none will release it! Is not the life of flowers more beautiful and pure? To be a pure violet, and drink the diamond drops that fall from the sweet eyes of Morning! To be a wild, melodious gale, unseen, and yet a haunting presence—a spirit of sound, a dream, a shadow! But not as I am! I never thought to drag the weary chain of dull existence on, hoping, fearing, enjoying nothing! And the stars bode nothing—except the death—except the death! Yes, I shall die soon and be forgotten! I, the worshipped of these vain hearts—the gifted, the beautiful—who am now as a Divinity! Death! What is Death? It seems to be: but it is not! Infinite mystery of nothing! We can conceive something; but how the absence of anything. We die! Well, what follows? Something or nothing! From that which has been, new life must proceed: so the wise ones say: and I have been studying hard—very hard, to distract my thoughts from myself! Poor Fanny!" She was silent for some minutes; and then continued thus: "I have succeeded perfectly in all I wanted. I have educated myself—read, thought, disciplined my reason. But still there is an aching void in my spirit! O God! O God! Never to love more! No, no! I would not love again to be Queen of the Universe. It is a lie, a damned, hellish lie! It is the device of a fiend, who dresses it up so that it doth assume a radiant angel's form, and leaves behind perdition. They mock at us, they laugh at us in the depths of darkness, and we who have drunk the aconite unto intoxication, find the death for ever! No more of this! There is a life after this being. I am assured of that. The joyous music of my secret heart has whispered of the eternal and divine: it has received the intimation from heaven. Death must be something or nothing, it told me. If something, it is not destruction; if nothing there is no death at all."

She opened the door of a closet in the room, where there was an assortment of books very different from those in the book-case. There were translations from Plato, Pythagoras, and other classic writers, besides some French works of Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire among the volumes. "How gradually did I understand what these great spirits meant in their writings," she thought. "Yet now I feel even they have not uttered all they might have done—only they were afraid of the laughter of the world. I should like to write the history of my mind,

and conceal naught. What a history it would be, if anyone were daring enough to make such a revelation as there will be before God and the angels in eternity! How it would appal the weak, how it would amaze the strong, if we could embody all the meanings and secrets that lie deep hidden in spirit and matter, which are one! These 'Confessions' of Rousseau! What are they? He did not dare to tell his thoughts, his guilty feelings, his madness! Poor Rousseau! I sympathise with him though! His was a fine nature and lofty mind perverted! So perhaps are mine. I am sad, I am weary. O, for the grave! The grave—I often contemplate it without a shudder. When the delicate limbs of this body are rotting there, where shall *I* be? O grave! Thou art the resting place of many hearts! I love thee: for from thy deep silence comes not a whisper of anguish and desolation! Not a tear, not a groan, not a breath of passion and woe!"

She drew her harp to her, and played a mournful air with great skill and sweetness. "I cannot rest," she said. "O, Spirit of Song and Poetry, come to me now, that I may pour out my being in impassioned thought and melody." Instead of the harp she then took a lute, and accompanied herself as she improvised a burst of melody.

SONG.

"Ashes and dust are the heart, they say!
But no; tis false! Do you think that they
Could stir from its silence the being deep,
That sleeps not as ashes and dust do sleep?

"The heart is not dust: but with life of fire
Clings wildly unto its most vain desire:
The flame is burning the dust of me,
Like a sun that shines eternally!"

"So mournful, Fanny!" here exclaimed a voice; and looking up, she beheld a portly man of princely aspect, who had been listening to her song. "So mournful!" he repeated.

"I did not hear your royal highness enter," was the reply. "Yes, the heart is the sun that scorches—not like *yon* sun, which does not fatigue our eyes—because of our beloved Night.—The heart has no night; and therefore I am weary."

"Poetical as ever! Do you mean to say you never forget——"

"Never! Not even in my dreams: for then my being is more intense than in my waking life. But I am sometimes in the Eden of peace, and then—though it is but for a little while, I wander through the infinite garden—while I forget not, I am blest in light!"

"Incomprehensible Fanny! You should not have been mortal. You

are a fairy altogether." The beautiful being smiled in her strange fashion, half sadly, half brightly, and transiently. It was a sort of moony smile, and once seen could never be forgotten. If a painter could catch anything like it he would be immortal. "I love to see you smile, fairest Fanny," said the Prince. "And yet it makes me melancholy."

"A smile once said to a tear," she rejoined—seemingly unconscious that she uttered aught out of the common—'I am more beautiful than thou, sad drop, that meltest away, and art no more seen!' And the tear would have replied, 'And what art thou, O miserable smile? What art thou, that mortals should worship *thee?* Canst thou, the self-same smile, return, having gone?' But as she opened her glistening mouth, behold the smile had gone away like a breath, leaving no vestige. But the tear hung trembling on a flower, and blushed to think she had been angry with the poor smile! There is a moral in that, O Prince! How pure, how brief!"

"Your mysticism grows more wild than ever, *bijou* Fanny! I, with my poverty of ideality and emptiness——"

"Do not understand me! No one does, because I do not attempt to understand *myself*. How can the mind which is linked to clay, comprehend the spirit, which is so fine and indivisible? The mind is in matter, the soul in God—*that* is my religion and comfort. I do not believe in my senses,—do you? That seems to me a wretched sophism which says, 'All that is in a substance is of the same substance; therefore, all in man is material.' Why *what* is matter?—allowing its existence!—We see, hear, feel, and taste: but how can it be so? Show me a sense in the abstract! Show me sense, a *being!* It is all in mind—it must be so. I felt it was, before I could reason on the truth of it. You have given me the means of educating myself. How much I owe to you!"

"Bewitching creature! I feel myself less material when in your society. What a fine brain you have! But, Fanny, what is all this new fancy to come to?"

"My Star has ordained all: and you will see the event in time," returned Fanny, mysteriously. "You are going to Lady Rivers to-night, Prince? She is a weak wretch!"

"She is clever at intrigue, though. Ah, Fanny, if we had *you* to help us, what might we not accomplish! But I have never attempted to persuade you to do anything you did not like. I have never even sued for more than——"

"You have been most generous to me, my royal benefactor;—saved the poor remnant of my earthly existence: and could I reward you, without sin, I would do it. Indeed, I would die for you, joyfully!"

"But you will not *live* for me! There are few of the loftiest I could not win to my passion."

"The loftiest!" said Fanny, scornfully. "O, that old cant of igno-

rance!—Forgive me: but say, can that woman be lofty, whose rank of virtue is degraded by yielding to greatness what she would not sacrifice to love?—I see that you colour, Prince! It shows you are not lost to good."

"By Jove! I would not take the tenth part of what you say from any subject in England!" exclaimed the Prince Regent, with flushed forehead. But the haughty spirit subsided, and he added—"True, the woman is not lofty who would sacrifice her honour to her ambition: but if she love, indeed, what are the cold forms of the world then?"

"Why, how you contradict yourself! Is not rank a form of the world; and do you not worship it?—I marvel, Prince, with your intellect, you soar not somewhat higher. Rank has been a curse to you. You might have been a great man, if you had had a motive for exertion. Let us change the subject, now. You will see Lord Wharton to-night—and—and—Colonel Wharton! I should like to prepare something for them. Colonel Wharton is about to marry?"

"Yes; he wants to pay some of his debts. He is very much piqued at not being permitted to enter your temple. I am overwhelmed with applications for tickets, and might have a virtue, I believe, for every other one."

"Strange—that love of novelty should still pursue you. Do you not sicken of libertinism? It is a brute thing, say what you will. Love, altogether, is insanity: but passion—ha, ha!—And Lord Wharton—is *he* going to marry? He is a man of great intellect. Do you know what has become of his former mistress? Has she returned to the stage?"

"Poor Anna! no. You know everything, Fanny: are you not aware of her situation? Bitterly repenting her error—I suppose I must call it—and wishing to expiate it as far as possible, she secluded herself from the world, though the Marquis of —— would have settled £3000 a-year on her, if she would have lived with him. You are aware Lord Wharton was absent from England for a long time; and when he returned, what was his astonishment to hear that his former mistress had commenced a crusade against seduction. She actually keeps a house, which is supported by voluntary contributions, for the reception of those who express a wish to reform, and although the house will hold but a very small number in proportion to the applicants for admission, I am told that she prevents directly, or indirectly, an immense amount of corruption. It is very absurd: but she is terribly sincere in her undertaking; and when the unfortunates enter the abode, she prays with them, weeps with them, and I don't know what else. She thinks she shall thus atone for her own indiscretion."

"And I too must do something. Your royal highness——"

"Nay, upon my word I cannot indulge you in *that* whim, foolish child. Think no more of it. What can *you* do?—I must say good

evening now—for it is getting late. Is there anything you wish for, Fanny?"

"Nothing that you can give me. The Prince who might afford the boon to me, I dare not ask for it."

"What do you mean? Is there any favour from abroad that you want me to ask? Some jewel from a foreign court that you have heard of? *I* will ask for it."

"I want peace: and it is not in the courts of earth, nor in the kingdoms of the universe. If you *will* ask it, supplicate it for me from the Prince of Peace. He rules not as *you* rule—alas!"

CHAPTER LXVII.

HISTORY OF MIND—THE PRINCE AT LADY RIVERS'—A CONVERZATIONE.

In the history of the Individual Mind there are so many deep and complicated springs to trace, the machinery is so intricate, the actions and relations so involved and almost inextricable, that it is very difficult to separate and to select, so as to present an uniform and perfect picture of thought and deed, delineating their mutual affinities, and demonstrating how the nice and apparently nugatory events of life create the elements of a mighty revolution of being. As with the individual, so it is with the whole; and if one could present the philosophy of a single existence—so indissolubly connected is the one with the all—he would be the great philosopher of the universe: in fact he would be omniscient. The mind of Fanny had made an immense progress in the course of a few years: but she lacked that wisdom which can alone direct powers and faculties for good: and she was still the same creature of impulse and fancy. Her imagination had grown intense, her reason was far more developed; but she had no pilot to guide the vessel of her existence, and she was tossed about by that same wayward will of hers, at the mercy of winds and waves. Isolated from the world, and living in a realm of the ideal, brooding over great wrongs, and unable to forgive,—though she repented;—her education and fine spirit were far from being conducive to her peace. And yet, there were many fine, endearing, noble qualities in her, which shone forth from the darkness with lovely lustre. And she was religious, too, in her way: she had a Deism of her own, a Christianity of her own, which were not altogether without truth and wisdom. The Prince Regent had discovered the vein of gold mixed up with baser metal, and he felt towards her with a kindness and a warmth which she deeply appreciated.

It is necessary to follow him who was virtually, at that time, King of England, to the house of Lady Rivers, in Berkeley Square. By ten o'clock the greater part of the company had assembled, and at that hour the Regent entered the illuminated drawing-room of Lady Rivers. There were more than a hundred of the highest nobility in London assembled there, and their dresses were blazing with stars, with diamonds and gold. Eminent characters of every description were present, for Lady Rivers affected the blue-stocking as well as the political *intriguante*. And among the latter, the Prince recognised Mr. Travers talking to the Editor of one of the principal Reviews, while near him was a tall young man of intellectual aspect, on whose arm a beautiful girl was leaning, and who was conversing with no less a personage than the poetical Lion of the day, Lord Byron. Lady Rivers advanced to meet the Prince, who having saluted her, graciously acknowledged the bows of all present in his vicinity, and entered into conversation with the entertainer.

"I see you have got Travers here," observed the Regent to Lady Rivers. "I wish we had him among us; he is very much respected. Where is Lord Wharton? I want to talk to him a minute."

"He is not come yet. As for Mr. Travers, his coming here is quite accidental. He returned unexpectedly to town a few hours ago, and his son brought him."

"Ah! Is that his son, listening to Lord Byron? I see there is a likeness between them. And that young lady—she is divine. Take me up to her and introduce me—*not* as the Prince, but the gentleman."

"Here are Lord Wharton, Travers, and the Sharps, at once."

As Lady Rivers spoke, the persons she mentioned appeared. But before she noticed them, Lady Rivers introduced the Prince to Julia, saying, "You must induce my fair friend to sing, your royal highness. She will not disobey you, but she is refractory at *my* behest."

The Prince commenced a conversation with the lovely ward of the rich solicitor, with all the ease, the grace, and affability for which he was famed. A rather pretty but vapid-looking woman of nearly middle age was reclining on a sofa near where the Prince stood, and as his eyes met hers, she exclaimed—

"Your royal highness must persuade our sweet friend to sing: you will be ravished with her voice. I was trying to prevail over her scruples all the way from Portland Place—for she came in my carriage."

"If the eloquent Countess of St. Clair cannot prevail with the obdurate Nightingale, how shall I hope to induce her to pour forth the melodies she would selfishly keep for her solitude," returned the Prince, smiling on Julia. The last observation, and an urgent request induced the young lady to look over some new music, and the Prince assisted her in a selection.

"Such a delight, such a jewel of a man!" whispered Lord Byron to

Reginald, with a sneer. "Who shall equal the Prince Regent in a drawing room? Travers Wharton and Sir Algernon—Brummell himself—must 'hide their diminished heads' before the light of his genius. I am delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Travers: I have heard of you frequently. She is going to sing! How irresistible a Prince's persuasions are! Women and Princes sway mankind—the first with beauty and nonsense, the others with bows and bayonets!"

Julia sang the following words to a sweet and simple air.

"When the spirit is dreary, and life is o'ercast
With the images made from the wreck of the past,—
Say, where shall we turn for a solace, a rest,—
What shall temper the anguish and comfort the breast?

"Will you weep? O such tears may relieve for an hour!
But they guide not to peace, and reveal not the pow'r
Which can raise and can purify,---smile from above,
Like a star with the light and the magic of Love.

"O the hope and the sorrow of earth are both vain,
They depart, and return more intensely again;
But they vanish in radiance so joyous and bright,
That we know the fair Seraphim bring us the light."

"Beautifully sang!" remarked the illustrious poet to Reginald. "But girls always love to twaddle about angels! And *that*, while they play the devil with us! How they are all complimenting the songstress! And yet, if it were a seraph that sang, they have no ears but for their own eternal cackle! Do you know Tom Moore? Those Irish songs of his are fine; but I hate so much tenderness in poetry! If people *must* be tender, let them damn a little—like the merciful critic of ——, who does it so softly, that it seems as if he were one of Satan's imps poking a wretch in the burning lake quite fondly!"

Reginald was silent. "Music has a strange charm over us," he said at last. "Are you not fond of it?"

"I hate it, on my word; it makes me perfectly misanthropical. What do we want with music, who have no harmony in our souls? It is far better to eat, and curse indigestion, than to listen to what chides us for not being more spiritual."

"Is that your idea of music—that it chides our earthliness? Surely your lordship errs! To me it is full of the human and the divine together! It seems to say, 'Heaven has made you weak, and knows your weakness!' It is gentle, it is full of sympathy: it may fill the eye with tears: but they are pleasant, and we would not do otherwise than shed them, if we could help it. O, I pity those who do not feel there is a friend

in melody! I can hear it even while I do not hear it.—But I have lived in Germany."

"The land of music and metaphysics, tobacco and drunkards."

"And yet from the smoke and the clouds what great sounds and mighty words have come! They are burdened with prophecy and inspiration; they search the depths of spirit, they are the trumpet and the battle *within!* Deep calls unto deep with sublime thunder: sound and reason are the mightiness of the armies: and the shouts are borne from world to world, stirring all the waters of the great human heart. They foam, they rush, they overwhelm: the sound and the *hush* create the enthusiasm and the rationality which combined can, *must* reform the world. Poetry and philosophy breathing in music and reason vivify the fires of immortality!"

Suddenly Reginald became aware that half those in the room were listening to the conversation between Lord Byron and himself, and never anxious to display his powers, ceased to speak. Turning his eyes to a little distance he beheld Julia listening intently, breathlessly, to what he had been saying, insomuch that when he ceased speaking, she seemed lingering on some echo of divine melody. But a hand was laid on his arm, and he found Mr. Sharp at his side. He wished to have joined Julia; but was obliged to answer the lawyer, and when he had done so, he saw Lord Wharton had accosted Sharp's ward. Meanwhile, the Prince was talking with Mr. Travers. Politics superseded poetry, and all were immediately on the *qui vive* to overhear what they said. Lord Byron turned away, and looked rapt, in a corner.

"That's so like Byron," sneered Lord Wharton to Julia. "Those poets cannot bear to be thought like other men; and yet in their ordinary life are *most* vulgar."

"Does your lordship think so?" returned Julia, somewhat abstractedly. "I suppose all men are equally egotistical."

"That is a sweeping censure. Assuredly we all want to be thought something we are not; but then the propriety of letting the fact be seen is questionable.—Poetry—what is poetry? You say it is something remote from our common experiences: but to my mind the bustle of active existence is more poetical than the abstract and ideal.—There is my nephew, Reginald, perpetually striving to inhale the ether of the third heaven. A man can never do it: even a woman, who is much more pure and spiritual—when like yourself, at least—is *not* a spirit."

"What is your lordship's definition of the spiritual?"

"Mine! Don't ask me: I could have told you twenty years ago, perhaps; but as we advance in life, we learn to doubt everything. I suppose Love is a spirit: but it burns in clay, that is the mischief. And yet, beautiful Julia, years cannot extinguish the power of those sentiments we are obliged to stifle: and beauty creates around our hearts such an atmosphere of brightness, the flame bursts from the smoke."

Lord Wharton was interrupted by the Prince, or he would have spoken much more to his lovely cousin; but the royal guest taking his arm, cried—

"Fie, my Lord Wharton! I can see you have been trying to disperse some divine vision of the angel who has deigned to come down to earth; but you will never make her earthly, with all your genius." Then drawing the Peer away, while the younger Sharp advanced and engaged Julia in conversation, the Prince observed—"That subtle old lawyer is trying hard to win Travers, you see! Hang him! he is so rich and clever that he can do almost whatever he likes. But Travers is one of the few, we well know, who cannot be bought. I would give half a kingdom for him. How unchangeable he is! The same tranquil face, the same calm, gentle frankness of manner, and subdued enthusiasm! And though he has grown grey, he has the same fine, uncorrupted heart of youth still."

"Travers is a wise fool," returned Lord Wharton. "What might he not have been now, if he had chosen! But he smiles at something Sharp is saying to him. That dog of a lawyer has done us infinite mischief."

"We will make another effort for our cosmopolite. Now they are going to supper. I suppose I must take Lady Rivers. That woman is a confounded bore, and I don't envy your brother his bargain!—My dear Lady Rivers!" approaching the person he alluded to—"May I have the happiness of giving you my arm?"

"The poor Prince!" Lord Wharton inwardly laughed. "Yes, the woman is insufferable!—Travers, let me take you home in my carriage. I suppose you will take up your night's lodgings in my hotel?"

CHAPTER LXVIII.

REGINALD AND LORD BYRON—THE CHURCHYARD AND THE OLD MAN.

Reginald Travers, on leaving the house of Lady Rivers, at about one o'clock, walked slowly along, buried in those thoughts which all of the imaginative and reflective temperament have experienced after quitting the festive scene. The night was hot, and not a breath of air was stirring. The yellow moon was sailing in her beautiful isolation among soft, rosy clouds, and the serene stars appeared gazing on her with wonder and admiration.

"How we mingle ourselves with all this splendour and brightness!" thought Reginald. "The warm summer air is sleeping in our souls, and the delicate light shines holily in the silent immensities of our subtle be-

ing! This passionless calm is eloquent of Love alone.—Mysterious Love! How I adore thee!" Here he heard a footstep behind, and turning his head, beheld Lord Byron. "What a sublime night it is!" remarked Reginald to the eccentric poet: "the moon is burning with mild glory! Is it not a divine light?"

"No: it is a very vulgar light, if I speak what I think. Only we are obliged to lie, when we want to be poetical. A tallow candle gives as good a light. I hate these sublimities of immensity: they make one feel so vile an animal. Yet what would those who versify do without the moon and the stars? The twinkling blackguards! They look so impudent;—as if they would search one's spirit, if they could!"

"Yet they give us strength, they give us fire, and fancy! I thank God he has not concealed them from us!"

"They don't give me strength, I know. They look so cold, that were it not June, my teeth would chatter. 'Give us fire?'—Dullard, that I am, not to feel it! They are so freezingly chaste, so icily modest, a man is ashamed of himself for being a man! D—n all sublimity! It makes fools mad, and wise heads crazy! I like what is shabby, sensual, vulgar: for then I feel myself sublime, which I never can do on nights like these. Here we stand, atoms and worms! Why cannot *we* be stars, who can conceive mightier worlds?—Those melancholy orbs! Luminous with sadness! Swimming through heaven as to a dirge of death! They are shadows and phantoms all!"

"No, that cannot be! They live, a burning truth in the heart of thought! Why; for this dunghill world that rots and perishes—it *is* a shadow and a phantom! But the essences of light and beauty which rise from its dark dungeon-bosom are glorified with eternity! The stars are not melancholy to me: they are the utterances of the Creative Mind. They are the poetry of God! Virgin they are: but yet they love, they worship, they hate nothing that *is;* and predicate immortality to man. There is wisdom to be gathered from the stars,—Hope and Faith indestructible! And surely they raise and do not *depress* our thoughts. We feel insignificant as material atoms: but the spirit dilates, and knows how majestic its nature is. They swim not through heaven to a dirge; but as to their own liquid music."

"Live a few years longer; and you will change your mind. Look, there is a churchyard before us. How soon we may lie there, ugly and eyeless skeletons in the dreamless and everlasting sleep! Do you not wish you had never been born? What is the use of existence?"

"No: life is an inestimable boon, and death no evil. The use of existence transcends our finite capacity to fathom, because it was the first thought in the Mind of Deity when creation grew out of himself. Yet, do we not see a divine harmony in existence, and amid all its calamities a purpose and an end? To love, to hope, to know, to aspire, these are

beyond use;—utility is not so lofty as we believe; but is the beginning of a good which is infinite. Therefore, when the Sceptic says there is no use in faith, I reply that its utility is to an end, and is not a consummation. What is a positive good? Can you tell me?"

"Certainly; happiness. Of course, you think it is so?"

"And do you not think there is in man a higher than happiness?* If you have faith in anything, you must be aware the sentiment of hope implied by the principle exceeds the possibility of realization. All tends to a higher and abstract being; and what we lose on earth we lose because without such loss we could not reach the faith which in itself is better than reality. I have found that argument stagger many an unbeliever, and it is the philosophy of Christianity. Here is the grave, *there* the eternity! If you believe not this, you are either irrational, or an Atheist. And Atheism is beyond *un*-reason."

"I must go to school again. But give me a call, when you have leisure to do so. I see there is good stuff in you—great stuff, perhaps. Adieu!"

"I wish I were what that boy is!" mused the poet.

"That man wrongs himself foully!" thought Reginald. "He has the elements of all that is best in our nature; but wanting to be *more* than man can possibly be, he becomes *less* than he might make himself. 'How abject, how august' we are!—Yes, we shall all lie in the cold earth: but to me death has a smile and a promise of exceeding consolation.—Even Julia will be a hideous skeleton; but then we may rejoice together in the fields of heaven, beautified, etherealized. Will she love me? O, yes! There is truth in Plato. I have found my other soul: I knew it from the first."

The Idealist entered the churchyard and contemplated the quiet graves. He read the inscriptions on some of the tombstones by the tender moonlight which streamed over those green mounds at his feet. Many had died young, and at those graves the young man lingered with that sympathy which youth ever feels for youth.

"In the flush of pride, of manhood, of beauty, they have died!" he murmured. "I too may die without having accomplished the purpose of my existence. But what is Life? How empty and how full of desolation! O, Grave! speak to my heart that my towering ambition may be directed higher than itself—that I may yearn toward virtue, and by adoration rise! Speak with thine eloquent voice, and tell me what I am!"

"I will tell you!" exclaimed some one, in a tone so hollow and dreary,

* The reader will recognise in this sentiment a great and deep thought of Thomas Carlyle. But as the bent of Reginald's mind is similar to that of the author of it, I may be permitted to attribute such an idea to him.

that if Reginald had been superstitious, in that hour and place, he might have thought the charnel had indeed responded to him. But turning round, he beheld an old man of thin and haggard form, who looked almost spectral in the solemn light of the moon. "I will tell you, young man, what you are! You are a wisdom-seeker; and he that searches shall find.—I have a child buried here—an only child—and a wife. To think that the head once pillowed on my bosom should lie there in corruption!—But it is at rest!—And my child was like you! Young and beautiful he died, in the glory of his genius and his manhood. *You* may die, too, alas!—But I said I would tell you what you are. A shadow, walking in a shadow, and dreaming of substance! I was once what men call a philosopher. But I am wiser now. I do not trouble myself with questions of entity, finity, infinity, and so on. Disquieting ourselves in vain with questions beyond our reason, we doubt and die."

"To doubt is to believe," returned Reginald, recovering from his surprise at such a rencontre. "To believe is to live."

"Doubt nothing, or deny all things," was the rejoinder.

"That is a strange sentiment! Wherefore should we do so?"

The old man looked intently into the glorious face of the young enthusiast.

"Truth is ever in extremes," he replied. "I was an Atheist once—till my son died. You behold in me, one of the Infidel writers of the last century, who stirred up the minds of men, and mingled in the bloody revolution caused by the abuse of reason. O, the crimes that I have committed! I did not shed blood, indeed; but I did worse. And now I am old and desolate. My boy died a Sceptic. But from that hour I believed, because I should have gone mad, despite my pride of reason, if I had thought he who was my treasure and my idol was annihilated. Twenty years have passed since then, and I come here to mourn and to deplore."

"I think I know you now." said Reginald. "The heart is indeed the best instrument against disbelief: if you can touch *that*, negation is impossible; faith necessary."

"I have made hundreds infidels; and now I preach in the fields and the lanes against infidelity. In one moment grief and agony converted me to Christianity. Philosophers would laugh at me: but O how I despise all philosophy! What can it do for you? Will it bring the dead to life? Will it recal the past? Will it diminish the stings of anguish? I say, no. If you are a Stoic, it may help you: but if you have human feeling, it is a mockery and a madness. 'Come to me,' said the divine One, 'all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' *That* is the philosophy we want: angels and seraphs worship it."

"It is the highest of all wisdom; but this worship of extremes is hardly wise. It may be in one sense that Atheism is nearer truth than

Deism; but who can say it is better? No, in the three philosophies—of Revelation, Naturalism, and Atheism,—is the truth in its universality. Christianity is the centre, not the extreme; and reconciles the existence of evil with the beneficence of God. We are happy in ignorance, but happier in knowledge, and therefore I am grateful for all it is allowed us to know: for by aspiring to wisdom and love, we are blest. Good night, sir. I am happy to have met with one whose works I have perused not without admiration of their subtlety, and whose present life is the best of all possible refutations of those principles, since it shows how vain is wisdom which does not soar beyond time in the hour of grief."

He pressed the wasted hand of the old man, and strode thoughtfully away.

CHAPTER LXIX.

A BABY'S DEATH—NELL AND STEPHEN AND THEIR LOVE—REGINALD TRAVERS.

TRUTH is never in extremes: it is the just medium between antagonistic principles; but there is not anything so difficult to find, as the exact point where reason ends, and error begins: we are continually confusing a true and a false medium; and surely, since we are for ever discovering we have made some blunder in our philosophy, as well as our lives, we should learn to tolerate; and discriminate between the errors of the head and of the heart: knowing we make *both*. Some people consider it their duty to persecute others who differ from them in opinion; not perceiving that by persecution a great spirit of resistance is created, and they inevitably injure the cause they would serve. We owe the Reformation in a great measure to intolerance, and though it is undoubtedly a blessing, yet the amount of division and sectarianism created by it have done harm to the cause of religion itself, exacerbating the minds of men, and causing war and murder. But there is a spirit of Catholicity and Eclecticism abroad which must gradually undermine the feuds and animosities which divide nations and parties, and we may hope finally to have a coalition, where ample scope is allowed for the diversities of opinion, and yet all are united in one brotherhood of love and tolerance. And for the principle of union what can philosophy supply equal to the great and universal command of religion and reason, "Love one another!" "Ay; but how is it to be accomplished?" demands the sceptic. "Oh, thou of hearts the weakest!" Love God for your own sake, and love man for God's!

But it is to the little garret adverted to a few pages back that the scene

now shifts. From the brilliant saloon, and the society of nobles, we must descend to the simple joys and woes of those in the lowest station of life. And assuredly there is more scope for the delineation of passion and feeling among the children of nature, than in the haughty pride, the repressed sentiments, and the studied grace and refinement of the mighty of this world. It was about the same time that the entertainment of Lady Rivers began, when the weary artizans are glad to snatch that blessed repose which is alone worth all the pleasures of the rich, and the extent of whose enjoyment we are not aware of until we have lost it by luxury and late hours. The mother and the child were there; but the father was absent. Stephen had heard of a situation at some distance from town, and anxious if possible to secure it went rather late in the day from home. Nell's eyes were fixed on her sleeping infant. Several little comforts were added to the scanty furniture of the garret, and among them a cradle for the baby, in which it lay quietly asleep. Repose is always beautiful; but beyond expression so, on the cheek of innocence, when the placid brow of infancy—shadowed by the waving hair—and the dimpled cheek, and smiling mouth seem fresh from heaven. Sleep! What a divine thing it is! Here it is "sore labour's bath—chief nourisher in life's feast" and it is so full of bliss when we have no cares, and are in health, that I could almost believe that it will constitute some portion of future felicity, when divested of incoherent dreams and vague shadows.

The baby slept, beautiful as a poet's dream! And the poor mother looked so proudly on it, as if she, and not God, had formed its grace and purity. Surely we live as with two lives in our offspring, and when we die, feel it is but half a death, if we leave the beloved ones behind! Some such thought as this was passing in Nell's bosom, for she exclaimed, "O being of *my* being, and of my Stephen's! We both exist in thee, blended and *one!* My treasure! I could not part from thee for a life of Paradise." She rose, and bending down, kissed the velvet cheek of the infant. It was cold. A momentary terror entered the mother's heart; but it subsided, and she said, "O, how sweetly he sleeps! Not a breath, that I can see! God bless thee, my angel boy! He has preserved us, and will still watch over us!—I wish Stephen could see thee, now,—thou wert never so fair!"

She remained contemplating that still and hushed repose with a mother's admiration for a long time. The yellow light of the moon fell on the tiny features and irradiated the golden hair. And she herself looked beautiful, too, though she was pale, and her voluptuous form was wasted with want and illness. She knelt down and prayed. When she was about to rise from the side of the cradle, the countenance of the child was changed. It was still tranquil, very tranquil: but she thought there was a slight noise, followed by a sigh, and then the rounded limbs which had just moved were perfectly motionless.

"He is about to wake!" murmured Nell.

Alas! poor mother! he has awakened—but not on a mother's bosom—on a God's! A baby's death! It is like the ripple on a stream, a breath, a motion—a stillness, and all the loveliness of being has vanished with a murmur of melody. There lay the corpse, and the moon poured down its tenderest lustre on the gentle dust still, though the young life had fled in the bud, and the flower had lost its fragrance. Nell placed her hand on the infant's heart; but there was no pulsation. With difficulty repressing a scream, she took it to her bosom.

"O, he will not die!" she cried. "Wake, my pretty one!—The doctor thought he would live!—Smile on your mother, and take the life which is restored to her breast for thee!—So cold! so icy cold! My God! This is not death?—No, no, no! He will wake soon!" But at last the unwilling eyes of poor Nell were opened, and she knew that what she held in her arms was clay. "Gone?" she cried, "gone! gone for ever! Why was he given to me, to be snatched thus away, as if the Giver repented of the boon, and would recal it!—O, I am sinful! He is safe from sin and corruption. What shall hurt him now?" She placed the little corpse in the cradle again, and smoothed the moveless and delicate limbs. "Just as he was about to prattle—and to call me *mother!*" she murmured, and wept—poor heart!

It was at this juncture Stephen returned, and entered. He beheld his wife kneeling beside the cradle, and the child lying an image of peace in the moonlight. He advanced; and Nell perceiving him, without a word got up, and sobbed on his bosom. He understood all in an instant. And he who had not shed a tear or uttered a complaint in trial and adversity mingled his tears with her's. He kissed the infant's lips, and then embraced his faithful Nell.

"Blessed are those that sleep!" he murmured—and there was a silence.

Not one sentence ever uttered by our divine Master but contains a truth and a consolation! We always associate blessedness with sleep, and, therefore, when we lose a dear one, that sentence implies a joyous waking, and if we are sorrowful, we say to our weak souls—"In sleep is blessedness—he is happy—and we too shall sleep like him, and wake, and find him with us!"

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The morning broke in glory and in gladness. Over the huge city streamed the broad sun, shining like an immortal spirit on some goodly world, over which it is given it to reign. The busy hum of life began, the birds sang, the merriment of nature was heard in the soft and invigorating breeze; and who would have thought one heart was desolate and sad? We can hardly believe, when we first open our eyes on such a morning, that we are really in a sphere of sorrow and darkness; we can scarcely credit that sin and death exist in so bright an earth! That

thought is for ever recurring to us: and the more glorious and beautiful the external universe, the more solemnly are we affected by the mystery of evil.

The childless wife and husband had fallen into a doze in each other's arms. With them the fruition of passion had been so small a portion of their joy, so rich and so abundant had been the finer and purer instincts of mutual love, that time had only strengthened their deep and overflowing attachment. Oh, how radiantly fair is the spectacle of that fond, clinging, human love, elevated and permeated by sentiments undisguised and reciprocal, not a thought, desire, aspiration, on which the heart and mind are fixed, but shared so perfectly! Theirs was not the high and ideal passion which poets sometimes describe: but still it had profound poetry in it. Nearly on a par in age, intellect, and, indeed, in every other particular, they had grown together almost into one being, and their consummate sympathy had afforded them support and comfort in many sorrows and tribulations. So, when they arose, "some natural tears they shed," but they felt their love alone was sufficient for happiness.

"I hope I shall get the employment I went in search of, last night," said Stephen, after looking to see whether any great change had taken place in the infant.

"He is not altered at all," returned the poor mother, without noticing what her husband said. How the heart clings to the earth, which we cannot help thinking is the *being* it contained!

"No, there is the same smile on the face, still—*your* smile, Nelly! He looks just as he was wont at the first morning greeting, when he opened his blue eyes and found himself pillowed on that fragrant breast. Heaven will send us others to love yet, dearest! You weep!"

"They will not be like him, Stephen! So full of intelligence and fondness! But—but he must be buried!"

"That thought of losing sight of the beloved features adds much to the sorrow of parting," returned Stephen, with ill-suppressed emotion. "Yes, he must be buried. We have the means now for the funeral, without applying to the parish. I am very proud, I fear, and could hardly have brought my mind—but it is a foolish thing. Poor dear! But, if he had lived, he might have been weakly and diseased. It is hard to bring ourselves to the belief: but all things are for good."

Some hours passed in conversation of a like nature between the bereaved parents, when they heard a step on the creaking stairs followed by a knock at the door; Reginald Travers appeared on Stephen's opening it. Stephen uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"I was sorry I did not see you yesterday," said the young man. He stopped short, perceiving instantly, with the fine intuition of a delicate mind, that there was something unusual in the place, and in the aspect of Stephen. His eye fell first on Nell, and then on the dead.

"My poor baby, sir!" said Stephen. "You remember my wife, though you see her much altered."

Reginald pressed the hands of his two humble friends warmly and compassionately. "I have never forgotten either of you, and rejoice you are found at last. Poor Nelly—she must let me call her so—she is indeed altered; not less pretty, but so pale and wasted. Stephen, you must remove from this place; it is not wholesome. My father will take care of your wife." And then he gazed at the dead infant.

"Is he not beautiful, sir?" said Nell, with that fond pride of maternal love which outlasts death.

"He is very like you both! Fair bud of promise, thou hast indeed been nipt in thine April life! But the summer would have brought the worm and the canker. It is better *they* should attack the frail body than the imperishable mind! But Stephen, if you will confide to me your history since I saw you, we will consult what steps to take."

"There is nothing I would conceal from you, sir!" And after a minute's pause, Stephen began his tale.

CHAPTER LXX.

STEPHEN'S HISTORY—THE ESCAPE FROM PRISON—VICTORY OF PATIENCE AND ENERGY—AUTHORSHIP.

"You are aware, sir, of the unfortunate circumstances to which I owed my conviction of felony, and I can only again solemnly assert my innocence of all criminal motives in what I did at the house of Mrs. Smyth, nine years ago. I feel that you believe me innocent, that you are not one to judge solely by externals; and therefore I will not now trouble you with any attempt to vindicate my conduct. I was hasty, I was rash; but my conscience and my God have acquitted me of crime, and in every difficulty and grief which have succeeded that unmerited conviction, my exceeding consolation and support have been my innocence and hope that Providence would ultimately clear me from guilt. Assuredly the punishment of man from without is the least of punishments: conscience is both the punisher and rewarder, for it is in eternity and not in time; it is the voice of the everlasting and infinite, the heaven and the hell from which we cannot fall, or escape. I have suffered much from the opinion of mankind being against me; but how much more should I have suffered if my own heart had been so! Every one wondered at my escape from prison after conviction; and it was indeed marvellous how it was accomplished: but I will presently inform you of the way in which it was done.

"I had resigned myself to my fate with what fortitude I might: I had resolved to bear all things without a murmur, so that my very sufferings might contribute to the satisfaction we may feel in any calamity, if we will: for there is no condition of life which a Christian and a man may not reap good from. To my mind, sir, there is not so majestic a spectacle in the universe as suffering nobly endured, with firm faith, with great, deep heart, with unflinching courage. I pity him who cannot derive benefit from the evils with which it pleases Heaven to afflict us all! A man is not a man until he has suffered heroically, until he has risen superior to the poor instincts of animal life, and rejoiced that he has a capacity of endurance as well as of happiness. What poor wretches we should be without the evils we cannot but feel and deplore in one sense, but out of which we derive our highest good! In our boyhood we frequently cannot understand why we are afflicted; but affliction is a better teacher than philosophy. My escape from prison could not have been managed by any ordinary means; but I had a friend who was willing to venture something for my sake; and he entered into a plan for my release with the relatives and friends of my cousin John Jenkins. He pretended to be sent on some business to one of the gaolers, and contrived to drug their liquor who were appointed to go the rounds. I shall never forget the sensations I experienced, when the door of my dungeon was unlocked and I beheld my old friend, in disguise: for liberty is so dear to us, that it almost requires an effort of mind not to dash out one's brains against the prison walls, when we catch glimpses of the beautiful world without, from which we are debarred—we who have been accustomed to the free air, and the glory of nature's face. Oh, the passion of freedom in my heart is more deeply rooted than love of life, and I wonder at the equanimity with which I sustained imprisonment! I am a man of strong passions, sir, and not a stoic in my sentiments; but by the grace of God I am what I am! How we pant for a little space of earth, when we cannot get it—we who can roam through infinitudes with the everlasting mind, and scorn the axe and the grave, ignominy and pain! But we have two natures continually warring the one with the other. Oh, I shall remember the joy of regaining liberty to my dying day! Cheaply was that rapture bought by all my sufferings. And when I found myself once more in the arms of my Nelly, all immediate danger over, I could have wept with ecstasy, if it had not been too deep for tears. And by the sagacity, the ingenuity and the foresight of my liberator, I was enabled to baffle all the exertions made to re-capture me, and to escape to a foreign land.

"I never saw my cousin John after I left the prison: but he too, I believe, was indebted to the same person for various disguises, to which he owed his safety. I married my beloved girl, who had gone with me into exile: but the means of subsistence which we possessed were so

scanty, that if she would have consented to part, I could have wished her not to follow my desperate fortunes. You would hardly believe the endless difficulties we had to struggle with in order to procure the bare necessaries of life: but we had youth, we had love, we had freedom; and with these, no strong spirit can be crushed; its powers of endurance rise in proportion to the demands upon them: we are gigantic in our energies, inexhaustible in our resources, our patience, our hope, and trust in Heaven. The possibility of mind conquering matter is an unanswerable argument to those who would degrade us by the doctrine of necessity to the condition of the brutes. There is no such thing as Fate to the man who dares, to the soul that aspires: we make our own destiny, we create necessity, we are sublimated by difficulties into Gods, and we say, 'Though it be *impossible* to succeed, yet will I struggle on.' That was the sentiment of Prometheus; and it is divine! Surely Milton erred when he ascribed it to Satan! It can only belong to the good, or to those who *try* to be good; never to the bad.

"Yet I should almost have sunk beneath misfortune, but for the magnanimity, the tenderness, the moral greatness of my beloved one, the qualities of whose high mind shone forth with such transcendent light in misfortune, that she shamed me into exertions which I might not otherwise have made. Deny it not, dear Nell! If there ever lived an angel in woman's being you are one! Oh, sir! I cannot tell you, if I had all the eloquence of a Cicero, all the dauntless heroism of that bright creature! She had ever a smile for me, to reward me after toils and disappointments which seemed never ending. We worked together, we gained life from each other's looks, and we were grateful to endure every thing since we were not separated. It is a miserable world to those who make up their minds to a holiday existence: but those, who fearlessly looking evil in the face, go forward; who are not scared by the malice, the scorn, the ignominy that may be heaped on them; can enjoy a life, which the poor despot and the Sybarite can form no notion of.

"At length we came back to England after a lapse of years, and I procured employment in London. What a feeling creeps over the heart, when we find ourselves a solitary unit in an immense city, thrown on our own resources, and without a friend to help us! The mighty machine goes on for ever, and how imperceptible the impetus which we give to it! Yet each individual is a portion of the history of the universe. I became connected with the Press about the time my dear Helen presented me with that dear child who is in heaven. I collected information—I wrote an article—I corrected the press—and all for three-and-sixpence per day; but I complained not. I drudged on, and was happy, for the dear ties of home were all I wanted for felicity, and I flattered myself the day would come when all difficulties would cease.

"I was not fearful of being recognised after all the years which had

elapsed; but such precautions as were possible I adopted; and as I found in England alone could I hope to obtain permanent employment, which might lead to a more prosperous condition, I resolved not to leave it again, except from dire necessity. But my wife fell ill; I could not satisfy my employers, because I would not leave her alone all day, and I lost my situation. But I turned author, and while I sat with my dear Nelly, composed a work which I fondly anticipated would raise me to fame and fortune. I had never before attempted to write a book, but I now concentrated all my energies on a long essay on the best means of ameliorating the condition of our operatives. But I vainly sought a publisher. I had made a mistake, I found. The trashy novel and the flimsy pamphlet might have succeeded; but a work which had cost me infinite thought—a work of which I had dreamed for years—and for which I had been accumulating materials in my mind from early boyhood—'would not go down with the public.' It is first necessary to make a name before you can venture to be at all profound in print. Good people sneer, and say, 'It is clever; but *so* visionary!'

"I have read, thought, seen much: I know the feelings and wants of the class from which I have sprung, and while I propounded some novel views, I never wandered from the main point to which all others should be subordinate. A scientific organization of the people, and a proper distribution of the wealth they create, would save the government an immense expense, and prevent that great demon monopoly from sapping the very vitals of industry, from stemming the tide of association, and fettering the limbs of thousands who would make an amount of riches almost incalculable, if they might exchange their produce for what they want, without being constrained to have recourse to a medium of false utility. My belief is, that were it possible for every man willing to work to sell his labour for the means of life, and not to be crushed beneath the weight of monopoly, the amount of manufactures he would consume would be so much greater, that the wealth of a country would be immensely increased: and this principle I endeavoured to carry out at great length, and to show its various ramifications. I proposed Association to carry out the principle to its fullest extent—I tried to demonstrate that if all classes were united, and all minds directed to the best means of employing wealth, and diminishing poverty and crime, we should not require a huge standing army, a constabulary force, and all the enormous expenses of monarchical government unsupported by republican institutions: for every man would be a soldier, the interest of one would be that of all, and the cry would be 'Forward!' but not merely to ignorance, to poverty, to dissension, and to civil war. Such was the work rejected by every Publisher to whom I applied; and I, too, was attacked by severe illness, until we were reduced to utter destitution.

"In vain I sought for employment; I would have worked with my hands for it, but even this I could not obtain, and we were absolutely starving, when your bounty relieved us. And my poor child is dead! But I am a Christian, and I believe to indulge grief in excess is weakness, if it be not irreligion. Death! why, what is it? We shall all die! and for this world, what a tiny atom it is in the eternity of systems! We are human, and we must mourn; we are mortal, and we must suffer: but when the soul expatiates in the infinitudes of being, there is no evil, there is no grief, there is no affliction moral or physical which it cannot rise above by faith and hope, those seraphs winged with immortality." That man *had* a soul and a religion!

CHAPTER LXXI.

REGINALD AND LORD WHARTON—THE SHARPS, AND OTHERS.

When Reginald Travers quitted the miserable lodging occupied by Stephen and his wife, he did not observe a remarkably small man in the street, who was conversing with a constable, but who remarked him curiously, as his tall form emerged from the dirty door of the house. The young man was thinking over the history of Stephen, and could not help admiring the fortitude, the unbending principle, the exalted sentiments of a being who had raised himself so high by that philosophy, the practical operation of which exalts the intellect and the heart together, and which can only be acquired by experience. Wisdom, if it be merely theoretical, is a very fine thing, but let us see what it can effect for its possessor. Virtue is wisdom in action, and the highest wisdom is that which can produce the greatest amount of actual happiness. We look around us, and on every side find something which requires forbearance and endurance. Bigotry, fanaticism, folly and intolerance excite the spleen of "the natural man," and without patience and charity we are involved in perpetual quarrels and dissensions.

"Yes," thought the Anglo-German student, "this man *is* a man, a noble man! I wish I were what he is, and nothing more!" Reginald Travers was not one who placed his Utopia in levelling all distinctions of rank, but he would not admit any aristocracy except of Mind. *That* is a nobility the sternest democrat cannot but admit to be valid. The royalty of virtue is so divine, we could almost fall down and worship it, if we did not know that "there is only One who is good."

"The Kings of Time," said Reginald to himself, "are Genius and Greatness. Genius brings down to the finite what is in the infinite; it is imbued with the fire which the Titan stole; while Greatness is full of

what the Titan *was*. The majesty of thought is enthroned in the eternal and the absolute; and how can the temporal and the relative contend against such powers and dominations? It is to the operatives we must look for the regeneration of society: when they have reformed themselves, then how easy will it be to reform institutions! At present we live in a transitionary state, and in that strange anomaly of law which is founded on the principle that what may be quite right in theory may be very wrong in practice. It is the head against the heart, instead of their co-operation. But a few spirits like Stephen's, rising from among the people, and constituting themselves the real monarchs of them, stern in virtue, high in faith, and indomitable in resolution, will achieve more than all the Uranian schemes of sages!"

"Ever dreaming, Reginald!" here exclaimed a voice, and the youth, looking up, beheld Lord Wharton. He had reached one of the Parks, and his uncle was walking leisurely along, when he met him so unexpectedly. "So, you are becoming a lion, eh?" said the statesman, taking the scholar's arm. "What are you going to do with your talents?"

"I shall try to accomplish something for mankind. I shall endeavour to destroy some prejudices and errors."

"I always encourage what you call such names. I like to build on the weaknesses of men, for then I do not trust to so sandy a foundation as their reason or their virtue. Your father and I had a hard dispute, last night, on a similar subject. He holds, you know, that reason must ultimately prevail. But, not having any passions himself, he does not take into consideration what a formidable foe is the low, sensual heart, to the eternal intellect! No, if we think as ill as we can of man,—if we believe in nothing but their folly and blindness, we shall be more likely in the right, than if we go to principles."

"My father is far from being a man devoid of all passion; but he has learned to subdue it. That is the lesson we are sent to grow perfect in, ere we can attain to a higher existence. As for folly and blindness, if we have faith in them, and by reason act as if we did not believe in such a power, we are sceptical on the very face of the——"

"Forbear, prithee forbear! Oh, this never-ending, this atrocious recurrence to first principles, which cannot exist out of mind, and therefore are only fit for a purely mental existence! See, here come several of our friends! My incomparable brother, the Colonel, and the equally unequalled Sir Algernon Sharp, on horseback, with Lady Rivers and the Countess. Then there is old Sharp and his son, with Julia, in that fine new carriage with the grey horses—and several others we saw last night."

All stopped to talk with Lord Wharton and Reginald. The latter advanced to the carriage of Mr. Sharp, and the latter shook hands with him cordially, and invited him to take a seat beside him. Reginald thus

found himself opposite to Julia. It was a delightful day—a day when we feel our spirits so buoyant and our hearts so blithe that we wonder we are ever sad; and Julia was more exuberantly gay than was her wont. Lord Wharton regarded the enviable position of his happy nephew with no satisfied looks; but he had an engagement, and was obliged to quit the Park. Julia looked at his retreating figure for some seconds, and then observed—

"Lord Wharton is a great man; but he does not occupy the place his distinguished abilities might entitle him to. You admire him, of course," she added to Reginald.

"Yes, I think him a first-rate statesman; but a very indifferent philosopher. I am too much of the visionary, I suppose, to well appreciate the practical man."

Samuel Sharp sneered. "Do you think that you could surpass Lord Wharton, then, Mr. Travers? Ah! at nineteen we are all vain."

"And what are we at four-and-twenty?" asked Sharp, coldly. "The farther we advance in life, the more overweening we are of present wisdom, and the less reverence have we for the opinions we have adopted and discarded; which should teach us there is no such thing as a standard of philosophy at any particular era of existence.—There, Mr. Travers, I *can* agree on your side of the question, with all my deification of common sense. Julia, why do you smile?"

"*Did* I smile?—I was thinking of what dear old Peter Quick said to me the other day.—'Ah! Miss Julia!' he remarked, 'we are for ever satirising our belief in our own wisdom by our actions. Like to put you up to snuff! No such thing as absolute wisdom; it is the absence of positive folly. When we are children we are inconsistent, when we are of mature age we try to be consistent. Now, I maintain, that a person who sticks to consistency is no wiser than the child.'—Poor Quick! What an excellent creature he is, with all his queer ways and odd phrases! Do you know him, Mr. Travers?"

"Peter Quick is an old fool!" exclaimed young Sharp. "He is half crazy, half knavish, and altogether absurd. As for what you say about progress in wisdom——"

"Nay, my dear Samuel!" interrupted Julia, "please to remember you are not in court, and if you must plead, *I* am to be your Judge. I will not hear Peter Quick abused. Is he not a good man, and a most faithful servant, my dear father?"

Sharp replied—

"I wish every one in the world were no better than he is. Out of a million rascals I could lay my finger on, I would find many who stand higher in the opinion of the world than Quick; but he is worth them all. O, I must introduce you to my head clerk, Mr. Travers. He will deliver an oration to you on every subject in existence in ten minutes; the older he gets, the more he talks."

"I should like to make his acquaintance," replied Reginald, as the carriage rolled on by Kensington Gardens.—He thought to himself—"I wish that Julia would not call her guardian her father. Is it possible that he can want her to marry his low-minded son?"

But while he was thus cogitating, the young lady cried—

"Let us get out and walk in those delicious gardens. I do not care for the country, here."

And, accordingly, they quitted the carriage, and entered the Gardens, which were crowded with company. Lady Rivers and Travers Wharton had gone on together, and Sir Algernon Sharp, having left his horse, had entered the place. Samuel Sharp wanted to speak to the Baronet, and joined him, much to the pleasure of Reginald. At the same time a young lad of not more than sixteen, and of such diminutive stature for his years that he did not look so old, booted and spurred, and with a cigar in his mouth, strutted up to the exquisite Sir Algernon.

"How d'ye do, Algernon, my dear fellow?" said the youth, with all the impudence of Eton's fifth form, and puffing his Havannah into the Baronet's face.

Sir Algernon recoiled with horror.

"Who the devil are you, sir?" he asked, with perfect unconsciousness.

"Don't you know Smyth—or am I so grown?—You were staying at our house, you know, a year ago."

"My good fellow, I don't know any Smyths with penny cigars in their mouths at such a place as this. . . . . Well, Sharp, so you are going to marry the lovely Julia. I wish you joy! She is a devilish fine girl; but rather too tall. Who is that with her?"

"O, the son of Travers! A d—d stupid rascal!"

"I think I have heard of him. They say he's clever."

"He is six-feet-two of humbug!—But I want to ask you when you think it is possible we may procure tickets for that performance of the Sylph—as they call her—Etherea?"

"In a week it is possible you may. Now, it is out of the question. You had better put your name down directly.—By the bye, Algernon, what has become of that girl of yours—Rose? She was a remarkably pretty creature."

"You shall have her, if you like; she is a great bore, but I haven't quite turned her off. Will you take her?"

"No, I thank you; I am wooing Julia, you know; but after I have got her and her thousands safe, perhaps——"

"You are a wise fellow.—I hear you are going to stand for —— at the ensuing election? You are sure to win?"

Here the young gentleman who had accosted the fop, and had met with so decided a rebuff, nothing daunted, came strutting to him again, and walking between two lads rather younger than himself, also smoking.

"My chums, Lord John and Sir Harry wish to be introduced to you, Algernon," said young Smyth, boldly.

The Baronet stared freezingly at the Etonians, turned on his heel, and muttered—"D—n those boys' impudence!"

"Smyth," said Samuel Sharp, "I am sorry to find you indulge in such low habits. Every one smokes, but no one, except a blackguard, is seen smoking."

So saying, the lawyer's son rejoined his party, while the Eton lad exclaimed with an oath to his aristocratic companions—

"There's a distinction for you, Jack!—But let us off to the theatre, now. We'll have a regular spree, to-night; and I'll put Harry up to a move or two. We'll go to H.'s, and twig the rigs there—the Saloon, the Shades, the Finish; and have a bobbery."

CHAPTER LXXII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE—THE THEATRE—KEMBLE AND KEAN—POETRY—PROGRESS OF THE LOVES OF REGINALD AND JULIA.

What an intellectual age it is! The age of slang, of humbug, of pseudo-sentiment, and of the worst cant (if that be possible!) of utilitarianism and mean-nothing political phrases! Our boys, before they don their tails, affect all the vices of mature manhood; they smoke, they drink, they fight, they go knocker-wrenching, they run into debt, they keep mistresses, they cultivate whiskers, they affect the society of sporting characters, and, in short, do everything they *can* do without being subject to transportation, or being cut by "decent people." And the education they have! What lots of Latin and Greek their masters cram them with! And what use do they make of what they *may* remember after some hundreds of floggings? They make false quotations from Horace and Virgil, they affect to despise their mother tongue, and go to France for conversational phrases, while, as for real knowledge and wisdom, they are as ignorant of them as the Man in the Moon. But then they know the world, they know the languages spoken by the Greeks and Romans, and by the denizens of St. Giles's, they can use their fists, they can take a fellow's nose off in a duel, they can dance, and describe all the "Beauties of the Ballet." How they throng to the Opera to use their glasses, and criticise the beautiful dancers' legs! This is the civilization of the 19th century—this is the triumph of science and of reason! Thus does the world scrub on from year to year, and people fancy it is all going well, and that those who desire any reform are fools or knaves. So be it, with all my heart! *Their* opinion is—an opinion.

"Will you dine with me to-day, Mr. Travers?" said Sharp to Reginald. "We shall be almost alone, and after dinner we are going to the theatre. Julia adores Kean."

"I thank you; I shall be most happy to do so. I admire Kean, with all his faults, myself. But do you think, when the novelty of his acting is over, he will excite the same enthusiasm?"

Julia replied, "He has originality and fire, and they alone will always command attention. I suppose you don't think Kean a John Kemble; but he is equally great in his way."

"I cannot quite agree with you. Kemble thinks more deeply than Kean, who carries away your judgment by the might of his electric melodrama. There is a grandeur in Kemble, a stately composure, and a solemn majesty, which to me amply compensate his monotony and want of passion: and when he *does* burst forth, how irresistible is his acting! But I do not go to the theatre for excitement—to live a more intense life than I otherwise could; and therefore I prefer Kemble to Kean. But I admit the merit of the lesser actor."

"Kemble is a solemn humbug!" here exclaimed Samuel Sharp, who came up as Reginald was speaking. He added, "May I ask what you *do* go to the theatre for, if not for excitement? Surely you *must* do so, if other than ordinary feelings are excited by the business of the stage."

"No: I like to study the abstract in the real. I endeavour to make the poetry uttered, and the exhibition of passion, subservient to the end of creating thought. I consider that to be able to trace the causes and effects delineated by the actor subserves a better purpose than amusement: yet I am amused, too."

"We flatter ourselves we are wiser than other people; but why go to the theatre, if you want to think? It seems to me, your thoughts would be less distracted in the closet."

"Of course they would. But one wants food for the closet. After the brief and unsubstantial pageant has passed away, then we can recal the scattered ideas, and trace the causes of those emotions which tragic passion may have created."

The young barrister would have rejoined, for lawyers love controversy, and he thought but meanly of Reginald's reasoning powers; but Julia said, "Well, we had better go home now, for it is five o'clock. I am always sorry to leave this place. Do you not wish," (addressing Reginald), "you could carry away with you those places you love—the trees, the streams, and the verdure? They *are* carried by the heart, indeed, for ever."

"Yes; but absence endears the beautiful to our souls."

"Do you mean to say you ever wish to be absent from what you love? If so, you are a very inconstant person. *I* should wish to have the objects of my love omnipresent. I think that omnipresence will be a joy of heaven. Certainly, parting is one of earth's sorrows."

"Yet Shakespeare says, 'Parting is such *sweet* sorrow!'"

"I know not," returned Julia, with a musical laugh, "I suspect, Shakspeare did not mean that literally."

"But," interposed the lawyer, who had previously taken no part in the conversation, "should you like *never* to be able to get away from what you love, Julia?"

"Not if it loved me. I worship what people without fancy call *sameness*. It is eternal change. The more we think of one thing, the greater is its variety, the profounder is its power and beauty."

They reached the carriage, and Sharp and his son talked together on some legal matter, while Julia and Reginald discussed poetry and romance.

"What do you think poetry *is?*" she asked of him. "Do you consider the poetical is the remote, the abstract, and the ideal only?"

"Far from it. But association is the law which regulates all poetry. Take that faculty away, and what were imagination? When something appeals to the heart powerfully, it is not because in its own essence it contains the power of moving our emotion, but rather because we associate it with its antithesis—grief with joy, hope with despair, and so on. Therefore, though the common and the real in life do not ordinarily excite our imagination, let association invest them with an extrinsic charm, and by a magic touch, how powerfully our hearts—our souls are touched! Wordsworth, more than any other poet, has this faculty of elevating the *common* in all things; and wherever there is goodness, is there not greatness?"

"Yes, a humble peasant, who drudges cheerfully on, may be greater than a monarch, and I admit the sorrows and felicities of obscure individuals may be a better theme for poetry, and excite more general sympathy than merely magnificence and power. Yet I like gorgeous poetry."

"Of course! Who does not, in a measure? The mistake of Wordsworth has been that he will not admit one object is more poetical than another. He entertains so great an antipathy to the ornate diction and continual splendour of writers without higher powers than command of language, and sweetness of rhythm, that he has adopted the opposite extreme. But I consider the medium in all things is the best."

"And whose poetry do you read most, may I ask?"

"You will hardly believe me when I tell you I read very little poetry, though I aspire to be a poet. And I do so on principle. Poets are continually endeavouring to soar away from actual existence, and are apt to forget that in doing so, they must inevitably leave a portion of individuality behind. Shelley now is almost lost in the infinite: his idealism, —or as the Germans would say,—his subjectivity,—removes him from the very apprehension of those who have not experienced the same associations and ideas. We should not try to be only a poet's poet."

The carriage reached the lawyer's house as this conversation terminated: and in the course of a few minutes they were all seated at dinner with the addition of two or three to their party. Reginald sat next to Julia, and, I believe, he did not eat a very great dinner, for love was making sad devastation in his powers of appetite, and all the gastronomic achievements of a French cook could not tempt him, while he heard the sweet laughter of Julia, and beheld her fine, open and radiant face, full of intelligence and varying hues.

It never struck Samuel Sharp that the joyous and smiling Julia could be falling in love with a visionary boy, who appeared absorbed in German transcendentalism and wild idealism to his vulgar common sense: but girls have strange fancies: and there was something in the mild, yet thrilling voice of the scholar, in the light of his large, luminous eyes, in the radiance of his high forehead, and in the tenderness of his smile when he looked upon her, which excited feelings in her bosom she had never experienced before for any one.

Reginald Travers was continually immersed in that species of abstraction which to a common observer seems listlessness, when he was not conversing with Julia; for he was not a person to conceal intense feelings by the affectation of gaiety, or loquacity. He was always himself, thoughtful, gentle, and full of subdued, yet high enthusiasm; but he could never degenerate into the charlatanism which conceals the real sentiments and sensations under a mask; he could not descend from the pedestal whereon he stood, for the sake of the world's low or high opinion. He never thought of what others would think of him; he only considered what his own heart would approve. And Samuel Sharp, with his conceit, his little sentiments, his want of all poetry and imagination, imagined the Thinker could not reach him. But his father imagined otherwise. There never lived a man, it may be, with keener insight into character than Sharp. Though devoid of those profound qualities of intellect which command universal attention, the huge strength of sense, the subtlety and keenness of the lawyer measured the intellectual stature, the breadth, the solidity of a mind with unerring tact and precision. He was quick to detect the lurking admiration of Julia for the lofty-minded Idealist: but he did not desire to check it, for more than one reason. First he entertained a doubt whether the coronet, the fame, the high intellect and knowledge of woman's heart, possessed by Lord Wharton, might not tempt Julia to regard him with favour. He saw that she despised Samuel, and strange to say, he did not contemn him less himself for his utter worldliness, his coldness, his vanity, conceit and shallowness. Yet the younger Sharp was not without quickness and shrewdness, where he himself was not directly or indirectly concerned, and with an ordinary woman, perhaps, would have made more progress than would Reginald Travers with the reserve he usually imposed upon

himself. But Julia was not an ordinary woman. If her intellect did not greatly exceed that possessed by sensible and intelligent females who have been highly educated, the refinement of her taste, the elegance of her fancy, and the warmth of her pure heart led her to seek those of a different cast to the million: and, somehow, she had long associated all that is great and noble with Reginald Travers. The impressions of childhood are stronger than we commonly credit; and Julia had never forgotten her young playmate, with his love of books, his dreaminess, his thoughtful face and his winning smile. Suddenly, after a lapse of years, she accidentally read his maiden work, full of that energy, that exalted humanity, and intense love of virtue which have since characterised a writer, who has as many faults and scarcely fewer beauties than any living author of the world. Then the incident of the attack on the carriage followed; and when she saw the pale face of the student, lit up with the excitement of the time, and gazing with interest on her, when she heard his name, and listened to his clear and melodious voice,—when afterwards she felt the immense superiority of his intellect and principles to those of most young men of his age, and, moreover, that he regarded her with deep admiration, she was resolved, if she ever loved, it should be "such a man."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE THEATRE—HAMLET AND MACBETH—THE PEER AND THE LOVERS—TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

Lord Wharton sat alone in his apartment, buried in intense thought. Ever and anon a light would flash from his dark eye; but then he would shake his head and mutter, "It will not do." At length he rose, and took his hat and walking stick. "Confound all plots and schemes!" he exclaimed. "I will go and hunt for pleasure to-night. Let me see, there is the young Countess at the Opera; but that is too troublesome a game for me to play *now*, as she plumes herself on her virtue, as well as her absence of prudery. Besides, I hate the Opera; I have had too much of it. I want novelty now. Ah! hang it; *what* is new to me? Poor Wharton! thou hast exhausted worlds, but cannot invent new ones!"

The air was less sultry than it had been at noon when the Statesman went forth; but it was a warm summer evening, such as disposes the voluptuary to indulge in the feast of the senses, and to exclude all troublesome reflection entirely. We are greatly affected by the external world, and we know not how much our mood and our destiny are operated on by a bright day or a pleasant evening. What in the universe indeed

does not exercise an influence on our souls? So the Peer paced along the least-frequented street, uncertain where he should go, but firmly resolved "to make a night of it." As is usual under such circumstances, he took the direction he was most accustomed to pursue, and found himself in the vicinity of one of the theatres. "Ah! Kean acts to-night, I see. I will have a look at him before I go in search of wine and women, for somehow my taste for the theatre is not much impaired." Thus cogitating, the Statesman entered the theatre, and proceeded up stairs amid a profusion of bows from the people attached to the house. He glanced through the windows in the box-doors to select a seat, and the form of Julia his ward caught his eye. "She here!" he thought. "And there is Reginald bending over her, while her eye sparkles and her bosom heaves. What a glorious creature she is! But surely she will not fall in love with that milksop!"

The first act had just concluded when Lord Wharton presented himself in the box where the lawyer and his party were assembled. "This is an unexpected pleasure," he said to Julia. And he sat down immediately behind the beautiful girl, a gentleman with whom he was acquainted resigning his seat to him. Lord Wharton was one of the finest dramatic critics of his day, and not the most delicate shade of histrionic talent escaped him. He had made the Elizabethan dramatists a profound study, and Shakespeare, above all, he had applied the powers of his mind to fathom. The play was *Macbeth*, and Lord Wharton observed,

"The genius of Shakespeare in this tragedy, to my mind, has taken its highest and most magnificent flight: *Hamlet* may be more profound in some respects; but I hardly think *Hamlet* is so perfect in every portion;—that it exhibits every struggle of a great mind with such sublime power, and excites our awe so intensely."

"But I like *Hamlet* best," returned Julia. "The only thing in his character which I do not understand is his treatment of poor *Ophelia*. What do you think of it? should we ascribe it to doubt or frenzy?"

"It is the natural irritation of a man, who having once been an optimist in philosophy has been led by circumstances to suspect all things and every one."

"Nay," interposed Reginald: "Shakspeare has delineated *Hamlet* as a poet, a philosopher, a prince, a gentleman. I cannot think that one of such exalted character could have treated one he loved, so harshly, if he had retained his reason perfectly. But *Hamlet* is the abstract of humanity: sane and insane together; he is not mad, but he is driven to the very verge of madness—to that point where it is difficult to decide in what state the reason is. And this theory will account for his apparent inconsistencies."

"Nay, I cannot see that *Hamlet* is ever distracted. He says of himself that he is no better than he should be; and we all delight, when we are wretched ourselves, to make others participate in our feelings."

"*Hamlet* says, 'he could accuse himself of such things, that it were better his mother had not borne him:' but that very humility is a virtue. I do not believe he would have wished to make any one miserable—far less *Ophelia*."

"It is a strange thing, but true, that when we are unhappy it is the being most dear to ourselves we would reduce to our own condition. The sceptic who feels his scepticism creates his own misery, would attempt to make the being he loves best like himself; the thief would do likewise, and so on, *ad infinitum*. In this way I account for *Hamlet's* pouring his doubts of the existence of honesty in any living man or woman into the ear of *Ophelia*. But the bell is ringing!"

Julia had resigned the cudgels into the hands of Reginald, as women generally do when they argue with a man, and Lord Wharton did not want to get into a discussion with his nephew, so that he was glad when the curtain rose. The sagacity of the Statesman easily penetrated the state of the hearts of Reginald and Julia; for love, particularly in its incipient stages, can hardly be disguised from an eye like his, when suspicions are aroused. The very absence of the consciousness of love precludes the guarded demeanour which supervenes in its more advanced state. And Julia had no idea how much she felt for Reginald. Women appear to be willing to disguise from themselves, as long as possible, the condition of their feelings, as if they were humiliated by experiencing them before they know they are at least reciprocal. It is otherwise with men: but perhaps there has never been any deep and lofty passion which has not germinated at nearly the same period. I have no faith in the fervour of those hearts which require years to move them into anything like warmth, any more than in the constancy of that affection excited in a few hours, unless it be under very extraordinary circumstances. Did Reginald and Julia, then, really love with that pure intensity which no time can diminish: or did they merely like each other's society, and admire each other's character? They would never have forgotten, even then: but the aspiration which is a portion of being, the desire which is amalgamated with the soul, the mystery in its fullness and integrity was imperfect.

Lord Wharton thought he might easily devise means to counteract the transient passion of a romantic boy and girl, but he knew that to throw impediments in the way of it, might defeat his object. He had strong faith in the perversity of human nature, and was convinced that so many of those termed "marriages of love" are the consequence of indiscreet opposition to the wayward will of lovers.

"If we could only *compel* any two lovers in the world to be together for a month, and see no one else, how heartily sick they would be of each other!" thought Lord Wharton. "Who would ever hear of marriage between *them?* No, no! I will not be so green as to seem to wish to

oppose this business; but I will find means to effectually prevent its coming to an issue."

Short-sighted Lord Wharton! But how could he understand such a man and such a woman? He, with his vile sensuality, his brutal passions, his absence of all the finer feelings of humanity? And yet he *had* loved —not generously, not purely; but as he could never love again. Julia, however, had excited more than a passing admiration in his breast, and he was resolved to possess her person and her fortune. He sat during the performance of the tragedy for the most part absorbed in devising the best means of securing his beautiful and wealthy ward for himself. Hitherto he had not troubled himself much on the matter, for he saw that none had made the slightest impression on Julia's heart, and he thought she preferred his society to that of any other man. But now he saw it was necessary to bestir himself, if he did not wish the prize to elude his grasp. And such an alliance was the only method whereby Lord Wharton could repair his ruined fortunes, which were now in fact almost desperate.

But what was passing in the soul of the lawyer, while the statesman thus meditated? He watched, when he could do so, unobserved, the shadows that passed across the face of his hated enemy from a corner in the box, and smiled inwardly. "It is all going well," he thought. "If I could only tempt him to do something that would blast his reputation for ever! I think I have the means of doing so. When he finds that his hope of possessing Julia is a broken reed—we shall see. Yes, I will detect him in some dishonest act he shall commit. He *has* done many a worse deed than what I intend he shall be guilty of: but the eyes of men are only open to something they do not often hear of." Such was the substance of Sharp's cogitations during the representation of the play. Below was the mighty fictitious tragedy in action, and the passions which agitated him were no less violent than those which the genius of Shakspere has immortalized.

To the reflective mind there is something in a theatre, when crowded with a brilliant audience, which creates a train of thought, full of sadness and grave morality. Behold those insects of a day, smiling, glittering, joyous, melancholy! In their hearts how many associations are evoked by the magic of the mimic scene! How the spirit of towering ambition is stirred by the august action on the stage, how love is excited, how grief is raised! And such is human life—a tragedy, a comedy, a dream.

> "And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,
> And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind."

Some such ideas were passing through Julia's mind, for she remarked to Reginald, on the conclusion of the play, "Does it not seem to you, as if a portion of our own being had passed away, when some great spirit which has been present to our imagination and senses, like this *Macbeth*—a spirit too high, and yet too low—has departed from us, and the great stir of passion is over?"

"Yes," returned the Idealist. "All is hushed! The proud heart, the stern intellect, the haughty daring—all the towering energies which seemed of such immortal might have vanished! Over such a wreck as *Macbeth*, angels might pause and moralize. Yet, you will hardly believe it possible that I feel frequently sadder after a comedy than a tragedy. Your eyes inquire why I feel thus, and I will tell you. A tragedy is finished. The actors have, indeed, departed from us; and the feelings which have been so harrowed up, are exhausted. But it is quite otherwise with a comedy. We know that a tragedy in human life follows the sunshine and merriment. But from the grave in which a great man lies, all is silence. For him no more the fever and the unrest—for him no more the stormy passions and the frustrated ambition! 'He sleeps well!' That is the sentiment which so powerfully affects me."

CHAPTER LXXIV.

LORD WHARTON AND HIS THOUGHTS ON THE BRIDGE—SUICIDE—THE ENTHUSIAST.

Lord Wharton quitted the theatre before the after-piece was concluded, but his mood had changed, and pleasure was not now his object. The human mind is continually vacillating and uncertain, and instead of repairing to any of the gorgeous temples of infamy he was in the habit of frequenting, the statesman bent his way towards a less frequented part of the town than that where the theatre he had left was located. In the course of a few minutes' walk he found himself on one of the bridges, and leaning over the parapet, he contemplated the dark and silent waters beneath for the space of some minutes.

"Sick! sick!" he muttered, "still am I sick of life! I could say, with *Hamlet*, 'Fie on't, O fie!' only I am ashamed to utter such a sentiment. Ha, ha! I am grown a twaddler! How easy now it were to plunge into that river, and forget all things!"—

In certain moods what a strange desire there appears to be in some minds to wish to escape from existence,—from the turmoil and the struggle of this busy world! Every man seems an enemy, every object a despair. I say not that this sentiment is participated in to its fullest

extent by every man; but no sensualist perhaps has not experienced it; and there was something in the cool aspect of the river below which was an actual temptation to Lord Wharton, with his throbbing temples and burning brow.

"One plunge—" he thought, "and then—ay, *then* what would follow? Annihilation? No! Shakspeare would have us believe that it is the fear of the hereafter which deters us from suicide. Yet it can be hardly worse than the hell of being we are so frequently tormented with on earth. The dull satiety, the repletion, the disgust which I feel are a very hell. Why do I seek pleasure? It is all a mockery of reality! Yet I am impelled as by some fiend within! How many who never contemplated self-destruction have been tempted into the deed by a momentary impulse in such a place as this! We gasp out our existence in a chase after bubbles, and having caught them, we dissolve—even as the bubble doth."

A thin and shadowy form here caught the eye of the statesman. It was that of an old man, with white hair and silver beard, who was standing not far away from the spot he occupied, also looking down on the river. He observed Lord Wharton, and moved slowly towards him.

"Good night," he said. "Brother, wherefore do you seem so desolate of soul? We are all brethren in Christ, and therefore I speak to you."

There was something about the old man so singular, and his voice was so earnest, his face so mild and placid, that somehow the statesman was impelled to answer—"I am not desolate of soul, friend! Yet I marvel that men should live so long, when it is so easy to die."

"It is easy to die," responded the stranger, "if you die assured of a better life. But otherwise, I think not. It is courageous to live, when you wish for death: it is a coward's act to fly from existence, because it is full of misery and disappointment."

The Peer replied, "I am unable to see how it is more courageous to live than to die! If we are uncertain of the hereafter, the more heroism in seeking it. Why is it cowardly to fly from evil? Do we not all try to avoid wretchedness throughout existence? Is it not the great law of being?"

Lord Wharton was one who delighted in sounding the minds of men, and his physiognomical powers led him to suppose the person he addressed was of remarkable character: nor was he deceived. The old man answered,

"Such were once *my* sentiments. But Time changes all things; and we depart from ourselves even as yon ripples depart, never to return. We float down the river of existence, full of hope and despair alternately; and unless we believe with a great faith in the world beyond, how shall we escape desperation? You say, it is *not* cowardly to seek another

being, when you are weary of the present! My friend, what is cowardice? If a soldier turn his back on an enemy who invades the country he is bound to defend, should we not call him a coward? In the soul of man there is a continual battle between principles and motives. The motives cannot be good without they are based on principle; and I hold that to defend life is a moral duty, because existence is given to us as a trust, and not to be disposed of as we will. Therefore, when we are tempted to destroy ourselves, we are cowards who dare not face the foe of our salvation, when he would rob us of the gift of God, unless we fight the good fight manfully. The foe of our salvation is the evil motive against the infinite and everlasting principle; and when we fly from present misery, who shall give us peace, save One?"

"But what right has Omnipotence to make me wretched?" returned the statesman. "Why should I not be permitted to seek happiness wherever I can find it? If I were to give you something, the possession of which made you unhappy, should you not think it rational to throw it away? I contend I have a right to act as I please with regard to myself—to live, or to die, as I desire."

"Omnipotence never imposes anything on you which *can* make you unhappy, provided you accept the antidote to the poison which is provided for your good. How is it possible to conceive God creates or commands, except to exalt and make happy his creatures, since creation and law are out of himself?"

A dark smile passed over the face of the statesman.

"I suppose God creates, because it pleases him to do so—because it conduces to his happiness. It is no virtue at all in him."

"Virtue is the highest in humanity, and the lowest in divinity," replied the old man to the statesman: "and as to creation conducing to the *happiness* of Deity, it is madness to talk of such a thing; since He is the centre of all principles, and can never be more or less happy, whatever we do. Therefore, if we commit suicide, though we do not make God unhappy or angry with us, we hurl away his trust, as though it were not worth our possessing, and must be wretched in eternity, according to the constitution of things. For Hell is of man's own creation, not of God's. Despising his free gifts or his trusts, we inevitably strip ourselves of wealth incalculable, and how can we purchase the felicity only to be bought with the riches of faith, of adoration, of virtue, of self-conquest? Seek Heaven, and you shall find it."

"I know of no Heaven, except sense," said Lord Wharton. "I should have been a Mahometan. Good night."

"Stay yet a moment! Pause! Retire!" exclaimed the old man, fervently. "You are on the verge of an abyss, and will you not hear the warning voice? You are wretched, and will you not be happy? Oh, that brute-idolatry of sense robs us of worlds more divine than all those

myriad stars of heaven! Look you what I am! I was an Atheist once; but now, by the grace of God, there is a smile in my soul, which is the in-dwelling of the spirit—the death unto sin, and the life unto eternal glory! O, I was so miserable—I was so benighted! But now, behold, all is light and glory, all is peace, hope, faith, all is love and aspiration—I am in heaven on earth!"

"Strange!" muttered the statesman, gazing on the calm features of the old enthusiast, which were radiant with the earnestness and the eloquence of his sincerity. "But the blood is hot within me! I am not old."

"Believe not, friend, that you cannot wrestle with and subdue the demon within your bosom, because your passions are not extinct. The Christian who fights against his physical nature conquers easily by his spiritual nature. I say the struggle is the victory. Subdue yourself, and know that Eternity is in you. The spirit of God which dwells with us in eternal effulgence purifies the earth, and elevates the being, until it assumes immortality. Such is the mystery of things—such is faith.—Alas! he is gone! How strong the evil is against the good!"

The old man gazed upon the retreating form of the statesman until lost in distance, and then, with a sigh, resumed his own way in the opposite direction. Yet his eloquence had not been without effect, and Lord Wharton did not choose to trust himself to listen to it longer than he did. Evil is weak in stability always, and the statesman could find no arguments in his own mind which satisfactorily overthrew those advanced against him with such zeal. How can the philosophy of Materialism answer that of Spiritualism? Religion is, in fact, the spiritual philosophy, and its antithesis the material irrationality. The one predicates the existence of a mind superior to sense, the other reduces man to a brute:—follow reason, and it is not possible to stoop to sense; obey sense, and how can you serve reason, when they are necessarily opposite?

Lord Wharton returned to his hotel, and proceeded to his room. His lips would move, but he uttered not a sound, his hands clenched, his broad chest heaved.

"The mood is coming over me again!" he exclaimed. "I wish I could disbelieve in all things!—That spectre! It is nine years since I last beheld it: and it haunts me still, wherever I go, with words of perdition and of frenzy! O, for annihilation after this life! But we cannot think as we wish to think. Reason knows no compulsion: therefore I believe in spite of myself. That old fanatic! That I should feel what he said—*thus!* We are the fools and Helots of ourselves, if we cannot choose what we shall put faith in, and what not.—Suppose I turn methodist! O rare! Thomas, Lord Wharton, a methodist parson! If I were a Roman Catholic I seriously believe I should seek a monastery. Damn spectres, and devils, and women, and wine—and all things! I

never asked for life: and yet I must live. Well then, I will live well, and die even what I am!"

CHAPTER LXXV.

REGINALD TRAVERS—DREAMS AND LOVE—TRAVERS—QUICK.

THUS do men live from day to day, struggling with remorse, and perhaps promising amendment; but doing nothing *save* promise. They tell us "Hell is paved with good resolutions:" but there is no resolution at all; we vacillate between principles and passions, and in such a contest, what gamester would not stake ten to one on the latter? And a philosopher comes with this nostrum, and a parson with this dogma, and what can their charlatanism and their dogmatism effect? Nothing. But the world goes on, and progresses, and philosophy becomes less intolerant, and theology less exclusive and more universal, despite interested motives, and party and sectarianism; and science, love and freedom will prevail. "In these last two centuries of atheistic government," (says Carlyle, somewhat *too* strongly, perchance,) "I reckon we have pretty well exhausted whatever of firm earth there was to march on; and we are now very ominously, shudderingly reeling, and let us hope, trying to recoil on the cliff's edge." Who can doubt that it is so? Men are getting ashamed of not thinking, and as thought corrects itself, and has a necessary tendency to improvement, the hour will come, and God shall smile on mortals once more, as he smiled on them when they were innocent. Yea, to my mind, God will love the work of his hands greatly more, when the creature has purified himself, than when he was made in his essence without impurity. What else has been the object of all the cycles since the world began? The past shall make the future!

Reginald Travers was also alone, after accompanying Sharp and his party from the theatre. He knew that he should not sleep if he went to bed, and therefore sat down and gazed out of his window. Ever idealising, he mingled his peculiar views of destiny and human fate, his sentiments, his feelings, and his aspirations; he endeavoured to trace the immense succession of causes and effects, and to account for the rise of new feelings in his being. In early youth, when thought has not been disciplined so sternly as we find the necessity of doing as the mind advances, we love to indulge in various trains and under-currents of ideas, and thus it was that Reginald connected things seemingly the most remote: his love of one, and his love of all, his poetry of self-existence, and his philosophy of humanity.

"Mysterious Love!" he said. "Mystery of mysteries! Thou prime-

val essence, from when all essences flow! And do I love the *one* better than the many? O yes, I love her more than the deep spirit of Night, with its solemnity and its silence! *Already* I love thus; and much more will come! Every object that is beautiful, every sound that is divine seems instinct with Julia's loveliness, with Julia's voice. She comes to me on this low night-breeze that fans my cheek, and is redolent of peace. The music of her spirit makes all the universe diviner and more full of Heaven!—She, so far the heavenliest work of all!—Why do I love her? Answer, O ye worlds, where all is etherealized;—ye worlds above the stars, present to our souls alone!—Because my being pants to mingle with a purer being! And wherefore thus? Because nothing which is single is perfect. Even those spheres above are not alone in the pathless ether, as we may imagine. By loving we adore, by adoring we live!"

I shall not attempt to give an analysis of all the thoughts which possessed the fine brain of the Idealist; for the object of the Novelist is rather to present an outline than to fill up a picture. The history of a mind it is impossible accurately to give, for the thoughts are so thronging, and frequently so incongruous, that unless we were omniscient, we could not perceive its endless ramifications. To pourtray a character, however, below the surface, it is necessary to follow the intellect as far as is practicable: and my design is not to present a merely skin-deep assemblage of individuals to the fancy.

In Reginald, more especially, I want to delineate the poetic thinker of the nineteenth century,—a being of lofty mould, entirely devoted to the abstract and ideal. And from the imaginative heights of passionate admiration, he descended at once to the serene depths of thought, uniting his destiny, as all men do, more or less, with that of the universe. "By love, all things may be accomplished," he thought. "It is our only hope for man. Without it, there could be neither faith nor virtue. And men hope more and love more than they did. I have a prophetic vision of futurity. The mechanism of society is disorganized, but out of that disorganization we shall have perfect harmony;—from the wreck we shall have a beauteous temple, in which hallelujahs shall be sung! The ruin of hate and hell is near at hand, and from the ashes of the phœnix whose fire consumed the evil with itself, will spring a flame inconsumable!"

On those thoughts did Reginald Travers sleep. He laid his head on his pillow, and slumber descended like some angel on his eyelids. Need it be added that his dreams were as divine as ever young poet's were, when replete with the first passion and the last. He thought the world was regenerated, that all were philosophers and poets, that all low and mean desires had vanished, and that he and his Julia wandered through perennial verdure, and whispered such things as are unutterable when we would embody their subtle meanings. And when he awoke he remembered the kisses of that Ideal Form of Julia, and he felt the worship

and the passion. So he wrote fine things about Julia, until his father came to him.

"Why, Reginald, my dear boy," said the philosopher, "I have been waiting for you to come to breakfast for nearly an hour! It is ten o'clock. But you have very undefined notions of time, when you sit down to write. What have you done? I suppose you will soon complete that work?"

Reginald coloured. "I have not been composing what you suppose," he replied, putting away his writing materials. "I get tired of philosophy sometimes—or rather it gets tired of me. I will come down to breakfast now." The father and son descended.

"I have been so busy the last few days, that I have scarcely had time to exchange a word with you. But important events are on the eve of birth. Lord Wharton has just sent me a letter from the Duke of ——, who proposes that, on the resignation of the present ministry, I should become Chancellor of the Exchequer. But that can never be."

"Do you not think you might do good in office?"

"No, I should be restricted in what I did. You hate politics, Reginald! All is dissatisfaction in them, because there is no universal opinion. If we could create *that*, the millenium of the world would be near. We want principles of political economy still."

A letter was here brought to Travers; and having read it, he said to Reginald, who had just taken up the newspaper, "I am asked to preside at the ensuing meeting for the suppression of prostitution, or the proper regulation of it, while it yet remains."

"It is a necessary evil for the present, I suppose," said Reginald; "but it is one which might be lessened."

"Of course it might. But men sigh over what they term the natural evils of society, and do not, or will not perceive that it is only the want of energy on their parts which prevents their destruction or amelioration. Do you think we should have such an evil as this among us, (an evil the most awful in its greatness, and most baneful morally and physically), if we were not culpably indifferent to the morals of the people? What government has done all it might have achieved for the benefit of the governed? They rule by fear, instead of love. Do you not answer, Reginald?"

"Love—did you say?" stammered the youth. "I—I was absent—pardon me."

"Why, what ails you?"

"Nothing—I am quite well. But I was at the theatre last night, and overslept myself; and when I have done so, I am always stupid."

Reginald then entered into conversation with his father; but a visitor broke in upon them,—a little man, of singular appearance, in antique dress—

"Beg pardon, Mr. Travers, for intruding," he said, "but I'm secretary to the society of which you are elected President. Scientific and humane Association! You know Peter Quick? Is that gentleman your son? Bless me, what a height he's grown to! I can hardly see him when he stands up! Great blessing to be short, though, sometimes."

Little Quick was just the same Quick as ever, but a little more elderly and odd in his dress: no one could ever mistake him for another. Fashions had changed: but he still wore the same suit, or rather non-suit of clothes, carefully brushed and neat, but coarse; and every thing about him looked as if it were not subject to mutation, but had gone on from year to year, like amorphous existence.

Travers smiled blandly. "I am glad to see you look so well, Mr. Quick. There is no one for whom I have a greater respect than yourself."

"Much obliged! Yes, they tell me I wear like an old evergreen. Friend of mine remarked, the other day, 'You look as if you had been poked in a bandbox for ten years, Quick, and taken out as fresh as ever.' Yes, thank God, though I'm not far short of sixty, here I am, well and hearty, and do more business than ever. And, though I've never sought riches, they've sought me, and so I give away a little where I think it's of any use. These societies springing up are some of them monstrous humbugs. But a few of them do good. I've brought you some papers, sir, to look at."

"Won't you take some breakfast with us? we are later than usual."

"Thank you, no! I always take my breakfast at six o'clock, summer and winter. Nothing like early hours for business. Make a hearty meal in the morning, as soon as I've dressed, dine at one, sup at seven, go to bed at eleven, and rise about five. That's the way to get on in life, I've discovered. I called in Portland Place as I came along—having got some flowers for Miss Julia—who you know. Met Mr. Sharp, and he said to me, 'Quick, I wish you wouldn't work so hard. I'll pay you the same salary for half the labor.' He's a kind master; but he wishes it to be thought he has no more heart than a stone. But I told him work did me good. What should I do without work? It's my native element, I was born to it, as a fish is born to the water; and I'm convinced the more you are occupied, the better for your health and morals. O, Mr. Sharp and I are always at work, and see what strong old fellows we are! People think Sharp has no feeling: but they don't know him. He doats on Miss Julia: and certainly she is a winning creature."

"You have known her many years!" said Reginald, with glistening eyes, as his father read the papers which Quick had brought to him. "She is attached to you."

"Bless her, yes. The man that marries her will have a treasure richer than worlds. But I forgot I've an appointment with Mr. Taylor. You've

heard of him, I dare say: he's a great reformer of abuses, and is the most indefatigable advocate of our society. Good morning, Mr. Travers —you're an excellent man, sir, and a great man, sir—the friend of the people, and not the indiscriminate supporter of all the rubbish which they want, without knowing the meaning of it all. Nothing like universality! Truth is everything—from toryism to republicanism—that's my notion, I think—but I must not neglect my engagement." And with an odd motion of the head, intended for a bow, the little man made his exit.

"What an eccentric being!" remarked Reginald, when he was gone—"but I am sure there does not breathe a better soul."

CHAPTER LXXVI.

PUGILISM—BUTLER, THE BETTERS, AND THE DRAYMAN—"MOLL"—OLD ACQUAINTANCES—POLITICAL MATTERS—BLACK BILL.

From the altitudes of Idealism and Platonics we descend to one of those low and odious scenes where humanity is so brutalized and degraded that we hardly recognise its divine origin, and question whether those we see have reasonable souls.

At the period to which our narrative refers, pugilism was the rage of "Young England," and the battles which were fought for immense sums attracted to the places where they took place numbers of the aristocracy and gentry. Fortunes were made by the prize-fighters, but few of them escaped without injuries which maimed them for their whole existence. It is not to the arena our readers must now suffer their imagination to be led, but to a low sporting-house, kept by a once famous pugilist who had sustained such damages in the last contest he ever fought, that he "could never fight again." A most heterogeneous assemblage of persons crowded the large tap-room of the ex-pugilist. There were a great many fighting men smoking and drinking, and their large, muscular forms, and ferocious faces, were contrasted by the slight figures and aristocratic features of some of their "noble" patrons. The lowest blackguards of London stood side by side with some of the most exclusive of exclusives; but the latter puffed their "mild Havannahs" and drank their brandy and water very unconcernedly, while they examined the various candidates for the honors of the ring, and made their bets upon them. The great pugilists of the day, in number about half a dozen, sat in a little knot conversing together, or answering the questions of those who backed them.

Some of them were enormous fellows, and their bare throats seemed muscled as with iron. The sinews of their hands were enlarged beyond those of other men, and their arms were of Herculean bone and size.

The same brute courage was stamped on the faces of all, and they appeared to be devoid of intellect and feeling. But, at a little distance from these fellows, was a man of great size, who sat apart from all others. His age was somewhat beyond thirty, his height was rather above six feet, his chest was of vast breadth, and his strength appeared colossal. His hair was red, and he had a great patch on the cheek, or otherwise he might almost have been considered handsome. But the great distinction between him and the boxers he set near, was the look of thought and even of power in his countenance. His eye was full of fire, his mouth denoted firmness and courage, but not a savage spirit; yet there was a stern gloom on the brow, and a dark deviltry in his looks, which evinced he was not of a tender or gentle disposition. There were two or three loose women in the room, and one of them appeared to survey the stalwart form of the red-haired individual with an admiring eye. Others there were whose strength did not seem inferior to his, but none had so much symmetry and vigor.

"Who is that?" asked the lady, who appeared so enamoured of the huge chest and giant limbs of the man in question, turning to a dark personage of rather repulsive exterior. "Who is that—boozing there?"

"Why, Moll, if you must know, it's Sandy Butler; but he's a cursed surly fellow, and hates the girls, so you had better not go near him."

"That for his surliness," returned the girl, snapping her fingers and tossing her bright brown ringlets. "I'm not afraid of any man." And advancing to "Sandy Butler" she said in that coaxing tone peculiar to her class, "My dear! may I drink out of your mug?"

Butler lifted up his eyes to the pretty brazen face of the woman and muttered an oath. "Drink, if you like," he said, giving the strong liquor to her.

"Thank you! They say you are surly; but I won't believe that, with such a face as you have got. Are you going to fight? You have immense arms."

The man made no reply, but the girl impudently sat down on his knee, and put her arm round his neck. All laughed; but Butler preserved a moody silence, without noticing the familiarity of the young lady, who was rather elevated.

"My darling! why don't you look at me?" she said. "Do you think I'm so ugly?"

It was at this juncture two persons entered the room, whose appearance excited some interest. They were celebrated for their judgment in matters of the ring, and were known to bet high. "Ah, my dearest Colonel," cried a well-known sporting character, as he shook hands with one of the new comers, an exquisitely dressed man, of fine person, "I am almost in despair. I cannot induce anyone to take odds against this giant here," pointing to a broad-shouldered fellow of gigantic stature, beside whom tall men were dwarfed.

"Oh, that's the drayman, isn't it?" returned the Colonel. "Let me look at your arm, my good fellow. Yes, he's a strapping boy, by Jove! Weighs seventeen stone, and stands six-feet-six."

"The big butcher offered to fight him; but he has broken his leg. You see he has beaten eight of our best men successively. Here are some pretty muscles, you see—oblige us by taking off your coats—but they are nothing to his."

"I would have taken the odds if the butcher had fought," said the Colonel's companion, a little man of mincing manners, but plainly of high fashion. "What do you say, Travers—do you think he would beat Brown?"

"Hollow," returned the Colonel, "I don't see one here who is a match for him," and his experienced eye ran over the room, until it suddenly alighted on the man Butler, when he uttered an exclamation of delight. "Here's the fellow we want," he cried. "Come, Saucy Moll, get off his knee, and let him bare his arm."

The red-haired man glared on the Colonel for one instant, and then arose, and stripping off his coat, he exposed an arm with such thews and muscles that even the prize-fighters swore it was "wonderful."

"You have been a blacksmith, I suspect," said the Colonel. "Let the drayman stand beside him. He is half a head taller, but, upon my soul, I don't know what to say. Who will bet? Algernon, what will you do? Just feel the upper part of that arm! Gods! It is magnificent—it is sublime!"

"I'll take an even bet if you like, Travers, for a thousand. I suppose they are about the same age?"

The betting went on briskly; and it was finally arranged that the fight should come off, a fortnight from that day, between the drayman and Butler.

"My eyes!" said the giant to his opponent *in prospectu*, "look out, red 'un—I'll *smash* you!"

"*You!*" returned Butler, with a derisive laugh; and he lifted up the vast form of the drayman, apparently without an effort, and held him high in the air. There was a murmur of applause.

"Two to one on the red 'un!" cried several voices, on this exhibition of strength. "Who trained you, my man? Where do you come from?"

"From Kentucky—English born, and Yankee bred," was the response. "I've fought a dozen Kentuckians as big as the drayman. *They* are the fellows to fight!"

"Well, if you can handle your mawleys as you ought, a little pluck will gain the day. I suppose you have been at an English mill?"

"Oh, yes! So, drayman, mind yourself. Give me your paw, old fellow, and let us see if you can bear a gripe." He pressed the monstrous hand of the giant until he roared with pain.

"I say, my cove, what are you at? You gripe like a vice. Let me see if I can't make *you* flinch." The drayman returned the awful gripe, but not a muscle of Butler's face moved. "You might as well press heart of oak," said the drayman. "Yes, we shall have a regular set-to!"

"Here is an earnest of what I will give you, if you win," said the Colonel to Butler. "Remember he is heavier than you are considerably, and has been well trained by the first pugilists we have; so take care." He offered some guineas to Butler. A very peculiar expression was visible for a second on the face of Butler, as he replied,

"No, keep your money till I have beaten."

"Well, I never knew such a cove as you are—not to take blunt, when it's offered by a swell," remarked Moll, as the betters departed.

"Bah, woman!" replied Butler surlily; and donning his coat, he strode moodily out of the tap-room, and quickening his pace as he proceeded, soon found himself in a narrow court, and stopped at a filthy house, which he entered by means of a latch key. He proceeded up a crazy staircase, and entered a small room at the top, in which two persons were seated. One was a man of middle age, or rather beyond it, and the other a woman. The latter rose and welcomed him home, but the former did not stir from his seat.

"Have you got any money, John?" asked the man. The answer was in the negative. A silence ensued. The elder man at length exclaimed, "This life will never do! I have seen Black Bill, and he proposes a *pannie*. That fellow's game to the backbone. He has returned from over the water, and is ready for anything. What say you?"

"I say, *no*," Butler replied decisively. "As for money, I will get you plenty: but you have too much of an "itching palm" father. What's the use of this d—d gold, when you've got it? It may enable you to make a beast of yourself—nothing more."

A momentary flush was seen through the swarthy skin of the would-be robber; but he replied coolly, "What use is there in aught *except* gold? It buys luxury, pleasure—and what not?"

"Peace!" returned the younger man. "It buys not peace. If you could give me that, O, I would slave for you to procure this gold you worship. I want peace! Well, there is one way to get it. I have seen several persons who were acquainted with me to-night; but they cannot penetrate this disguise. And I am changed too—much changed—we all three are! I saw that scoundrel, Travers Wharton, a few minutes ago; and he has betted largely on me. I wonder what has become of *her*? No matter! I hope she is dead."

"Poor John!" murmured the woman. "You cannot forget."

"That is impossible, mother; but what then? I live; I see slaves and villains thrive, and honest men starve, and my heart is fed with a great passion from the ashes of the past. I have not been idle; and before

long great things shall come to pass. That miserable French revolution has done both harm and good to the cause of liberty! Men fear to strike now. They say there is a medium between anarchy and despotism. What is the difference between a brutal, bloody tyrant and a sanguinary oppressive demagogue? Yet it has shown the people what they can do, if they are organized; and systems are shaken to their centre. How we are plundered and insulted by these rulers of ours! But surely we shall derive a strength from that rapacity and insult to destroy them for ever! Father, let us live for vengeance, and die for freedom! We value not life, and can afford to throw it away. Each movement of the masses strikes a death blow to oppression, each defeat is in fact a victory. We only want to teach the people what they *might* be—to ignite the passions that are torpid for want of zeal: the spark raised, the explosion must follow."

"You are too hot-headed, John! What are the people to us? If they choose tamely to submit, let them. No, no, I have outlived those dreams I had, twenty years ago! Let us return robbery for robbery, and laugh at laws which man has made, and man may break so easily. Wife, some gin! This is the stuff to comfort one's heart. O—here's Black Bill, who promised to pay me a visit: he's a d—d good fellow of the right sort."

In these individuals will have been recognised the Jenkins family: but we leave them for the present, and return to the fortunes of Stephen and Nell.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

STEPHEN AND NELL—THE VISITOR—REGINALD AND SHELLEY—THE POET'S GENEROSITY.

"OUR dearest will be buried to-morrow," said Nell to her husband. "Before another noon, the cherished form will be gone."

"No, love, we shall retain it in our heart of hearts for ever! Eternity cannot efface the recollection of love; for such pure feeling is not of this poor sphere of ours—a shadow that flies."

"You are right, Stephen—you are always right! But we must weep the loss even of material objects so dear to our souls."

"Yes, earth is endeared by heaven. We are human, my Nelly; and all that is not above humanity must be full of sorrow. Oh, the tears that man has shed, and God has dried! We are never long wretched, when we seek consolation from on high! Nay, grief itself has no bitterness, if we have faith—which is hope and love combined. I wonder we should feel death so much, when life fills up the blank!"

"The loss is supplied, my Stephen: but it *is* a loss."

Thus did those noble beings solace themselves under their bereavement, never doubting for a single instant in the wisdom and mercy of their affliction. It is hard to reconcile ourselves sometimes to an irremediable calamity; but its very certainty may in some measure close the wounds, more than if the sword of Damocles hung over the head:—the economy of evil is, perhaps, the most wonderful of the heavenly philosophy, although it forms no integral portion of it. I wish that I could devote some space here to the subject; but as I cannot, I would ask the intelligent and thoughtful to pursue the theme, and the deeper they advance into the heart of the mystery, the more occasion will they find for admiration and wonder. Good is no enigma; but the absence of it is.

"The more we are chastened, the more we are comforted," said Nell. As she spoke these words, a handsome carriage stopped at the miserable house in which they lodged; and, much to their astonishment, immediately afterwards a beautiful lady entered their apartment, when, after tapping, she was bidden to come in. It seemed almost as if the last words uttered by Nell had been prophetic, and an angel had come to them, so beautiful was their visitor, who addressing herself to Nell, exclaimed,

"Pardon this intrusion, at such a time as this; but a friend told me some particulars of you, which interested me in your behalf, and I induced him to give me your direction. So I am come to ask you if I can be of any good to you?"

Stephen and Nell were both much affected by the kindness of their new friend. It is in the hour of adversity we are ever most susceptible to benevolence. Amid smiles and sunshine it seems blended with the frame of nature, it seems a part of the divine economy; but when the atmosphere of the heart is chill and dark, and the cold world has frowned its darkest frown upon our souls, oh, how blessed is a pitying look, a tender word:—they reconcile us to sorrow,—they are the balm of suffering!

> "Though friend after friend may each falsely depart,
> Though Life's dreary shadows around us may fall,—
> One shake of the hand that is felt at the heart—
> And, oh, 'tis a beautiful world after all!"

We have much need of friendship and good offices one towards another: we are not brutes and stoics to be contented without social intercourse; and though we may be disappointed and deceived in those we take to our hearts, the essence of love, in its catholic acceptation, is too sacred to be destroyed by falsehood.

Nothing good is ever really annihilated; the life of things is unchangeable; and were ever evil to triumph over good, why then hell has conquered heaven *already:* for in the constitution of nature there must have been a principal inimical to virtue originally implanted in the universe,

and the Gnostic doctrine—so blasphemous and vile—is correct. No, we must never despair of man, since he did not make himself, since the universe did not make him,—but God did. It was a fair sight to behold the bright and joyous-hearted girl, accustomed to such splendour, in that squalid apartment, where death and corruption had been, and were yet busy. Never is beauty so divine as when it is irradiated by the beam of compassion,—so like a seraph's smile, or what we conceive of the brightness of eternity.

"O, Madam!" said Nell, "you are too good. Mr. Reginald Travers told you,—but thanks to his bounty, we want for nothing. O, he is so good, so kind, so wise, that his presence alone carries peace and comfort! It is long since we have known such friendship and goodness—bless him!"

Julia's splendid eyes swam with tears, and she took the hand of Nell and pressed it in her snowy palm.

"Indeed," she said, "you must let me do something for you. Riches are useless if they do not relieve some burthen, or alleviate some distress; and I am certain you will not refuse me the gratification of giving out of my superfluity to you, since that is a little pride which rejects the good offices of friends—and I feel that the noble-mindedness which has sustained you through so much ill fortune will not——"

"Nay, Madam," interrupted Stephen; "we are not in want of your generous bounty. We are not too proud to accept such charity; but I had rather work for the things we want, since he alone has a right to them who is willing to fulfil the conditions of Heaven, and the idle are as weeds that poison the good flowers of life!"

Julia gazed on Stephen with admiration, and no longer pressed her bounty: but before she could depart there came another tap at the door, and Reginald accompanied by some other person appeared. He did not immediately perceive Julia, but said to Stephen—

"I am merely come to ask how you are, and to say I have taken a lodging for you.—How! Is it possible?" he added, the form of the beautiful Julia meeting his eye. She blushed slightly.

"You have sent us an angel, sir," said Nell; "but I am sorry she should have come to this miserable dwelling."

"An angel, indeed!" echoed Reginald, fervently; and the look he directed to Julia was one of passionate love.

His was the adoration of the pure soul, and his passion was more excited by this instance of his idolized maiden's goodness, than it would have been by any other means. He had advanced into the apartment, leaving his companion outside, but Stephen said to the stranger—

"Will you not walk in, sir?"

The person he addressed was a slight, delicate-looking youth, who stooped considerably, and in whose face there was an expression of in-

tense imagination. He had been absorbed in reverie before Stephen addressed him, but accepted his invitation, and entered the room. The walls of the garret were damp, the floor was dilapidated, and the roof of the house was seen through the broken ceiling.

"Alas!" muttered the stranger, "to such things are the poor reduced! Their health suffers from want of proper lodging to keep them from the winds and rains: while the lazy opulent——"

He did not finish the sentence; for Reginald exclaimed—

"I had quite forgotten;" and turning to his companion, added, "My dear Shelley, this lady admires your poetry greatly." And he introduced the poet to her he loved. "But we are intruding on you," he said to Stephen. "Good bye. I shall see you to-morrow, when I hope you will remove from this place."

He led Julia away; but Shelley lingered behind, and put a purse into Stephen's hand.

"No, no, I thank you, sir," said he, detaining the poet, who was departing without saying a word; "I cannot accept this purse from you."

"Why not?" returned Shelley. "To whom does the earth belong? To the whole human race!—You have as much right to what I give you as I have,—and more—because you need it. Farewell."

"Stay, Mr. Shelley. Your generosity oppresses me. Pray take back this purse."

"Nay, when you see others in greater want than yourself, you will relieve them. I wish, poor hearts, I could restore to you the little one you love! But all the wealth in the universe cannot bring back the dead to life. It was a cruel thing in nature to recal her gift to you so early.—Does the child lie there?"

"Yes, sir," said Nell, removing a garment from the cradle, and discovering the corpse.

Shelley gazed sadly on the fair features.

"It is utterly impossible there could have been any use in creating this little one, to die before its reason was developed," he said, contemplating the serene face earnestly. "The only purpose possible could be that of lacerating tender and loving hearts."

"You err, assuredly, you err," returned Stephen, though the poet had been soliloquising rather than addressing him. "He died, that we might wish the more for heaven."

Before Shelley could make a rejoinder, Reginald returned, and unwillingly receiving back the purse he would have given to Stephen, he departed. When they reached the street, Shelley observed to his companion—

"That seems to me a miserable sophistry, that evil must be inflicted, in order that good may be evolved. What should you say if I were to plunge a knife in your arm that your patience might be exercised!"

Reginald replied—

"The analogy is false: for if I wound you, and do not at the same time give you the means of healing the wound, or if I only wound without the purpose of bettering your condition, I commit a crime. But if, on the contrary, I plunge a lancet in your arm that I may prevent or remove disease, I act kindly towards you. But, then, you reply, 'It would have been better not to permit the disease.' I answer, if it prevent a greater evil, it is good: and it is impossible in the nature of things there can be any good without evil, since all is negative in time; and one state implies another."

"Then, wherefore create time? If Deity could cause nothing but relative good, he had better not have put forth creative power; since relative good is in fact evil."

"I deny it. What we call evil is relative good. A trifling disease would be a boon to one who has suffered great agonies."

"But, surely, evil *is* evil."

"Yes, to a certain extent. I do not contend that there is an equality of happiness and misery in existence. Therefore, if God had created, without the possibility of restoring the equilibrium, which a state of mutation necessitates, he *had* better not have caused existence out of himself—which is absolute good: but if Eternity is made more happy by a little suffering in Time, how can it be said he is not beneficent?"

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

STEPHEN'S PHILOSOPHY—NELL'S VISITOR—THE RESCUE—FLIGHT—THE RIVER—THE CONSTABLES COWED.

"THE last thing that man learns," said Stephen to Nell, when they were alone, "is that perfect faith, which is the highest of all philosophy, whereby we are grateful to Heaven that we are stricken. At first we can only be resigned; but resignation and submission at length grow into gratitude. This is the religion of eternity: and it is not *in* man, but must be acquired by him. How hard it is to rise superior to humanity, and yet all may do so!"

If I were asked for the best argument against unbelief, I should say the practice of such a man as Stephen affords a more irrefragable proof of the divinity of the principles on which he acts, than all the wisdom of Grotius and Fenelon can afford. What can the sceptic say, if he perceives the beneficial effects of a pure faith: how it can support and vivify the spirit and aspirations, when without such strength all is utter despondency? Stephen was such a being as the humble philosopher, Wordsworth, has given so fine a picture of, in his noble poem of "The Excur-

sion," a work that has done, and will continue to do an infinity of good to man. These examples of fortitude and faith energize and sublimate us: one good man makes many good, as, alas! one bad man defiles many.

It was requisite for Stephen to go out to arrange about the funeral of the child, and on leaving the house he observed a very short man walking opposite, but was too much engrossed with his own feelings to pay any attention to the circumstance, though he thought he had once before seen him. The individual watched him until he was out of sight, and then entered his abode. Without giving any intimation of his presence before he entered, he presented himself to Nell, who uttered a terrified exclamation on beholding him.

"Never fear," he said, "I am not going to hurt you; but I wish to make a few inquiries, which if you answer, you shall be safe."

"What right have you, sir, to intrude yourself thus?"

"You see I am a little connected with Bow-street, my girl! You seem to have forgot John Thompson, but I have a better memory for old friends. I was surprised yesterday to see Mr. Reginald Travers come out of such a house as this: but now I see how it is! Though he seems so sanctified, he has an eye for beauty. And that flash lady who has been here is, I suppose, a mistress of the other young fellow?"

"How dare you talk so, sir?" returned Nell, stifling her apprehensions at the presence of Thompson.

"I *dare* do anything—but I bear you no malice. Do you know what has become of your family! If you like now to give me such information as I want of your father, I can put £50 in your pocket."

"I know not where he is!" And as she spoke Nell thought of the danger of Stephen. But the man had not mentioned him.

Thompson paused a minute, and then said, "I've got up in the world, my girl, since I last saw you. Sometimes I make more than a thousand a-year by thief-catching. So I'm looking out for a mistress! Nell, you are a monstrously pretty woman—but you seem poor."

"Begone, wretch! You would not dare to insult me thus, if my husband were at home. I know what you mean, and I loathe, I abhor you!"

"And may I ask *who* is your husband? Don't you know the power that I have? A word from me, and the gallows——"

"Ah!" screamed Nell. "Mercy, mercy! You would not—you *have* a heart. Oh, Thompson, spare him! he is my world! Look," (and with a sudden impulse she exposed the dead infant),—"let that little one, so soon removed from the miseries of this life—plead for its father with those peaceful looks, so eloquent of heaven and of God! If you take Stephen from me, you take more than life. He is so good—and you know he is so innocent, too! I kneel to you, and as you hope for future pardon——"

"Nay, nay, rise, my dear Nell! You can easily purchase his safety. Come and live with me, and we will have many children to supply the place of that one. Why do you recoil? Remember my power!"

"I am a wife, and the mother of that blessed one," returned Nell, as she rose, and stood erect, pale, and proud, with a dignity that awed the Bow-street officer. "*Your* power! O, what is the power of man? No; let him die, rather than that I should be dishonored! Go, vile demon, and bring your chains! Take him to the dank dungeon—take him to the scaffold: but as the Lord liveth, I would sooner a thousand times plunge a dagger to this heart than submit to your foul caresses. O God! O God! Is it come to this? But Thou wilt protect him still. And I may prevent—yes! Ha, ha! I thank thee, guardian spirit, for that whisper!" She made a rush for the door, intending to lock it on the outside; but Thompson seized her, and a struggle ensued.

But Nell was weak from recent illness, and though nerved with desperation, she felt her strength was inadequate to contend with that of her foe. Oh, the mortal agony of those moments, as she felt her efforts were vain, and the vision of Stephen led to ignominious death perhaps, rose to her imagination! She knew she had no mercy to expect from Thompson; but if she could warn Stephen of his danger in time, he might escape. Thompson however overpowered her, and then said,

"I shall now lock you in, fair mistress:—but if you had succeeded in what you wished, I have a rattle which would have brought me immediate assistance."

These words had hardly escaped the mouth of the short man, when he was suddenly seized from behind, a gag was thrust into his mouth, and his struggles were vain as those of a child against a giant. Nell uttered an exclamation of surprise, but did not instantly recognise her deliverer.

"You do not know me, Nell," cried the voice of John Jenkins. "You see I am disguised." While speaking John had been bandaging the eyes of Thompson, who could not see him throughout the struggle.

"O, how came you here?" exclaimed Nell. "I thought you were in America."

"I have returned from thence some time. And Stephen—how is he? That little child was yours?" He pointed to the corpse.

"Yes," murmured Nell, "our only child."

"I heard where you were from Black Bill—a friend of mine—who saw Stephen, and knew him, a few hours ago, and watched him into this house. For this little scoundrel—fetch me some rope, and I will tie his arms. But you must not stay here."

"No, no; I must hasten after Stephen—and I must leave my child! But be it so. There is some rope for you."

Having bound Thompson hand and foot, John and his sister left the room, locking the door after them. They descended to the street, and then Nell cried.

"Alas, I know not where to go! Should Stephen return, what is to be done? For if he finds me gone, he will not be able to seek me."

"I have a friend at hand," answered John; and he had hardly spoke when the worthy gentleman known to the reader as 'Black Bill,' but whose appearance was considerably metamorphosed, came up to him. "I will tell him where we shall go, and he can wait here until Stephen returns," said John to his sister.

This being arranged accordingly, they quitted the street in which the wretched lodging Nell had occupied was situated, hoping to meet Stephen as he returned. Nor were they disappointed. Stephen was no less astonished than Nell had been to find John Jenkins was in London: but they had no time to waste in making inquiries, and John urged them to proceed with him to the house where he said his father and mother were living.

"I should like to return and secure some papers,—and kiss the baby before I go with you," said Stephen; "and as you say this Thompson is secured, the peril would not be imminent."

"I know not that," returned John. "Most probably the fellow had comrades within hearing, and they will wonder at his protracted absence. Hark! What noise is that? Come along! It is a rattle, by heaven! I could not have secured Thompson firmly: or perhaps he has bitten through the rope. Hasten!"

As he spoke, Black Bill came running up. "Cut your stick," he exclaimed, "or you'll be lagged."

The quarter of the town in which they were abounded with labyrinthine windings, and Black Bill being perfectly acquainted with them darted along, while two other rattles were sprung. The Jenkins's all followed; but poor Nell was faint and could hardly walk. John perceived this instantly, and catching her up in his arms proceeded with her through an unfrequented lane, at the extremity of which was the Thames. But it was evident they were pursued in all directions, for rattles sprung at every step they took, and they were fearful of being seen by others than the police, and stopped. Black Bill ran with all his speed to the river, and jumped into a boat containing a lad of about fifteen.

"Jump about, Jem," he said. "Get out the other oars." They were ready to push off when Stephen, Nell and John got to the edge of the river. "You two had better lie down," said Black Bill to the married pair, "for they'll soon be here; but they mayn't follow if they don't see you in the boat. John, take the helm. Come, Jem, pull away!"

And the boat was pushed off, and cut the water rapidly, Black Bill and the lad rowing with all their might.

"I hope they won't see us at all," said John. "It was lucky we came in the boat together."

These words had just escaped his lips, when several constables, and a

crowd of persons arrived at the water's brink. But those in the boat had made good use of their time, and were nearly a hundred yards away, so that their persons were indistinct: but the constables shouted to them to put back. Affecting not to hear, Black Bill and the lad rowed swiftly onwards, while Stephen and Nell crouched beneath. A wherry was quickly sent in pursuit of them, and was manned by several practised watermen, while several constables also entered it.

"Hang it, Jem," said Black Bill, "can't you pull any stronger? John, take the oars of him: he's but a young 'un."

Jenkins immediately took the place of Jem, and the speed of the boat was immensely accelerated; but it was not well built, and the wherry in pursuit rather gained than lost upon them. They shot through the last bridge, and as they did so, perceived a huge barge bearing down upon them, which obliged them to alter their course; and the pursuers lessened the distance which had been between them by one half.

"Let us only get to some place where the fellows will not be able to get more help; and then we'll show them something more than a clean pair of heels," said John.

"I've got but one bull-dog," remarked Black Bill.

"I have a brace," replied John.

"And I've got a cutlass," said the boy Jem.

"The oars will serve for weapons to beat off such curs as those," observed Jenkins.

The chase continued for nearly half an hour more, when the wherry was within gunshot of them; and then John rising up, exclaimed, "Run her ashore, Bill—we are far from any place they could get help from now."

There were half-a-dozen men in the wherry, three watermen and three constables; but when they found resistance was contemplated, and saw the enemy had fire-arms, they seemed to think discretion the better part of valour; and paused.

At a short distance from the place where the boat now remained, was a narrow path winding through a dell, and skirted on either side by precipitous banks which rose to the height of nearly fifty feet; and John Jenkins proposed to his sister and Stephen that they should land and proceed through the dingle, while he and Black Bill defended the pass.

"Never!" exclaimed Stephen firmly. "You would certainly be overcome."

"But something must be done," returned John. "The cowards will get help, sooner or later: but you see the constables have nothing but their staves, and they are not powerful men; so that we should have no difficulty in keeping the pass—nay, in beating them back. But I have some disguises with me, which it will be better for you to put on, as soon as you can do so unobserved. Here is a grey wig for you, Stephen, and

I've got one for myself to match. Get out of the boat, and Jem—who is an old friend of yours, though you do not know him—will lead you to a place of safety. The old Gipsy King lives somewhere hereabouts."

"Can it be little Jem Thompson? I recommended him to the care of the old man, but I feared—well, I will get out of the boat; but not to desert you."

Stephen and his wife landed, and the boy followed them, and then the constables appeared inclined to make an attack; but the clicking of the locks of the pistols in the hands of John and Bill intimidated them: for, as Scott observed in Waverley, a man with that little weapon may awe many, because although he can only kill one person by firing, no person likes to be that one. Meanwhile John coolly donned his wig over the red hair he wore and was perfectly transformed by it—as was Stephen when he had done likewise.

"We shall easily baffle them in the thicket," said John to Black Bill. —"But is that another boat yonder? Yes, by Jove! They are coming after us, too;—we had better run for it." Suiting the action to the word, he jumped out of the boat, followed by his companion. "Let us separate," he cried. "Jem, you know this place well; so you take care of those who are with you. Bill and I will go together."

The men in the wherry, emboldened by the approach of succour, now also landed, but hesitated to advance into the dingle, where a bullet might find its way so easily to their brains; and thus they lost sight of the fugitives. But when their friends joined them,—confident in numbers,—they continued the chase. The light was by this time waning, for it was some time past sunset, and though they found the trail of those they pursued, they were not able to follow it, as the shades were deep among the trees; and after several minutes spent in unavailing search, they divided into two parties, thinking chance might put them into their power. In this, however, they were disappointed.

We shall leave them for the present, and return to other characters in our drama. Alas! dear reader, how often is the author compelled to trespass on your patience and forbearance, and how seldom can he make amends for the frustation of your wishes, while he hops about will-o'-the-wisp fashion, hither and thither, and you have no power to catch him. And it is an awful responsibility for a writer to waste so much invaluable and irrecoverable time, as he must, if it be to no purpose! Suppose, now, but two persons read every copy of this chronicle of the "Peer and the Blacksmith," by the time it is finished some one hundred thousand hours may be expended on its perusal. Yet we all consume powers and feelings, both *in* ourselves and out of ourselves—in our waking dreams and in the reading of imaginative works—which are very precious. Still, do not think, if you choose to reap advantage morally and intellectually, as well as otherwise, you may not do it from any book, because

there is nothing but may excite reflection. I only condemn the practice of some novelists, who think that to hurry as fast as is possible from one incident to another, as if it were at a race, is the legitimate purpose of fiction. What is the object of the novel, or what SHOULD it be? "To wake the soul by tender strokes of art," to excite the passions, and yet to purify the heart; to stimulate the powers of reason, and to fascinate the faculties of imagination; to idealise on the real, and at the same time not to desert the actual; but to kindle in the breast a love of virtue and a detestation of vice, to imbue the soul with rational principles of true piety and genuine faith; to satirise follies, though not truculently, to be the friend of the sick and the sorrowful, affording gleams of consolation, while diverting the thoughts from brooding too deeply on irremediable misfortunes: and, surely, if any *one* of these objects can be accomplished, it has not been in vain. *Collectively*, they are all in all.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

QUICK—TAYLOR AND SHARP—REVENGE—ANNA—THE RENCONTRE—FANNY AND HERMES CONSULT THE STARS.

IN the office of Mr. Sharp sat two individuals on the same evening as the circumstances narrated in the last chapter occurred. The first was little Quick, who was seated on a high stool, writing, talking, and listening by turns; the other was a man of about fifty, of rather low stature, with hair somewhat grizzled, and a countenance somewhat saturnine, and full of grave intelligence and shrewd power.

"Yes, that money which old Richards kept so carefully for the child which we don't know whether it be alive or dead," said Quick, "has accumulated immensely. Strange thing—as I don't want it, nor trouble myself about it—but all I touch turns to gold.—Poor Rose! So you are certain you have seen her, and that rascal, young Sir Algernon, has been abroad with her until recently?"

"Yes, Quick, I am *quite* certain, for I have seen her,—nay, I have spoken with her. You know now that I am the principal agent of the society which the unfortunate lady who lived with Lord Wharton created; and I met her—O, how changed! But I could never forget that face. I saw she was wretched—she *must* be wretched—and I considered it my duty to endeavour to recover the lost sheep. She was touched by what I said; but only wept."

"That's the way of them all! And how did you meet her?"

"By accident alone! I thought that I had subdued every feeling connected with that sad error of my prime of manhood; but I felt it

deeply—unutterably! How the pulses of the heart will beat, while the heart throbs at all!—But when will Mr. Sharp be here?"

"I expect him in the course of half an hour.—You have altered your course of life greatly, Mr. Taylor."

"I do not know *myself!* When I recal what I was, and think of what I am, I am lost in amazement. Who would know in the respected Taylor, the worthless Williamson, who lived on the credulity of fools?—But thus we change, and our former being is as a dream!—Ah! Mr. Sharp, I have not seen you for a long time."

Here the rich solicitor entered the office, and received his visitor with some cordiality.

"I have heard of your progress through many towns," he said, "and I am glad to find you have been so successful.—But there is that in you, Taylor, which I do not understand. I suspect you are trying to create a moral power to overthrow us all; but, my dear fellow, you will never succeed."

"I do not desire to disguise my object," was the reply, "and should hardly despair of making you a convert to my principle, if you could spare the time required to get into the heart of the matter. I do—though not with conceit of my poor merits—I do conceive I may be able not only to reform abuses; but to create the elements of positive good. This is a subject, however, for future discussion.—I am just come from Lord Wharton, and I find him sunk lower than I thought it was possible even for *him* to sink. How wretched he is."

"I thank God!" exclaimed Sharp, in the words of the Jew—to whose character his own was not dissimilar, for if he had lived in Shylock's age he might have been Shylock. "I thank God!—But I will make him more miserable still—by defeat and shame."

"There was a man you *profess* to respect beyond every other, who enjoined you to love your enemies, to forgive—to do good to those who wrong you."

"It is impossible—utterly impossible. I will walk out with you in a minute—excuse me if I leave you."

Sharp quitted the office, and Quick getting off the stool, apparently not without risking his neck, exclaimed—

"You're quite right:—revenge is all humbug and nonsense;—no such thing as revenge—unless you *do* forgive—that's my system—that's wisdom and religion. It makes me sorrowful to think how our ignorance creates our misery! This world's all a shadow, and he that worships a thing only FOR the world, is mad."

"Ay—a mockery,—I see it now. We worship ourselves, and die hopeless."

Here Sharp returned, in time to hear the last sentence of Taylor.

"We *must* worship self," he said, taking Taylor's arm, and nodding to

Quick as he left the office. "How can we adore a principle or a being to the exclusion of our own desires? If then we are constrained to prefer ourselves to all the universe, is not that man a dolt who would sacrifice an object which can make him satisfied and happy, if attained, to a principle which can afford no gratification, if carried out?"

"But all principle in action *does* make us happy. The very endeavour to act up to principle is happiness."

Sharp shook his head.

"By a parity of reasoning," he rejoined, "if we have a principle for doing what is evil, the action makes us happy;—whereas, if we have none, we should be *un*happy. Now, children, who have no principle in what they do, are happiest."

"For my own part, I suspect that children are *not* so happy as we often fancy; for we are apt to conceive a thing at a distance is brighter than it is: and it is the absence of thought in them which is their bliss: but the presence of it *our* content."

"Nay," said Sharp, "it is in the bustle of active existence, when we have not time to brood on real or ideal woes, we are really most blest.—Who is that who just passed us in a hackney coach? I think I know her; but my memory is getting treacherous. I am old."

"Do you not recollect the former mistress of Lord Wharton? She rejected most splendid offers of protection in order to lead a better life. She is still beautiful, and not much more than thirty, but she seems to have forgotten the world. There never lived a better creature."

"I pity women," said Sharp, "who can never recover the station they have lost by indiscretion.—Lord Wharton treated her vilely:—she idolized him.—It is a pity, Taylor, with your abilities, you do not aspire more."

"*I* aspire? Wherefore? There is nothing which can afford me pleasure among the gauds of this world."

"But you should have an object in view:—if I had had none, I should have sunk into despair long ago."

"My way of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf!" returned Taylor, or Williamson, if the reader likes. "Yet I am not without an object. Who is? If we had nothing to pursue, what a being we should breathe! Therefore we need something unattainable in time to excite our aspirations. For we find we clutch but a shadow, when we accomplish our dearest schemes, and the pursuit, rather than the attainment, was delight. Do you think you will be satisfied when you have trampled this haughty Minister, whom it seems almost impossible to crush, under foot? When you have done it——"

"I shall live on *memory!* Ay, when I *have* done it, I shall be content to die. He has, indeed, a marvellous power of rising into strength, when you think he is destroyed. His political vitality seems indestructible.

But he is a bad man, and it will be doing a good service to the community to overthrow him."

"But *not* to yourself. When he has toppled down from his eminence, never believe you can live, as you imagine, on memory. The only memory which is life, is that of kind deeds, of pure love, patience, virtue."

"The old cant of pseudo-moralists, my good friend. Every portion of our being was given for a purpose, and if we neglect our passion or faculty, because we believe it evil, it will have a penalty. Revenge is a sublime thing, when it is directed against a villain. Talk not to me of forgiveness. The devil is doomed for ever."

"I do not believe in a devil, you know. Nor has an erring mortal a right to place himself by the side of the Infinite. What sublimity is there in revenge?"

"The passion which stimulates us vivifies powers which would otherwise be dormant. Can forgiveness elevate the mind?"

"Certainly it can. Revenge may excite a degree of the morbid intellect, which a cunning maniac may possess; but to *forgive*, requires a *moral* effort; and morality is far higher than intelligence. Take away morals, and what were man, with all his proud reason? Worse than the beast that perishes; for *he* is imperishable."

"We will have our argument out another time. I am now going to see my unfortunate. Poor Harriet! But she is happy now. I would have married her, after all, when she recovered her sweet reason, if she would have consented. Good night, old friend."

And with these words Sharp departed.

"That man might have been a noble being!" mused Williamson. "What a pity that such powers as his should have been thrown away on malice and vengeance!"

While thus cogitating, he reached an unfrequented path, and enjoying the pleasant evening, entered it; and listened to the sounds so eloquent of Heaven and eternity. The wind blew softly, the trees lisped gently, the tinkling stream appeared to murmur of peace and love, while the solemn night seemed listening to the last notes of the birds ere they dropped asleep. And above, all was serene beauty, and below, all was tender melancholy:—the smile of God was on the universe. Suddenly he felt his arm touched lightly, and turning, beheld a female closely veiled by his side. Fancying she was some unhappy creature who lived by the sale of her charms, he was resuming his way; but a voice, a never-to-be-forgotten voice, murmured—

"Do you not know me, Williamson? It is I—Fanny."

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Williamson. "Wretched girl! Is it true that the Prince of Wales supports you?"

"It is: but you must not reveal you have seen me."

"And do you without a blush proclaim that the royal voluptuary —"

"Peace, peace!" interrupted Fanny, majestically. "I would not suffer any man to pollute these lips again for all the stars above. But I have appointed one I knew in years past to meet me here: for great events are in the womb of time.—Alas! Williamson, what is all that we see, what is all that we believe? A phantasm follows us to the grave—we fancy we live, but it cannot be."

"And where are you now? The world will not believe that such a man as the Prince of Wales—perhaps the greatest sensualist that ever lived—only supports you."

"What care *I* for the world!" exclaimed Fanny, sorrowfully. "What care I for the madmen, the idiots, and hypocrites who point you out, and wonder and sneer by turns? No; I live not *here*, though I seem among you. In those bright and everlasting worlds which rule our fate is the immortal spirit's home. I breathe in the infinite, and smile to see the wrecks of time: for they depart, while *we* depart not. We grow to the stars for ever! Ethereal worlds! in your ineffable realms alone is peace, is purity. We can all be in the Heaven we go to, before we quit this corruption."

"Strange Mystic!" cried Williamson.

But she continued—

"I find my religion, my hope, my refuge in the creed of those stars. Why were they placed there? Surely to draw us up from time to eternity. They do not change—they shine with spiritual radiance for ever and ever. And when the great world passes away—how think you it will be? The shadows of matter will have passed from our eyes, and we shall see the divine essences of light and music.—I should go mad but for the stars! You may think I *am* so in worshipping them."

"There is but one God," returned Williamson, "who rules earth and heaven—the million spheres, and all that therein is. Do you not adore him beyond all things?"

"How can you separate God and the universe? I am not an unbeliever in the Deity; but he must be one with the frame of things—all permeating MIND."

"But, tell me, what are your objects and your hopes?"

"*That* the planets will answer to-night. Yes, God is present to the universe, or else there is none."

"Say, rather, the universe is present to God. Fanny, you look flushed and excited. Your eye has a brightness which is preternatural!—Take care; those wild dreams of yours may, indeed, drive you mad."

She smiled such a smile as seldom ever lit up *her* glorious face.

"Prate not of madness! Thoughts the most abstract and intense seem frenzy to the cold and material!—Do I seem much changed, Williamson? No: I am certain I am not. But if you could see my soul, you would find a new being there.—Yes; I am waiting for the old King of the Gipsies, who is wise in the wisdom which the slaves of convention

affect to despise. I saw him by accident yesterday, as I was driving in the country, and he promised to meet me here, and consult the immutable influences.—It is past nine," she added, impatiently; "and this is the hour he said he would be here." But while the words lingered on her lips, an extremely aged man, bent nearly double, and mounted on a mule, came in sight. "Now, then, Williamson, I must be alone," said Fanny. "Take this card, and come to me at about this hour on Sunday next." She waved her hand with an air of authority; but Williamson lingered. "Go," she said, "mighty things are to be done."

"But this is a lone place, and you are unprotected."

"I *never* am unprotected.—I command you, depart."

Williamson obeyed; and Fanny advanced to meet the King of the Gipsies. The old man put forth his withered hand, and mumbled a benediction on her.

"I was fearful you would not come, Hermes," said Fanny, reverently. "Have you been studying the stars? They are multitudinous to-night, and seem propitious."

"What say you?" returned the aged man, absently. "The stars—ay, I remember. But I am very old, and I forget much. If you should live to be eighty-eight—what did you say?"

It was evident the aged man was somewhat impaired in intellect, and a little deaf; but there were still occasional gleams of fire and intelligence in his dark eyes, and there was a venerable look about him, which were not without an imposing effect.

"My child," he proceeded, "you must not expect to gather from me all that you desire to hear. But there are potent spirits which sometimes visit us in dreams, and their wisdom I can interpret aright. Behold, I had a vision last night. And I thought you were a star, shining in the firmament of Heaven. And there were many stars around you; but none so bright and beautiful. This is a mystery, which it is difficult to comprehend; but it seems to my mind to foretel——"

"What?" eagerly inquired Fanny, who had been listening with breathless attention to the astrologer.

"Yes," answered Hermes, again in his wandering manner; "you will be wealthy, and may be great here on earth, if you will. But I perceive your days are numbered. You will die young."

"I have prayed to destiny that it might be so," rejoined Fanny. "Why should we wish to drag on the burthen of existence longer than is necessary? To die young, is to inhabit the brightest sphere."

"Now, then," responded Hermes, "we will repair to that ruined building yonder. I have brought with me all the necessary apparatus, and as soon as the hour of midnight comes, the answer of the spirits I am about to invoke will be made known to us. Come, dearest daughter."

So saying, the astrologer turned his mule in the direction of a ruin,

long since deserted, and which slept picturesquely in the pale light of the moon, on a rising ground, commanding a view of the surrounding country. Having reached the place in question, the old man produced a telescope, a lamp of peculiar construction, and several instruments, together with some herbs of not very fragrant smell, which he ignited, and drew a circle around. He muttered words of incoherent, and almost unintelligible nature, while Fanny listened with suspended respiration, and looked upon the face of the aged Hermes, as if he was inspired.

With all her acquirements, she was not a tittle less superstitious than when she was a wild gipsy girl, ignorant and associating with those but little beyond barbarism. She remained with Hermes for a long time, engaged in astrologizing or weaving spells: but nothing satisfactory to her was consummated. She quitted the place, and drawing her cloak around her, bade the aged man good night. It was almost as light as day when she took the road to London, for the moon was at her full, and the whole heaven was blazing with stars. Hermes mounted his mule, and was soon lost to sight; but he had scarcely disappeared, when Fanny beheld a shadowy form advancing from a cottage at a few furlongs distance.

CHAPTER LXXX.

FANNY AND HARRIET.

The person Fanny beheld never raised her eyes from the ground, but advanced slowly, as if she walked in her sleep. She was a woman of singular height, and her appearance was so uncommon, that once having beheld her, she could never be forgotten. A superstitious awe seized on the soul of Fanny, and she remained rooted to the earth.

"It is that shape," she murmured, "which has deserted me so long!" And still the tall female advanced, until she was within a few paces of Fanny, when she stopped, and gazed up at the spangled vault above. She opened her lips, and spoke thus: "Blessed hour, when spirits and angels seem to walk gently on the invisible gales, and bear the healing dews of heaven to the wounded heart! O, ye sweet-tongued gales, waft my prayers upwards,—the prayers of contrition and remorse:—for God does not despise the contrite heart, however guilty it may have been. Ah! we want to soar away from earth, but we cannot. Dear God! Thou art here, in this breathless peace that is creeping over the universe! Pity the poor mortal, who has sinned and suffered so much!"

Here the supplicant became aware of the presence of another, and looked wonderingly at the little form opposite, so great a contrast to her own

towering figure. "What brings you here at such an hour, young girl?" she inquired.

"Those words seemed an echo of what my soul *would*, but *dare* not utter," returned Fanny. "Mysterious being! who art thou? Surely, thou canst not be of this world!"

The tall woman smiled benignantly; and she was very beautiful when she smiled—like some fine ruin that appears to rejoice in the moonlight! "Alas! I am a poor wretch, full of mortality," she replied. "Art *thou*, too, sorrowful of spirit? Look at yonder churchyard in the quiet distance! Why should we weep, why should we mourn, when we know we shall all soon sleep there? You have erred, perchance? Who has not? Behold those worlds in the pure sky that seem to sympathise even with sinners! *There* we may dwell after death, through Heaven's mercy, and though we attain not to perfect blessedness, be happy."

"Yes, yes, I feel that it will be so! Oh, that I could reach the stars! I have sinned, and deeply. But I cannot find rest on earth! Can *you* tell me where to seek it?"

"Poor child! yes. Have you so early gone astray? Have you so early repented? It is well. Seek peace in heaven, and you shall find it. For in this dream of Time there is an everlasting shadow to darken every hope. The wisdom of the wisest cannot avail to make a brief Paradise of such a life as this! But the spirit is in Eternity,—it knows no change, it knows no shadow. Listen with the *soul!* Cannot you hear the divine harmonies of the Immortal—more exquisite than the music of the spheres—'Come hither: *here* is rest!"

"Say on! Your eloquence touches my being's life!"

"Behold," continued the pious woman fervently, as her eyes turned from the young face of Fanny to the sky, "behold every passion but seeks a grave, every bliss a tomb, in this poor earth! Have you loved? Ah, yes! you *must* have loved! Love seems like a smile of immortality; but it vanishes in ashes! We rejoice—to weep,—we hope—to despair: but there is a better hope that does not die, that *cannot* fade."

"You have not been what I have; or you would not be so serene, and full of hope in the eternal," said Fanny with intense mournfulness. "Memory is a tomb, darker and deeper than the charnel! Who shall efface the departed? What power in the universe can blot out one act of ours? Can you give me oblivion? That is what I need, and without I can obtain it, a cloud obscures heaven."

"Oblivion? No! But do not think I have not sinned as deeply as you have! I do not forget. The past is as a buried hell, when you have erred and found peace."

"A *buried* hell? No, no! It clings around the fibres of the heart, and sears it until it is mad—mad! The warm and sunny air, the glory of nature, the majesty of mind, all that is sublime and beautiful teems with gloom and lamentation, while the plague-spot is on us."

"It *is* a leprous stain; but there is one who wipes it away: even as he cleansed the lepers, for a type of the healing of the polluted soul. I have found it so."

Fanny shook her head; but did not immediately reply. The bell of the distant church tolled one. "Time!" she then exclaimed, "why hast thou left us? Wherefore cannot we recal thee? Oh, what crimes and woes thou hast witnessed, inexorable Power, that *hast* no power, yet all. Farewell," she added, extending her hand to the tall female. "I had once strange notions of you, and somehow I still connect you with my destiny. I thank you for speaking to me—and I would see you again. Do you live in that cottage? Good night. Oh, that I were you!"

Before an answer could be given, Fanny hastened away. Thus terminated the singular interview between two of the most important characters in our drama—for it has been surmised the tall woman was no other than Harriet. Who has not felt the worm of unavailing remorse devouring at the heart? *There* it remains, an avenging angel, from whom we cannot fly, unless we take refuge in a Being above angels. But it is the custom of the world to ridicule such sentiments: it appears nearly divided between practical infidels, and wretched fanatics; and those who do not belong to the one class or the other, are scouted by both. We are all wont to think ourselves better than we are, and therefore the stony-hearted worldling affects to despise virtue, and to doubt its existence, while the hypocrite and the bigot would rob us of all incentive to exertion by predicting the inutility of all that man can do for his own exaltation and amendment. Yes, there is a great truth in both these antithetical systems. Virtue is not inherent in man; the heart is not inclined to purity; but neither is it utterly depraved by its original nature. God never made anything evil—otherwise, he is the author of sin. It is utterly impossible to suppose there is necessary sin in our being, but there is a tendency to the sensual, inasmuch as we are animals. Now if we had no reason we should be no worse than the beasts of prey: but when the reason is developed (which it is not in childhood, as the follower of the doctrine of original sin would have us believe), then commence moral and religious responsibilities. Then the battle between matter and mind has to be fought:—for I hold all virtue is the victory of reason over sense, and that Christianity enforces faith in our spirituality, before all other faith.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

LORD WHARTON AND JULIA—A DISCUSSION—A LETTER.

SEVERAL days had elapsed since the events recorded in the preceding chapters; and Lord Wharton sat alone in his apartment. "It will do," he muttered, "it *must* do! And now I will go and see the fair Julia.

This boy out of the way, I will dazzle her brain, and captivate her imagination—her passions, her sentiments shall be centered in me. It is only necessary to inflame desire, to flatter, to bewilder, by turns, in order to secure a woman's heart. They talk of the fidelity and constancy of females; but I have found them all fickle, vain, and foolish in affairs of love."

So saying the Peer put on his hat, and walked forth. It was very rarely that he presented himself at the house of Sharp; but he had now an object in view, and did not hesitate to call there, knowing in all probability the lawyer would be out. He found Julia alone, drawing, and seating himself beside her, began the conversation with his usual ease.

"I almost envy you that accomplishment of yours, sweetest Julia," he said. "How many gifts you have! Genius, beauty, virtue, all smile on their beloved favorite as they have rarely smiled before. Think not I flatter! I have got sick of adulation since——"

"Since when, my lord? Why do you not conclude the sentence?" returned Julia with a slight laugh.

"What silver laughter!" exclaimed the enamoured Peer. Lord Wharton was a very Richard in his blandishments with the fair, but Julia was no Lady Anne. He had a tongue that could "wheedle with the devil," but her pure soul, like Ithuriel's spear, ever detected the true from the false, especially since she had known Reginald Travers. Genuine love is an infallible touchstone against baser metal; and Lord Wharton felt he was on dangerous ground. "You hate flattery, Julia! But do you dislike to hear the unsullied and sincere sentiments of the heart? Impossible! And you write poetry, I have heard? Happy girl! I must come to school to you! Will you take me for a pupil? The old may often learn of the young."

"Indeed you greatly overrate my powers. I believe your lordship is a great patron of the fine arts, and excell in many of them yourself. Which do you think the highest?"

"They are all equally high, perhaps, in one sense. If you ask me from which of them I derive most pleasure, I answer, music. I have outworn many feelings, but not my passion for sweet sounds! Will you sing to me?" Lord Wharton was wily and wary. He would not alarm Julia too soon, he would not affect the airs of a youthful lover, for he was aware he had to contend with five-and-forty years and sixteen stone at least. "I do not care for Italian music," he added, "it is all brilliancy and little real feeling. You like German profundity?"

"Mozart is my idol; but I cannot sing to you this morning, for I caught cold the other night at the theatre. By the by, have you been to Etherea's performance? She is quite as much the rage as ever."

"No, I have not thought it worth while to sue so humbly for a ticket as some persons do. It is the mystery of the thing which is so delightful,

I suspect. When that is over, the *furor* will cease. That passion for mystery, which is so predominant among the gay flutterers who sport away their butterfly life, is omnipotent. Curiosity is but another phasis of it:—you and I, Julia, live to higher ends."

"You must not put *me* in the same category with yourself," answered Julia. "You are engaged in a nation's weal."

"And you—you," returned the Peer, with a burst of his thrilling eloquence, "are as the light of some world which were dark and dull without you! A statesman! O, Julia! what is the power of intellect to that which *you* can wield? *I* may convince the *reason;* but you lead the *heart!* How every eye is fixed on that divine beauty, as it moves, like a Sun amid all that is brightest, eclipsing every other luminary! The stars still shine, but while that Sun is burning with its intense lustre, *it* alone is seen, loved, worshipped!"

"You make me blush for shame, my lord, that I am so unworthy of such hyperbolical encomiums!" replied Julia, with perfect calmness.

The Peer shifted his position. "Should *you* like to be a statesman, were you a man? It is a high and dangerous career, and has both its pleasures and its miseries. I am almost sick of the deep and subtle game; I could enjoy a serener being now. When I was a very young man I only lived in excitement; but I am growing wiser. One only thing remains to turn me from the paths of error; for my habits are so deeply rooted that nothing less than a motive such as I allude to, can extirpate them. You have heard I am a voluptuary; but that is not true. Though keenly alive to pleasure, I can find enjoyment in nobler pursuits; but it must be with one who can sympathise with me, whose pure and uncorrupted feelings have that exquisite freshness, no art, no talent can acquire."

Julia was relieved from a conversation which was becoming embarrassing by the announcement of two visitors. Mr. Travers and his son made their appearance, much to the annoyance of Lord Wharton, and Samuel Sharp immediately afterwards came in. Travers had discovered the state of Reginald's heart, though he had made no formal confession of his attachment to him, and had asked the young man to introduce him to Julia as they were riding in the vicinity. Julia gave her attention to the philosophic statesman, as the greatest stranger, while Lord Wharton turned over a portfolio belonging to her, and Samuel Sharp condescended to speak to Reginald, though he was what he termed "a most infernal bore." In the course of conversation the Idealist happened to say, alluding to some barrister of eminence, that "he did not think highly of him as a reasoner, that he was too fond of the *argumentum ad ridiculum*, which is in fact no argument at all." The disputatious Sharp, who thought he should now expose the shallowness of the youth, instantly rejoined,

"Ridicule is the most powerful of all arguments; in fact, there is no other mode of argument, as every one must know who has thought below the surface. Sarcasm is based on certain axioms of common sense, and is in my opinion a powerful auxiliary of reason. If we can laugh a person out of a folly, it is better than reasoning him out of it, and is easier to boot. Lord Wharton will agree with me on this point, for his sarcastic powers are wonderfully great."

Lord Wharton vouchsafed no reply; and Reginald, though he did not care to argue with Samuel, whom he thought a vulgar-minded and pragmatical puppy, for the sake of civility simply answered—

"Ridicule *may* effect good, and yet be no argument."

The lawyer's son sneered at "the greenhorn."

"But I suppose," said the barrister, "reason is the basis of ridicule. How is it possible it can be otherwise?"

"I thought," returned Reginald, "you held the contrary doctrine, from what you said just now."

We are often betrayed into discussion, when we do not intend it, by some impertinence or other; and the barrister, resolved, as he thought, "to take the boy down a notch with university logic," responded—

"You are going away from the subject of controversy. I said, sarcasm is based on certain axioms of common sense. What did you think I meant? You should go to Oxford, Mr. Travers."

"You confuse a negative and a positive," rejoined the youth, now fairly on his mettle, as the barrister seemed to imply his dialectics needed improvement. "Socrates said, 'If you find you have no reason to advance against an opponent, laugh at him.' What is the inference? Not that you are arguing logically on a principle, but assuming a principle which does not exist. Therefore it is I object to mere ridicule."

The barrister did not see the distinction. People of ordinary minds always think little of extraordinary, or superior ones.

"But still," he said, "you merely smile at a person who controverts a proposition which the common sense of mankind erects into an axiom."

"I do not understand what you mean by common sense. Every one laughed at the first Thinker, who affirmed that the earth revolved, because it contradicted common sense; but as it is now evident that such is the fact, men laugh at those who deny it. Is it not better to convince than to deride? For if we persist in ridiculing everything new, we can make no improvement, and must wander in the old paths of dogmatism and bigotry. After all, Mr. Sharp, you virtually admit all I wish to substantiate, for you argue for sarcasm, and I only maintain that reason must precede satire."

Reginald here turned away, not desirous of prolonging the discussion with one he disliked; and Lord Wharton at length looking up, observed,

"All argument returns to the point from whence it started; and I

cannot but exclaim with Butler, when I hear such fine words wasted to no purpose—neither for money, nor pleasure—

> 'That such vast difference there should be
> 'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee!'

Looking at his watch, the Peer found it was later than he had imagined, and remembering that there was a cabinet-dinner at which he was expected, rose and took leave, saying to Travers, "You will be in the House to-night, as that measure of P——'s is coming on?"

"I intend to do so; for it will be a hard run." The father and son did not remain long after Wharton, and when they had reached the street, Travers cried, "She is almost what your mother was, Reginald. I never talked with one more prepossessing."

And the poet's eyes sparkled at this eulogy of his father on her he now loved so deeply. He was resolved on the following day to seek an interview with Julia, and to woo her to be his bride. But, alas! he was to endure much before he gained the prize. How short-sighted are the wisest of us all! On reaching home he received a letter; and on opening it, was startled by reading the following words:—"O, Reginald! Come to me! I am distracted. I send you a *rendezvous*—but let it not be known to any. Do you love me? If so, you will not think me unmaidenly in acting thus. Remember, ten o'clock.—JULIA."

It was about three hours since the youth had left the house of the lawyer; for he had dined with a friend at a chop-house: and, consequently, the time was nearly that appointed for the meeting.

"What can it mean?" thought Reginald. "I fear something dreadful. It is evidently Julia's writing. Let me see; it is now past nine o'clock, and the part of the town mentioned here is two miles away. I will go at once."

And without waiting to consider further, in his impetuous desire to learn the secret of this strange billet, he quitted the house, and strode away. Your philosophers and thinkers, when they are in love, are quite as hot-headed as the most frivolous of mankind; and Reginald was not one to suspect any sinister motives against himself; so that he had not a doubt the letter was really from Julia. It was rather a dark night, for there was no moon; and when he reached the street mentioned in the note, the obscurity had greatly increased. It was not a very reputable part of the town; but Reginald was so new to London that he was not aware of the fact; and stopping at a house in which there was something rather strange, he knocked at a door in which there were three glimmering lamps, and after some delay was admitted by a female, and ushered into a room.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE MYSTERY—IS IT SHE?—THE MADNESS OF REGINALD.

THE apartment in which our Idealist found himself was of moderate dimensions, and dimly lit by a lamp; but, if he had used his eyes, there was something peculiar in the furniture and ornaments. The sofas were not like ordinary couches, and there were statues and pictures such as were not admitted into decent houses, liberal as we are in not repudiating the nakedness of E—— and ——. But Reginald was so anxious to behold Julia, that he stopped not to survey aught.

"The lady will be with you, sir," said the female, who had conducted him to the chamber, with an impudent smile, "as soon as she has changed her dress."

She vanished, and he was left alone. Some minutes passed before the door again opened, and another woman, gaudily and indelicately attired, motioned to him to follow her. Still unsuspicious of foul play or deceit, he did as was desired, and followed his conductress through several corridors. She stopped before a door of oak, which she opened with a key, and pointing into the room, said, "She is there."

Reginald eagerly entered, and did not hear the door locked after him. At first he could see nothing; for there was no light in the apartment, which was of considerable size; but he became aware of the presence of some one at the farther end, and hastily advancing, a female form extended on a couch was visible.

"My Julia! What means this?" he exclaimed, clasping a voluptuous form which he doubted not was that of her he loved. A deep sigh escaped from the lips of the female, who, far from shrinking from the youth's embrace, placed her white arm on his shoulder, as he leant over her, and to his astonishment found she was in *deshabille*, and that a heart merely covered by a night-dress was beating against his own. Then a suspicion flashed upon him. *His* Julia a wanton! Impossible! But it was too dark to distinguish the female's features. "Who are you?" he cried. "Speak! I know you not."

"Not know your Julia!" exclaimed the woman. "I did not think you could forget me, unkind one!" And she wept. The voice was certainly like Julia's; nay, as far as he could judge in the uncertain light, she resembled her in person. Was the chaste, the pure English maiden his imagination had endowed with such heavenly virtues, no better than a sensual and depraved Italian? He stood as if petrified; but the girl flung both her arms round his neck, and sobbed on his bosom. "You

will think me a wretch, Reginald," she said; "but there are circumstances I cannot reveal to you:" and she wept.

"Merciful Heaven!" ejaculated the young man. "But speak to me—tell me why you are in this dark place.—Can you be my Julia? The ward of Mr. Sharp?—O, no, no!—But what circumstances——"

"There is a terrible mystery, I dare not for my life make known to you," was the rejoinder. "But do you say you love, cruel Reginald, and doubt——"

"Julia! Adored Julia! O, I must be mad!"

"Give me one last embrace," said the supposed Julia. "I swear this is no imposture. I have resolved to die rather than to be torn from you; and I have poison here, and wine in which to pour it. Perhaps it *might* be possible to avert the dreaded evil:—but no, rather than act so, I will take the fatal draught."

"For God's sake, withhold! Do you swear that you are Julia?"

Bewildered and stupified, the youth hardly knew what he did. His head swam, and he felt a faintness suddenly coming over him.

"O, you are ill!" said the female. "Drink this wine."

And partly by persuasion, partly by holding the glass up to his lips, she succeeded in making him swallow some liquid, which he had hardly done, when his blood seemed on fire. He was young and inexperienced, and taken by surprise. A sudden change came over him, and seeing the girl still wept, he said, "Be comforted."

"One last kiss," she said; and a delirium seized on his senses. He pressed a burning kiss on a ripe and tempting lip—and it was returned with passion.

Farther I dare not follow; but in a moment of frenzy, his passions wildly excited by some insidious stimulant or poison mixed with the wine he had taken, the pure-minded Idealist yielded to an evil demon, uncertain whether he embraced Julia.* Blame not the poet! We have *all* our intervals of frenzy; and his was the madness from without, as well as that proceeding from the heart. "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone."

In years, happily long past, when *Roderick Random* was written, public opinion would hardly have condemned a man who was unfaithful to a virtuous mistress; but now we have purer morals, it is to be hoped, and though there is a vast deal of hypocrisy among us, we have a standard of virtue higher than those of a century ago. The change augurs well for mankind, provided they do not merely sentimentalise on ethics. But never believe that a Reginald Travers could have acted as he did

* An incident, extremely similar to this, actually occurred some years ago, the particulars of which have come within the Author's own private knowledge. Truth is stranger than fiction!

unless the foulest machinations had been practised against him. If there ever lived a good man he was one; but he was not without sin—he was not a perfect being. Perhaps you may say, if he did no wrong his conduct requires no defence; but I only want to place it in the true light, for we are in the habit of condemning others by actions instead of motives. Yet a soldier kills, and a murderer kills: the one is received with open arms, and the other is justly scouted and abhorred by all men. Reginald acted rashly; and so, I hesitate not to say, the warrior acts when he sends an immortal soul, without preparation, to its great account.

A stupor came over him, in the course of a few minutes after he had swallowed the liquid, from which he did not awake for a long time. And when he did so, the light of reason was obscured in his brain. Every thing was unreal and phantasmal; and he cried—

"What, Julia! have we stolen into Paradise unseen by the watchful angel? What fruit, what odours, what streams of nectar! Glorious! Hark! The wild music! Divine sound! The Gods listen!"

Two persons were present during this raving of the Idealist—a beautiful girl, and a middle-aged woman; and they were alarmed when they beheld the rolling eye-balls, and heard the incoherent accents of the youth.

"What is to be done?" said the elderly female. "Some cold water! I dare not send for a doctor! Quick, girl. We shall get into a cursed mess with this business."

"What exquisite light!" exclaimed Reginald, rapturously. "It is the light of love! Julia—my own Julia! We shall never be parted more in this Elysian place! We shall live pure, now, as angels live, and never die! O, the intense splendour of immortality! See, the thrones and principalities are smiling; and the rosy amaranths—" Here water was dashed on his fevered brow, but availed not to check the progress of the fever which had seized on his delicate brain. When he recovered his breath, he spread out his arms, shouting wildly—"The Nereids and the Tritons tempt us to their cool retreats beneath the translucent water! Delicious sense of being!—and we are married—ha? Who married us, my Julia! The moon attended at our nuptials, and pronounced a pure benediction! The divine moon, filled with the beauty of peace."

"O, we have murdered him!" here cried the girl. "I wish I had not consented.—How beautiful he is!"

"Silence, wench!" returned the elder woman, sternly.

"We sail through the liquid air, as through a sea of glass!" exclaimed Reginald. "We sail to the essences of beauty, truth, love, life, wisdom! And the stars follow us with eternal melody! Blessed be the stars, that light the universe to God! Ha, ha! Who says there is evil left? Lying fiend! The myriad spheres echo but joy for ever! All that has ever lived is changed into ineffable beauty! The very worms that we thought

perished, imperishable glow, and light the seraphim through the pathless immensity! Sweet sounds, that we wept to find had gone from us, never *did* depart, but still utter things we do not understand the depth of here."

"Alas! he's quite mad!" sobbed the wretched girl, who had administered the potion to the Idealist.

"Nothing can die!" continued Reginald—"*but* Death! *That* is an unreal mockery!—Bah! Why do you bring me that ugly skull, which smells so foully? Where is the spirit—the subtle spirit that smiled annihilation to scorn? Lo, it is soaring through the blue space like a bird of heaven! Lustrous forms are around it, and it shines itself in naked loveliness—the purified being of the body.—That was a fine idea of the old German Mystic! The soul is the substance, and the body the shadow! It flies through the immeasurable void, swifter than light itself. It sees, it knows all things. The colossal universe of matter is dwarfed to nothingness before the majesty of spiritual vastness. There is no limit in spirit—all is unbounded wonder and stupendous glory! The great God is above, and around, and everywhere. Poor Atheist—blush, blush!"

And then Reginald burst into a song of wild exultation, which having done, he sunk down exhausted, and slept as if he would never wake more. How those miserable women by the side of the poet wondered at the flights of his excited imagination! Even in madness and delirium there is a marked difference between the ravings of different persons. Those guilty beings would have uttered beastiality and ribaldry; but he poured forth the pent up and ethereal aspirations of his fine fancy and pure mind. He was ever dreaming of the infinite and invisible, and his madness was beautiful and wonderful, indeed.

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When Reginald recovered his senses, he felt an extreme languor and weariness; but he was perfectly collected. Looking at his arm, which felt sore, he found it was bandaged; and he could not doubt he had been copiously bled. But to his astonishment he found that he was tossing about, and he heard a sound like that of rushing waters. He doubted whether he was awake. He heard a noise overhead, like men hauling heavy cables along, and perceived that he was in a cabin of small size, and stretched on a hammock. He rubbed his eyes, and endeavoured to recal what might have befallen him, but to no end. He was lost in a maze of conjecture; but when he tried to get out of the hammock, he found himself so weak that he could not do so.

"What can it all mean?" he muttered. "It is impossible it can be reality! Yet here are my hands;—I see, I smell, I hear.—And I am conscious of my own identity. But I begin to doubt all things!—What, ho!—Does any one hear me?—It is like one of those wild German stories! I cannot dream?"

At length two men appeared,—strangers to Reginald.

"Ah! Doctor," said one of them, "your poor mad patient——"

"My friends!" interrupted the youth. "Where am I?"

The men shook their heads, and stifled a laugh.

"Do not trifle with me! I want to know where I am, and if I really hear the noise of the sea? Have I been bled? Where is my father? Why do you not answer?"

"Poor wretch!" ejaculated the person who had spoken.

"Pooh!" cried the youth, impatiently. "Some trick has been played upon me. I insist on knowing——"

"Pray be composed, sir," said a short man in a wig.

"Hang this nonsense: you have kept up the farce long enough. Here am I, Reginald Travers, and you——"

"Do not alarm yourself. You have been ill," returned the little man in the wig. "We shall soon be at the end of our voyage, and you must keep composed, or I will not answer for the consequences. You understand?"

"I understand nothing. If you think I am mad—which I was almost on the point of concluding myself—I will relate any particulars of myself you wish."

"This is his lucid interval," said the little man to his companion, "and he will talk so rationally that you could not believe he is insane. He will give you an account of himself and all his relations——"

"For God's sake," interrupted Reginald, "tell me who and what you think I am. First, it seems, I am mad. Well, if I am so, what is my name? Do you know who you think I am?"

The men shook their heads again; and without answering a word, left him to his bewilderment.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

THOUGHTS—REGINALD AND HIS PHILOSOPHY—ADVENTURE.

Reader, if you are an imaginative being, one who has thought and dreamed with that passionate aspiring which creates "the thing it contemplates," and have suddenly found yourself, after that ideal life, in this old, common, and vulgar world, with its bustle and hubbub about nothing, you have wondered that you could wake from so beautiful a vision to the actual world, and have lamented that it is impossible to dream for ever. And Reginald recollected he had had most exquisite visions, such as had never visited him before; but, strange to relate, remembered nothing for a long time of the events which are usually most vivid when

we rise from sleep—those of the most recent occurrence. What a mystery is the mind of man! How incomprehensible we are to ourselves, with all our boasted science, philosophy, and reason. We cannot conceive the finite, and yet we behold

'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread'—

and those with five senses, which they know next to nothing about, and which, after all, may let in but a segment of the wisdom of the *material* universe, talk learnedly about infinity, and measure the Eternal God as they would a man of six feet high. Gradually the suspended memory resumed its powers, and the fine functions were restored in all their might and vigour. The Materialist will seek to account for all this by the blood and brain: but where did you ever see blood and brain make memory? And he began to reason and connect events in their proper sequencies; and all flashed on him.

His pale cheek flushed crimson, when he recollected his adventures in the mysterious house he had been entrapped into; but he vainly attempted to account for the affair. The whole transaction from first to last was totally incomprehensible, and he was constrained to wait for its elucidation with what patience he might; for he was so enfeebled by profuse bleeding, that it was with some difficulty he could move a limb.

"God forgive me!" he murmured; "but I have been deceived vilely. And there is a Providence to bring dark deeds to light.—I fear not for myself, now.—O, Julia!"—And then the image of the female in the darkened room rose to his mind. "O, it was not her," he said. "How could I wrong her in thought, even in the contingency of events, by so monstrous an idea? It was foul of me; but that wine was drugged.—Who could have instigated the deed? I never wantonly wronged any?"

The Idealist could not conceive how he could have created an enemy, for he had not arrived at the sad conviction that there are many, who out of envy of fine qualities, without any other motive, hate and injure the high of soul; nor could he imagine what possible good his present condition could effect for any person. That we should learn to suspect almost all men, as we advance in life! We who live for so brief a time, and follow the precepts, or try to follow them, of the divine Lawgiver, hoping to share one common heaven above! Coleridge, in the warm exuberance of his fancy and feeling, passionately cried—

"Methinks it were impossible,
Not to love all things in a world so fair."

But we cannot love the vile, and though we hear,—as he eloquently adds, of the beauty and love in sound—

"The mute, still air,—
Music that slumbers on its instrument"—

until we fancy it is a spirit that but breathes on the soul; we turn away, and cry with Hamlet, bitterly—

"'Tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed!"

But yet the wise and pure cannot entertain dark and morbid views, but perceive the germs of good in all around. It may be that "*every* heart contains perfection's germ," in one sense, because, *who* made the heart? The One perfect and divine! And, surely, as God alone is eternal in the eternity behind, and good also must have existed with Him from everlasting, evil must be temporal in its duration, and cease with time; for in its very essence it is mortal and earthly, and has only been admitted into the divine economy for the creation of inconceivable good, which could not have been brought into existence without it. Does not hell mean the annihilation of evil? Carlyle tells us that "Hell is the infinite terror of being condemned by God;" but where is it, save in the evil heart? Conscience is the hell which otherwise has no locality: heaven is in the soul which clings to the pure and spiritual. Those are gloomy bigots who in the austerity of zeal conceive a material Pandemonium, peopled with innumerable fiends: and the Universalists have got hold of a great truth in the midst of an error; for, as it is certain, good alone could have been from the beginning, as we believe not with the Gnostics in the co-eternity of evil, how can aught but good be immortal? There *is* condemnation, doubtless; but it seems to me, religion teaches us, all matter, and with it pain, crime, and woe are to be annihilated. I like that notion of Mrs. Downing which suggested her beautiful drama of "Satan in Love." She asks how it is possible for what has sprung from the Creator not to contain some portion of good? Can you conceive essential evil, when evil is only relative, not absolute? It is, in fact, like darkness,—the absence of light; and in its physical meaning is not an entity at all, being simply a modification of good. "What!" it may be replied, "are disease and death no positive evils?" For disease,—it endures not long; and if we recover, how enhanced is the enjoyment of existence! While death is life for ever! How we shall smile hereafter at a past being of pain; when we know what eternity *is*, and what time *was!* Such is my cheering philosophy in the midst of evil; and I find that it is productive of hope and happiness. I dare say some will think such subjects unfit for works of fiction: but answer, O sophist, *where* is any little wisdom we think we may possess out of place? If we can remove a doubt, or a difficulty; if we can impart comfort, and win by love, not awe by dire denunciations—as is the manner of some—let the callous sneer, and the dull inveigh; I write not for them, unless they will hear and see, and return reason for reason.

Such were the sentiments of Reginald Travers—as they are of the

humble individual who is attempting to delineate minds morally and intellectually above his own. The more civilization is diffused, and the more love and charity are universalized, shall we have theology without fanaticism, morality without severity, laws without ferocity, and social intercourse without foul suspicion, distrust, and restraint.

Reginald Travers was one who had mingled with men of opinions the most opposite; and had learned to gather truth from error, to select a philosophy out of the systems which die and revive again, evincing they have something imperishable in them. Why was error admitted into the world?—Behold, O Sceptic! How we rise to faith by the knowledge of our ignorance; and blush to think you wish Heaven's laws repealed! And the wisdom which the youth had obtained by reading books and men was not merely speculative. That is a bastard philosophy which cannot be carried into the actual; and if Socrates, Kant, and Berkeley thought only how to invent ingenious theories, they had better not have thought at all; and *we* also should eschew the abstract. But there is a nobler purpose in metaphysics than that of sharpening the intellectual faculties. The beauty of truth once being perceived, the heart as well as the head is set in motion; for we have two distinct natures, and the higher one requires cultivation. The moral unites the intellectual and sentimental;—it is poetry and philosophy combined; it has both reason and imagination; and you will find in the "Phædo," the "Metaphysic of Ethics," and the idealism of Berkeley, as much of the one as the other. Is not that a sublime idea of the Transcendentalist—a great and religious idea—that the body is in time, and the soul is in eternity? Is there no morality in *that?* Is there no practical use in believing the mind is in the atmosphere of immortality, while the body is in corruption? Must it not necessarily refine and sublimate intellect above its earth?

Reginald uniformly when in wretchedness had recourse to his peculiar philosophic tenets, which he blended with his religion. He considered it a great blunder to divide theology and psychology, since the one must lead to the other. And he never remained long miserable, so deep and great was his faith, so earnest his belief in Providence. He was such an intellect as Browning would delight to follow through its aspirations and noble dreams: he had imbibed the spirit of modern Germany, but had happily soared beyond the scepticism mingled with it.

"The hand of Omnipotence is in all things," he thought, while he swayed to and fro in his hammock. "Wherefore then should we repine, since all evil is for our good? I will not doubt, I will not fear; I am no doubter now. Eternal spirit of my being! what is it that this poor dust in which thou art immured should suffer? I see that there is treachery at work against me—that some unknown foe is busy for my destruction; but villany ever defeats its own aim; and I will not temble. But Julia! O, Heaven avert evil from her dear head! Can any miscreant seek her

ruin? It is impossible there can be such a fiend in the universe!" But in spite of himself this dread disquieted the mind of the Idealist; and he was racked with terrible apprehensions. "I will try and induce some person to give me information of where I am," he mused. "O, that I could quit my bed!" But his limbs were so stiffened that it was impossible to do so.

How mortifying it is to our pride that a few bones and muscles should thus make us the slaves of dull matter, when more than life is at stake! But again a torpor crept over the youth, and he sunk back in a species of trance, though perfectly conscious of all that was passing. And presently there was a great noise overhead, men running to and fro, and cables thrown out. The anchor was let down, and it was plain they had reached harbour. But Reginald could not stir, could not utter a cry. Several men here entered his cabin, and he was borne away on a stretcher, accompanied by the short man he had heard called Doctor. "Good God!" he thought, "I might accomplish my deliverance by a single word; but I cannot speak." He knew from the dress of those he saw on land that they were in a French port: and that the vessel which had conveyed him thither was a brig of no very great size. Several passengers were around him; and suddenly by a mighty effort he succeeded in shaking off the trance or stupor which oppressed him, and seizing the arm of a fat, jolly personage who happened to be close beside him and exclaiming,

"Help me, friend! Villany keeps me a prisoner!" gained his feet, but found he could not stand; and fell upon the person he had addressed.

"I say, young gen'l'man, that's coming it rayther strong!" exclaimed this individual in an accent redolent of Cockaigne. "Isn't this here the unfort'nate loonatic?"

"Yes, yes," said the Doctor, "leave him to us. You must not attend to what he says."

And Reginald again relapsed into a stupor, which when he recovered from, he found himself the inmate of a lunatic asylum.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

LORD WHARTON'S DECLARATION—REGINALD AND LOVE.

"Yes, sir, such is human life," observed Quick to Sharp, on the morning succeeding Reginald's last visit to the lawyer's house, the clerk having just called on him in Portland Place on business.

"Here we go up, and here we go down—never stopping, but always advancing or retrograding! And yet we really never go back;—it's all

progress for good or evil. But you don't like philosophy. No more do I, when I can't have it my own way.

"There is no arguing with you, Quick: you are such a will-o'-the-wisp sort of a fellow—one can never catch you. Now, go up and see Miss Julia, while I look over these papers you have brought; she wants to see you, and is rather poorly this morning."

Quick nodded, and mounting a flight of stone stairs, knocked at the door of the drawing-room, and Julia's voice bade him enter.

"Sorry to hear you're not so well as might be, my dear Miss Julia," exclaimed the little man. "Hope you'll soon be better. Don't send for the doctor, or he'll keep you in bed a fortnight.—Just been talking to Mr. Sharp, in my odd way. He thinks England, having attained the pinnacle of its glory, is declining fast. Don't think, for my part, it is so. Reading, I see! Will you let me look at the book? Mr. Reginald Travers wrote it. Very clever young man. Profound at his age. He's an optimist. We're always in extremes when young and old,—hoping for the best, or fearing the worst. Would you believe Mr. Sharp was ever a visionary?"

"I have heard he was so from you. It is strange."

"What *isn't* strange? The most common things are strange;—nothing new, and everything new, to my mind. There is not a single moment we don't change."

"Certainly you exemplify the truth of your aphorism!"

"To be sure! We think we are the same we were an hour ago; but it's impossible.—Capital argument that for reason not being material. Like to argue on high themes—it makes one feel great—however little. What is the soul but reason?—You're looking very pretty, Miss Julia.—Poor thing—poor thing!"

"Why do you pity me, particularly, dear friend?"

"Never been in love yet, Miss Julia? Eh? you blush! Nay, then, I see how the land lies. But take care to whom you give that treasure of a heart. Men are sad scoundrels, for the most part, I'm sorry to say. *Are* some good ones, though, if you knew where to find them. But I've seen a little more of the world than you have.—Heard something about Master Samuel and you: but that's all flam, I know."

"I did not tell you I was in love at all, Quick. You are the oddest creature;—and as for Samuel Sharp——"

"Not worthy of your little finger!—I'd sooner you married his father, or even myself—excuse me for saying so. He wouldn't make you happy—has too much worldliness and ice in his composition;—ice that won't thaw,—while you are all spring and feeling."

"Indeed you must not talk so: you'll offend me."

"Excuse the liberty: it was all in good part. I'll tell you who I should have no objection to your marrying, if he is what he seems;—

Mr. Reginald Travers.—Thought so! The minute I saw him, thinks I to myself, 'There's a husband for Miss Julia!'—But it's a lying world, and it won't do to trust to appearances.—So, now I must say good bye."

Julia did not detain the eccentric clerk; though she was usually too much entertained by his quaint originality and peculiar way of thinking, to let him go so easily.

"Yes, I love him," she murmured, when she was alone. "It is not his lofty mind, his splendid genius which captivates my heart, but the deep and silent homage he pays me, which creates something like adoration in my breast. And, yet, I *do* adore his fine intellect, I *do* hang on his utterances, and feel I could mingle my soul with his!"

Some time elapsed, and she saw Sharp leave the house, and expected she should soon see the object of her thoughts. There came a knock at the door. Was it Reginald? O, miserable disappointment! Lord Wharton was announced.

The readers of the first portion of my narrative are aware that the Peer was one of Julia's guardians; but as his house had never been a fit home for her, she had always resided with Sharp. Somehow, she feared the Statesman; and there was something in his looks, on the present occasion, peculiarly disagreeable to her.

"Julia!" cried Lord Wharton, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips, as soon as the domestic who had announced him was gone. "Beloved Julia! I am come to offer you what I have never offered to any woman but yourself—my heart—my existence! The influence of your heavenly charms of mind and person has cleansed my bosom of the earthly and the sensual: and I offer to you as pure, as deep, as fervent a passion as ever burned in human soul for woman. My life—perhaps my *eternal* life—hangs on your decision. Julia!—can you love me? I am not young in years, but what of that? You are no vulgar girl; but can rise above prejudice and bigotry——"

"My lord!" interrupted Julia, "I am honoured by your preference: but I must at once declare that I can never consent to accept your proposal.—It is not age——"

"Nay," interposed the Statesman, in his turn. "I do not flatter myself that I have excited those feelings in your breast which I could desire to gain: but I would ask you as a favour, an inexpressible favour, to search your heart, and delay passing sentence on me till to-morrow. *Then* I shall know whether I may aspire to the heaven, or must despair to the hell. Be not hasty, I entreat. If you fear, from what you have heard of my past life, to trust your fate to me, remember that resolves at my age are not easily shaken, and that you have the power to redeem me. Otherwise, all is darkness. Only do not utter another word at present. I urge not this because I hope; but because I wish you to reflect whether the good you may accomplish, the ardent love I bear you,

the devoted spirit you will possess, may not compensate for the want of youth and of those early flowers of life which are past their summer in me. I shall be quite satisfied if you will do this, though it may seal my fate for ever.—Julia! I have been a man of fearful passions, of ungovernable feelings, and of impulses which have been too often the foes of my peace and hope, because they have led me to the brink of perdition. It is in your power to drag me back, or to let me perish. I love, I adore you, and this sentiment can alone save me from myself. I will say no more:—I hear some one coming. Farewell, farewell, and recollect you rescue, or——"

He left the sentence unfinished, and went towards the door, as it was opened, and a friend of Julia's entered. It was no other than Lady Rivers; but Lord Wharton passed her with a significant smile and a bow, muttering he was in haste, and Lady Rivers went up to Julia, who had been unable to answer a word to Lord Wharton ere he went. She little suspected it was all a preconcerted plan between the Peer and Lady Rivers, and that she should come in the nick of time to prevent a positive rejection.

"My dear Julia!" exclaimed the fair widow, "I have brought you tickets to go and see Etherea, at last. Travers Wharton is going, and we hope she will tell him his fortune. Poor Travers! I suppose I must take pity on him: but, for my own part, fairest, I would rather be you! Lord Wharton has such glorious intellect, and fame, and station.—So you are really going to marry?"

"What can you mean?" ejaculated Julia, wonderingly.

"Why, it is the talk of all the town, that you are going to be Lady Wharton! It is an immense triumph; and I envy you not a little! He who had forsworn marriage for so many years, whilst the brightest and loftiest in the land were languishing for him——"

"Who could have spread such a report?" interrupted Julia, indignantly. "I hope you will contradict it from my authority wherever you go. It is quite false."

"O, *that* is always the little affectation of mystery with us women. I see you have got the 'Post.'—Let me look at it.—I thought so. See here. You *must* marry him after this, Julia, indeed. 'It is currently reported in the *Haut Ton*, that the belle of the season, Miss —— and Lord W—— are engaged.'"

"But that may not refer to me," said Julia, much annoyed.

"Why, who is the belle of the season, *par excellence*, you little affectedly modest thing? But to proceed. 'It is understood that the nuptials will be celebrated at the termination of the present season, and that one of the guardians of the fair bride elect, though at first unwilling to yield her to his old political opponent, has at length consented to the match, and will bestow a portion of his immense wealth upon her.' Miss ——

is in her nineteenth year, and Lord W—— is past forty; but genius and beauty should ever go together. It is a great victory to have subdued that gallant, 'gay Lothario' And so it goes on," continued Lady Rivers. "'He is a prodigiously fine man,—though he has grown so large; —and will soon be Premier and an English Earl.' But I must not rattle away with you. I only came to congratulate. I shall call for you to-night."

"My dear Lady Rivers, I must beg leave, most emphatically, to deny that I have consented, or ever shall consent to be the wife of Lord Wharton; and it is most repugnant to the delicacy of a woman to——"

"Nay, I cannot stay to listen," returned the widow, with a smile.— "Bye, Julia! I shall call at seven."

And she departed on the instant, leaving the maiden much disconcerted.

"The wife of Lord Wharton!" she exclaimed. "I would rather seek my grave. O, Reginald! How insignificant he seems, with all his power and greatness, compared with you!—Who could have been so busy as to spread this report?—Lord Wharton—the greatest sensualist in the world! Become *his* wife, after I have heard his nephew speak! O, Love! O, Heaven!"

The poor, wretched Julia!

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE THEATRE—FORTUNE-TELLING—THE LETTER—THE PARAGRAPH.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening; and one of the most brilliant assemblages London could produce, when all that is most magnificent and splendid is collected therein, was congregated in the theatre of Etherea. The performance was later than usual, and the company conversed together, in low tones, while refreshments were handed about. Among the most prominent of those present, in a box, beautifully decorated, were Travers Wharton, Sir Algernon Sharp, Lady Rivers, and Julia, who were taking ices, or sipping lemonade; and presently the Prince Regent entered, and sat down by the side of Lady Rivers.

"There is to be something new in the performance to-night, I believe," remarked Sir Algernon to Julia. "Indeed, it is always new; for the bewitching Etherea has such inexhaustible resources, that she imbues everything with the charm of novelty.—I long to hear the fortune of our dear Travers. Poor fellow! He is melancholy about it!"

The Coxcomb laughed; but before he could reply to his rival friend,

a strain of soft, dreamy music filled the theatre; but suddenly ceased. The Prince turned to Julia.

"Is not that delicious?" he said. "It is full of the mystery of love: it seems to speak of the soul's deep things, which we cannot utter! I wish our fairy would tell us what love is! Perhaps she will do so soon."

"Old Johnson said, 'It is the wisdom of the fool, and the folly of the wise!'" remarked Travers Wharton. "But why are we tantalised thus? Ah! the curtain rises."

Etherea did not appear; but a wondrous voice sung—

"Love! say you what is Love? O, ask the stars!
It lives among them pure, nor dies: but here—
Cold hearts—weak spirits plunder and despair—
Pillage from Heav'n and fly from it—O, where?"

"She hears all we say, and can *improvise*, instantly," whispered Sir Algernon Sharp to Travers;—who smiled.

Flutes and hautboys then played some melting airs, and once more Etherea's voice was heard, now accompanied by the dulcet music, but sweeter than all instruments.

"We fly from the Heaven,—an Angel pursuing,
Imagining we have ta'en treasures away;
But the splendours and smiles melt in fiery ruin—
For how can Eternity dwell in such clay?

"Love lives not among us: it casts from the spheres
Some ineffable shadows of glory and light,
And dissolves like a dream, and the pearls become *tears*;
The immortal desire grows dim in our night.

"O, hushed is the music, and mute is the lyre!
The darkness of death overshadows the breast!
It came like a form of ethereal fire—
It went—but it left not the music of rest!"

Many bright eyes were dim with radiant drops while the songstress poured forth these strains with profound pathos, as if her very heart melted in woe. Julia, with difficulty restrained her emotion; for it is impossible to describe the sweetness and mournfulness of the air sang by the invisible improvisatrice. It could hardly be composed; for it was so wild and abstract that it did not appear a regular melody, but was more like a nightingale's strain. So impassioned, yet so devoid of effort was the song, you could scarcely believe it came from a human throat; and when its last bird-like echoes died away, a dead silence succeeded.

"I never heard but one such voice!" murmured Travers Wharton:

"but even *that* was very inferior. I wonder what has become of that girl?"

The Coxcomb was at the back of the box: but to his amazement he heard a whisper close to his ear. He distinctly heard the monosyllable "Here!"

"Are you a ventriloquist?" asked Travers Wharton of Sir Algernon, who sat on the other side.

"I! my dear fellow, what are you thinking of? I wish I were; I would have fine sport," was the reply. "I would make money by it,—for, to tell the truth, I have not a guinea left. Last night I lost the few hundreds which removed me from being an absolute beggar. My commission alone remains."

"I have been in your predicament for many years," returned Travers Wharton, in the same low tone of voice, while instrumental music was played by skilful performers behind the scene. "You will get on much better without a farthing than with a little. Having nothing but one's wits sharpens them amazingly."

The performance proceeded; but a novel feature of the entertainment was a masquerade. A number of persons singularly and fantastically dressed came upon the stage, and fell into various graceful attitudes; but all was dumb show. Then on a sudden all the lights in the theatre were extinguished, somewhat to the alarm of the company; but to the astonishment of all, a fairy figure appeared, flying in the air, weird flames around her. "How is she supported?" was the universal cry; but the darkness prevented them distinguishing what means were employed to accomplish the miracle, for the phosphoric light in which she sailed through the air was so transient that it afforded no radiance, save such as was sufficient, aided by the dim twilight, admitted through stained glass, to reveal her aërial form. Melodies of unearthly sweetness seemed floating around her, while she traversed the space from the stage to the other end of the theatre; and she touched several persons in her flight with her wand, the last of whom was Travers Wharton; chaunting—

> "Ye whom I touch, I bid ye come and listen mute
> To what the oracles shall tell, and snake reveal—"

and disappeared in a sudden blaze of purple light. Those who had been touched by the enchantress were conducted by a black page from the theatre, while the band again played, and the masquerade was renewed. Among those marked by the favoring wand of Etherea was Julia; but she hesitated to present herself at the mysterious shrine.

"You must go," said the Prince, "or you may make a mortal foe of the fairy;" and, accordingly, Julia, with half-a-dozen others, followed the page.

The place to which they were conducted was quite dark; but presently a huge serpent of some metal, marvellously like life, rose apparently from the earth, emitting lurid flames. Julia was the first person commanded by a voice, which seemed to proceed from the snake's mouth, to advance; and she was then told in doggerel rhyme to place her ear to a tube fixed in the wall; when she heard these words—

> "Maiden, thy lot is not so bright, but o'er the sea
> Of thy life's being there must come a storm,—
> Behold, the oracles look dark: but there shall be
> A star from Heaven; descends a lovely form—
> This is the shadow of thy destiny."

And an exquisite dissolving view disclosed to Julia her own figure, and much to her astonishment, that of Reginald Travers, struggling together on the ocean. Dark phantoms came and went; but at length the tempest and the gloom vanished, and all was serene and fair. A few more mystic words were pronounced, and she was dismissed, that others might hear the oracles, each person being conducted back to the seat occupied by her or him as soon as the fate was told.

Travers Wharton was the last: but when he went back to the box, he looked pale and uneasy. He was unmercifully ridiculed by Lady Rivers and Sir Algernon, but was too much disconcerted to reply a word. Nothing could induce him to inform them what was the nature of the revelation which had caused him such chagrin. There was no farther performance, and the company dispersed at an earlier hour than usual. Lady Rivers carried Julia home, she being accompanied by Sir Algernon Sharp—for Travers Wharton disappeared as soon as the curtain descended.

Julia was glad to find herself alone in her chamber, and proceeded to undress. How strange it seemed that her love for Reginald was known to the singular being by whom her fortune had been told! She had known him but a few weeks as a man; and she had only recently discovered the state of her own heart. While reflecting on the circumstance, she noticed a letter lying on the table directed to her; and opening it, her attention was immediately arrested by the contents subjoined—

"Your well-wisher, but unknown correspondent, takes this method of warning you that the young man, Reginald Travers, is a deceitful and artful villain. You will doubtless feel indignant at this assertion; but I cannot see your confidence abused, without stretching forth a hand to save you. He is in fact a most licentious young man, and is, even at the present time, carrying on an intrigue with a certain Countess, well known to Lady Rivers. Besides this, he has no motive in pursuing you

but that of repairing his fortunes, which he has ruined by dissipation and extravagance. His affected sanctity and purity are only a cloak for designs which will be manifest hereafter. Although your correspondent is aware that anonymous letters in general deserve but little attention, you may be assured that the assertions here made will receive irrefragable proof."

"Miserable falsehood!" exclaimed Julia, contemptuously.

And she thought nothing farther of the matter until the following morning. But when she descended to breakfast, she observed that Sharp was reading a paragraph in the newspaper, and seemed distressed, in spite of his usual apparent stoicism. Samuel Sharp was drinking his chocolate, and was remarking, coolly—

"That is always the way with those who pretend to be better than their neighbours! What do you think, Julia, that young fellow, Reginald Travers, whom you thought such a pattern of virtue, has gone off with Lady St. Clair?—An odd taste; for she is not far short of forty!—Why, what's the matter with you?"

Julia caught the back of a chair, to prevent herself from falling, and gasped for breath. She did not utter a syllable, but a deathly pallor overspread her face; and she fell senseless into the arms of the lawyer, as if felled by a blow.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

SECRETS—SHARP'S SON SHOWS HIS BREED—JULIA.

Amid all the sorrows with which we are afflicted, it is hardly possible to conceive a greater woe than that which is occasioned by finding that the being in whom all our heart's dearest hopes are garnered up, is utterly worthless; that the idol we have worshipped is but of earth, and the Ideal we aspired to and adored, is a dream for ever. But the wise and good cannot despair for long: we have all our fits of scepticism and despondency, when we individually suffer; but hope and faith triumph.

With woman, love is not as it is with man, "an episodical romance." I do not mean to say that men cannot really love, deeply, enduringly; but it is not the same passion as it is with women, to whom it is existence and sole felicity. Moulded in sterner metal, *we* have our ambition, our struggles, our philosophy; but she being made of softer stuff, can only mourn over the Paradise from which, though innocent, she has been expelled. But her innocence is her refuge and her consolation; while man, alas! instead of seeking solace in the serenity of virtue, too often plunges

recklessly into the vortex of guilt, and is irrecoverably lost. Julia was of too high a soul to give way to despair, after the first shock of the fatal intelligence was over; but the smile left her cheek, and the roses departed; the fire of her eye was quenched, and she shunned all society.

But it is necessary to detail some events which preceded those just narrated, before our story proceeds. Samuel Sharp, with all his frigid feelings, was by no means attached to the worship of the chaste goddess. There are many men without passions who follow the example of those who possess them, on the same principle as people, who do not care for cards, play when they have nothing better to do. It was no wonder, then, that Samuel Sharp, about the same time as Julia went to the theatre of Etherea, finding himself in the neighbourhood of a certain establishment, went round by a court, and entered at a private door. He was met by one of those infamous women who entrap the poor unfortunates of their own sex, and fatten on the hideous traffic to which the horrors of the Slave Trade are preferable.

"Who have you got in the house, Mrs. Taylor?" asked the young barrister, familiarly.

"Why, there's no one except your old favourite, Jane; but I can easily send to my other house in O—— Street."

"No—I'm very fond of Jane. You may send her to me, with some wine," and Samuel sat down. "What an old beast that Taylor is," thought the young barrister. "But I've heard she used to be rather a handsome woman, and a favourite of Lord Wharton's when he first came to town."

As there was nothing to amuse him in the apartment where he was, he looked out of a stained window, and observed a chair had just arrived at the private door. "What can *that* be for?" he muttered. "There's something in the wind!" At this juncture he heard a heavy step descending the staircase, and presently perceived a man steal out of the house. "By Jove, that must be Wharton!" said the barrister to himself. "What a devil he is, at his age!" Here one of the chairmen entered the house, and presently young Sharp heard him descending, accompanied by others. The chair was brought into the house, and the curiosity of Samuel being excited, he peeped through the keyhole, and saw that a tall personage was placed inside by the chairmen, but could not see his face. "Oh, he's drunk," thought the barrister, "that's it." There was a whispering outside the door, and immediately the chair was carried away, accompanied by a short man in a cloak.

It was dusk by this time, but Samuel thought he recognised this latter individual, though he could not be positive of the fact, and as he went from the window a very fine girl of about nineteen entered to him. "Ah, Jenny, you have had the Minister with you! He's a great beast! When I am twenty years older than I am, I shan't frequent——"

"I've not seen him," said the girl. "I'm only just up; for I have had no sleep all night; and Mother Taylor woke me to come to you."

"That's a lie, Jenny! If I were to cross-examine you—but no matter. Can you tell me who it is they have been removing in the chair? I think I know him."

"No, I can't. How should I know anything about the hundreds who come here?"

But when Miss Jane was sitting on the barrister's knee, and had partaken of some wine, she became more communicative, and he ultimately elicited from her sufficient to convince him that the Peer had been engaged in a transaction not very honorable to himself, though he could not make out, from what the girl told him, who was the victim of his foul policy. But he was resolved to sift the whole business to the bottom—thinking he might acquire some power over Lord Wharton, which he might turn to his own advantage. In every act of his life, Samuel Sharp was always thinking of his own interests; and though not a highly intellectual man, by his unwearying industry, when he thought he could accomplish aught for his aggrandizement, he frequently succeeded in doing more than if he had possessed good talents; for it is not your brilliant men who are most prosperous in the world, but your plodding ones.

When he left Mother Taylor's, he made it his business to look out for the chair which had conveyed from thence the insensible person, and justly calculating that, if it had returned, it was most probably in the immediate vicinity, he turned into a narrow street, where there was a public-house (where is there not?) and entered the place, when he noticed a chair standing outside. He easily recognised the two men who had carried it, and who were two brawny Irishmen, "pottle deep" in their ale. Pretending to "cut it fat,"—as the elegant phraseology of such places is,—he gave the chairmen a pint of gin to drink, and betted a guinea with one of them that he could not outdrink his comrade. When they were half-seas over, he easily extracted from them where they had conveyed the young man from Taylor's; and then proceeded homewards, as it was too late to prosecute any further inquiries that night. But he went out early the following morning, and employed his clerk, a cunning fellow, to fish out the whole matter, and inform him of all as soon as possible.

* * * * *

He went out of the house directly Julia had recovered from the fainting fit which had seized her, muttering, "I see how the land lies! Hang that young visionary! Who would have thought it possible she could love him?" Here he met his clerk, who taking off his hat, said,

"I've found out all you want, sir! I went to Mother Taylor's, pretending I wanted to see a girl who lives with her (and who I happen to know). She had picked up a paper last night, which I have got, directed

to 'Reginald Travers, Esq.' Here it is, sir. She could not read, so she knows nothing; but I gathered some particulars from her, which, coupled with what you found out, may give a certain clue."

"Well, Jones, there's a ten-pound note for you, and be silent, as you value my favour." The barrister cogitated for some time. "I have it now," he thought. "Lord Wharton wanted young Travers out of the way, and caused this note to be sent to him. *He* wants Julia. But I have the great Minister in my power now, if I can trace this business home to him. But there's the difficulty. I must bribe Mother Taylor and Jenny; but the deuce of it is, *they* won't be believed on oath against him. How can a harlot speak the truth, when she accuses a Minister of State? But he has employed some agent! That short man,—who is he? That I must find out by the people who saw him embark. I hope young Travers may never come back. I could not conceive the boy a rival to me! Yes, I will not divulge the secret, unless Wharton should throw defiance into my teeth. I *must* marry Julia!"

* * * * * *

Meanwhile, all London was full of the elopement of Lady St. Clair and Reginald Travers. No very extraordinary intimacy had existed between them, and it had been said the Countess was indiscreet with a very different person, of political notoriety, who had left town a few days prior to the affair. That man was a creature of Lord Wharton's, but without very superior abilities, and owed his office to the Minister. He had just departed on some secret mission of negociation to a distant court of Europe, for he was so unpopular in England that it was thought he was better out of it; but some months afterwards it was whispered Lady St. Clair was seen with him in disguise.

The London season closed, and many bleeding hearts sought the grateful quiet of the country; but none more gladly than the heart-broken Julia. Lord Wharton made several attempts to see her before she left town; but she persisted in refusing admission to him, on the plea of ill health. He was resolved, however, not to abandon his game.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE MAGISTRATE—SIR A. SHARP—ROSE—MARRIAGE—CONTRITION.

Early on the morning succeeding the eventful night when Reginald left the hotel to go, as he thought, to Julia, his father received a letter from him, simply saying that he could not return home till the following day, and would explain wherefore when he did so. Travers had such

perfect reliance in the lofty principles of his son, that he gave himself no concern on the subject, and having important business at some distance from the metropolis, went to transact it. But, on coming back, he was dismayed to find another letter from Reginald, containing a few hasty words:—"Do not condemn me, my father! I have taken an imprudent step; but I was wretched—I could not live without her who has consented to fly with me." In addition there were a few common-place sophistries in palliation of the crime of running away with a man's wife; but Travers had not patience to read through them.

"This is a base forgery!" he said; "the hand-writing is like that of Reginald, and is peculiar; but where is the vitality of his soul? I could not believe in this imposition, if I would. But there is something mysterious in it! God grant no harm may have come to my noble boy! Oh, Great Spirit of the Universe, do not inflict upon me such a chastisement as the loss of him!"

And with this murmured prayer, Travers hastened to a magistrate who was a friend of his, and laid the circumstances of Reginald's disappearance before him, urging him to take prompt measures in order to defeat any machinations against him. The magistrate was an intelligent man, and very prompt in action. He ordered a Bow-street officer to be sent for, and applied himself to the examination of the case.

"We shall soon be able to ascertain where your son is," he said. "I have just read the paragraph which mentions the fact of the elopement of Lady St. Clair with Mr. Reginald Travers; and it strikes me they could hardly have procured such news in so short a space of time, under ordinary circumstances. We must learn whence they got the intelligence."

"All I fear is," returned Travers, "that some miscreants have inveigled him into their power for the purpose of robbery and assassination. I am certain he could not act thus."

"Young men *are* young men, Travers, and *will* be green. But I own I had a higher opinion of your son's taste and heart."

"It is not possible he could have done it! He loves another; he knows but little of Lady St. Clair, and he is the best and loftiest of human beings. I have watched the progress of his mind from infancy, and have never known him guilty of a base or low action. He has had far greater temptations to struggle against than the vapid soul and faded charms of this woman could be, to one of such a nature."

"My good friend, *de gustibus nihil disputandum est!* It is certain that Lady St. Clair is gone. But here is our friend from Bow-street—though not the one I sent for. Well, Smith," as a stout, middle-aged man, of peculiar appearance, with a bright keen eye and a jaw of iron, entered, "we want your assistance." And he stated the case.

"Give me the exact description of the missing gentleman," said

Smith, taking pen, ink, and paper, and looking at Travers; who answered,

"He is in his twentieth year, but looks rather more. His height is six feet two, his hair——"

"Stop!" interrupted Smith. "Is he at all like you in appearance, Sir?"

"Yes, certainly, there is a family likeness. But why do you ask the question."

"Do you think he is in the habit of going to Taylor's in —— Street, Haymarket?"

"What house is that?"

"Don't you know?" exclaimed the Magistrate, in much surprise. "Why it is the most notorious brothel, perhaps, in London!"

"I am certain he would not enter such a house."

"Pshaw! you have forgotten your youth," replied the Magistrate, who had been a little bit of a *Roué*.

"What I mean, is," said the Bow-street Officer, "I am pretty certain I saw a young gentleman, answering the description you give, knock at the public door of Taylor's house the night before last. I remarked he was tall, and stooped a little, and he had a singular face—a face of genius, as they call it. I will go to Taylor's with a search-warrant, if your worship pleases, and bring the old girl up for examination to-morrow morning."

"Do so, Smith. How is it Thompson did not come?"

"He has got a holiday, please your worship," and Smith departed. But he returned without having learned anything of consequence, and Taylor, the keeper of the brothel, was gone on a journey. Smith said, "She had left for Paris, in search of additions to her household, that very morning." But the officer did not relax in his exertions from want of immediate success. He was persuaded he had seen Reginald at the house in —— Street, and was indefatigable in his endeavours to obtain a clue to him. But for some time he was unsuccessful. At length he went to Travers who, with all his philosophy, was almost distracted at his darling boy's disappearance, and said he was convinced he was somewhere in France. But, when pressed to give his reasons for such a conviction, he hesitated.

"I am unwilling to injure a man's character before I can prove him to be a villain," he said. "It's very unprofessional and ungentlemanly." The Bow-street runner prided himself on his honour and gentility, though he had once been a rogue of eminence himself.

Travers, finding him reluctant to speak where a third person was concerned, asked, "What would you advise me to do?" and Smith replied,

"Go to Ostend. When you are there I shall have learnt more, and will either come myself, or send some person to assist you in your

search. Depend on it, the young gentleman is safe; but I cannot enter into particulars."

"And what am I to do on arriving at Ostend?"

"Why, you must be careful not to let the enemy get scent of your proceedings; but the French police are sharp fellows, if you will tip them handsomely." And, after some more conversation of a like nature, Smith departed.

Travers, in a few hours afterwards, was on his way to France, well furnished with the stuff which unlocks almost all lips. And Travers was almost the only person in the world who had the slightest doubt of the guilt of Reginald; but *he* never for an instant questioned the purity of his soul. But he was not to discover his son so speedily as he hoped he might; for Smith the officer was seized with paralysis, which deprived him of speech and the power of writing, the very day after Travers had conferred with him, But we must put ourselves in the company of others of our *dramatis*—or rather, perhaps, *historiæ—personæ*, before we follow the fortunes of the philosopher and his son. It is to Sir Algernon Sharp our chronicle returns.

He returned home after escorting Lady Rivers to her house in no very bright mood, and a fair creature of about three-and-twenty welcomed him with eager arms.

"Don't be a fool, Rose," he said, pettishly. "We have lived together for no less than nine years, and are no longer boys and girls.—There, now you are going to snivel! You know I hate snivelling women! You've no idea how plain you look with the absurd *nose* you make when about to cry!—Rose, I'm ruined! I would advise you, and seriously, too, to accept some of the good offers which have been made you. I can't afford to keep a mistress, any longer."

"Cruel! cruel!" interrupted the girl. "I will work for you, I will slave for you! But you would not send me away from you, Algernon! Dear Algernon! I could not breathe out of the atmosphere which you make of earth! O, you will not send me away, to mourn and die?"

"Silly girl! You don't pretend to love me now?"

"Not love you? When did love ever die? It is life—it is essential being, and can never perish! Say that you but jested, Algernon! I know you often jest; but it hurts me to the heart sometimes!"

She turned away to conceal her tears. Poor wretch! She loved that frivolous, selfish man, who cared for none in the universe but himself, as if he had been a God! Women expiate their misdeeds by the very passion which leads to almost all. No female ever fell, without love, however gross the sentiment might seem to those of more refined feelings. I pity those who err from weakness; but I have no sympathy for those who take advantage of that weakness to gratify their lusts. Love creates weakness, for lust to destroy. And creation is very different

from destruction! Love creates fine feelings in the heart, but lust extirpates them all. But men, as well as women, are weak?—Ay, in temptation! But he that seeks the hell is not like him that falls from the heaven! To err from love is most undoubtedly to depart from God—but *not* from the hate of him—*Love never hates!*—Alas for human virtue, alas for human wisdom! How the person without passions, who has never experienced temptation, exults in a fancied superiority over those who have fallen! Why, after all, it is quite possible for a woman who yields to nature to have more real virtue than the cold, stony-hearted female who calls her such vile names! There is no merit whatever in being a moral person, where it is most agreeable to be so: it is only the great of passion who can be good. But I have no desire to hold up error to admiration; I only maintain there may be virtue even in the fallen: and we certainly find there are many kind-hearted, charitable, generous creatures among the female outcasts of society—who would not stoop to a dirty action—who would not say a harsh thing, who would not detract from the character of another; and such was poor Rose.

Seduced by a specious scoundrel when but little beyond childhood, bitterly had she repented her weakness. But what could she do? She could not retrieve her reputation, and she still loved her seducer, despite his coldness. She had no alternative except to live with him, to bear all his humours with uncomplaining patience, to weep in secret, and to smile in his presence, even though her heart-strings cracked. For to be the mistress of another man was most abhorrent to her feelings; and she was well aware she could not obtain any respectable employment.

Barbarous system of society! When shall this persecution of the weak cease, and the strong, who have preyed upon them, suffer what they merit? If it were so, men would not play the villain's part so frequently: but, as Lady Morgan has shown, they have ever infamously oppressed women, made their own laws, and enforced obedience by physical, and not moral power. O, for a few brave spirits who would dare the brunt of ridicule, and stand forth the champions of dear, injured woman—expose the scoundrelism of the oppressor, and put them on a footing of equality, as far as all laws whatever concern them!

Sir Algernon Sharp the following morning went forth, and called on Lady Rivers. He found her alone, and exerted all his powers of pleasing to the uttermost. The fickle widow already repented the promise she had given to the coxcomb Colonel, and thought the Baronet, after all, was the most agreeable man, though he was not so handsome, and was but five-feet-four. It is not necessary to mention the means whereby Sir Algernon effected his designs; but the very next day, at ten o'clock, they walked to St. George's, Hanover Square, together, were married, and in the course of another hour were rattling away as fast as four horses could carry them from London. Travers Wharton thought it was

a "d—d shabby trick" of Algernon; but allowed that he should have done the same, if similarly circumstanced. Rose was the only person whom the intelligence of this hasty marriage affected very deeply. The Colonel thought the widow was a bore, and horribly old, and that, after all, he might pick up a younger and prettier wife, with as many thousands a-year as she had. But Rose never lifted up her head after receiving a few frigid lines from her seducer, enclosing a bank note, which he said he had had some difficulty in procuring; and advising her to accept some offer of protection, for he could no longer retain a mistress.—Yet a few months afterwards the Baronet kept three ladies, instead of one!

Rose, after the first ebullition of agonized grief had subsided, resolved immediately to quit the house she was in, and return the money Sir Algernon had sent to her. But where was she to go? She had not a friend in the world. Suddenly she recollected an advertisement she had seen in the paper a very short time previously, and resolved to apply for admission into a house appropriated for the reception of those who had gone astray, and repented. Acting at once on this resolution, she quitted the abode of her seducer, and took her way to a distant quarter of the town. In about an hour she reached a rather picturesque abode in the suburbs of the great Babylon, which is ever filled with so much destitution and crime, and knocking timidly, a female of pleasing exterior opened the door. She was evidently not a servant, but dressed in the plainest manner, and her face was still beautiful, though sorrow had made ravages on it. In a low and hesitating accent Rose made known the object of her visit, and the female contemplated her fair young face sadly, and with deep interest.

"Welcome, my poor sister," she said; "you are very welcome. Yes, there is room for you. Sit down." While she spoke, an elderly man of attenuated figure entered the room into which she had taken Rose. "This is our good minister," she said. "He is not a priest, but officiates for us, and gives us his counsels and consolations. He is wise and merciful, and you will derive comfort from him."

"Wisdom and mercy are not man's," returned the old man, solemnly and meekly. "God alone is wise and merciful. Poor child! And Heaven has brought back the strayed sheep to the fold!—You weep: it is well. Tears relieve the o'ercharged breast, and are grateful to the Creator, when they proceed from contrition. Our sister here, will comfort you better than I can. Men do not understand women so well as they do themselves.—You will find that we are not bigots—that we do not mourn, and put on sackcloth and ashes all the day: but those who come here, work for the poor, and try to expiate their errors by doing as much good as they can. Remember, my young friend, that grief alone will not raise you in the scale of moral being; that belief without works

is not faith, but that faith doeth all things. And do not for an instant despair! Christ forgave, and He will forgive!"

"You are very good to me," said Rose, "especially when I am a stranger to you."

"Do not say that you are a stranger," returned the female. "We are all the children of one common Father, and I recognise no such thing as strangership, where any good is to be done. Once more, welcome, and may Heaven restore you to felicity again."

Rose shook her head. "That cannot be," she cried.

"Yes, you will find exceeding peace," exclaimed the old man, fervently, "which is beyond earthly happiness—the peace of God! He has wiped away all sin from the penitent—he forgives and receives."

That old man and lovely woman were once respectively the infidel philosopher, and Lord Wharton's mistress!

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

FANNY—THE POETRY OF PANTHEISM.

The visionary Fanny was in her chamber, employed, as was her wont, in astrologising. She had no real system or theory of the starry science, but resolved it into the vague mysticism which had become a part of her being. Never did she look, perhaps, more strangely beautiful than at that still hour. "Still they roll on for ever!" she said. "No change, no pause! They love, they worship, and are immortal. O, that I were a star, or dwelt away from all the shadows of this wilderness of Time! My only joy now is the imagination—the true, ethereal imagination! I sometimes fancy I glide down a breathless stream, under a light which is not of the sun or the moon, but more liquid, soft, and holy! And ineffable music is in my soul, and love is in my being. And above there are dark green trees spreading their immeasurable shade, and myriads of birds are dreaming, and singing, as they dream. And there are sweet flowers and fairy islands exhaling perfume, and smiling as if they had life. Oh, *such* islands! If they could be found, I would leave the world, and seek them. Orange groves and forests of lemon trees, and no storms, no dissonant sounds—while the calm ocean strives to murmur a love-song to the spirit that hangs in the golden atmosphere; and the blue and sunny air whispers fond tales to the woodlands, while tender waterfalls gush over the daisied grass! And then to lie and dream of love, in which there is no falsehood! To think of the past as a vision and a night; and to find bliss even in the dark shades which have departed, and left exceeding light! O, to dream of one, and *one* only—a spirit of *my* spirit! To feel the ethereal breath like thrilling melody in the inmost life, and

love till passion is consumed and gone! O, there is something deeper than passion in us! It partakes of its nature, but is more subtile and spiritual. And we must pine for love, because it is the essence of life and of all we see. Love without passion! Well; why not? The spirit lives in its own fine and delicate element, and the body in its gross sensual atmosphere. Why should we not be pure as the heavens, and mingle ourselves with the great Life of all? Incomprehensible power! Sitting on the throne of Space, and counting the vast pulses of the Universe. Vitality of all things, without whom nothing is or can be."

Pantheism is the Natural Religion of the imaginative; and I recollect a writer in one of our magazines, alluding to Shelley, said, "he worshipped God in Nature." It is an error; but a lovely one. There is always hope in a Pantheist, because he adores something—no matter what. The very existence of adoration is a species of religion: the Atheist—the unmitigated Atheist is alone without poetry, without hope, and God. All poetry is faith, all faith is love, all love is worship; and he who has these three elements of mind, cannot possibly be an Atheist. For atheism asserts the non-existence of anything divine; it is a "brute-idolatry" of Self, and excludes the principle of hope altogether: while Love cannot be without faith in the Everlasting, for it would cease to be such, if it admitted nothing but the material and perishable to exist; and consequently in its own nature (as Mr. Talfourd eloquently demonstrated in one of the finest speeches even *he* ever made) "vindicates the immortality which it would deny."

All poetry is the search for something better and higher than exists in this world; and the Atheist must exclude everything but sense and reality from his wretched system, if he be consistent. We have much more practical than theoretical atheism in this enlightened century. We all abase ourselves too much at the shrine of Mammon: and, while we rightly imprecate iniquity, do not open our eyes enough to the impiety and ultra-atheism of many with whom we associate, who have God's words in their mouth, and the devil's lies in their hearts. This is the prostration of mind and perversion of reason which I hold to be one step beyond blasphemy and profanity. But those things to which we are accustomed, we see through a dim glass, while we magnify distant or unusual objects, and shudder at a shadow. Theoretical atheism is but a shadow, and cannot gain ground; but practical atheism—Oh, tremble at it!

Fanny was roused from her abstraction by the entrance of the deaf old woman who resided with her, and who announced that "a gentleman wished to see her, and had sent his card."

"Oh, you may admit him," returned Fanny, and presently Taylor made his appearance. "I am glad to see you," she said; "but you are late. Well, I should like to walk out: it is just nine o'clock. The stars

are yet dim: age but makes *them* the brighter. Am I much changed, Williamson?"

"Scarcely at all. You are very, very beautiful."

Fanny smiled sadly. "So you know the tall lady I mentioned to you when you came last? I should like to be introduced to her."

"I called on her this very day, and she mentioned you to me. Yes, I at one time lived in the same house with her, at the request of the rich lawyer, Mr. Sharp, whom you may have heard of. She is a heavenly creature."

"I feel as if I could love her. You must take me to her some evening. Now I am ready."

They walked in the same direction as the place where they had met after so many years, and when they arrived within a short distance of the ruined cottage, beheld the same tall and shadowy form which the superstitious Fanny had once conceived to be a spirit. They mutually recognised each other, and Harriet hastened her steps, and invited them into her dwelling.

There was a winning softness in her melancholy smile, and an endearing sweetness in her low clear voice, which were almost irresistible.—And those three beings of blighted hopes, and of characters so opposite, conversed together; the man with his high philosophy, the women with their touching poetry. What would men do without reason, and women without imagination? Among other things, Harriet said,

"There is no evil we are afflicted with that is not sent in love; and the perfection of wisdom seems to me to lie in that faith which assures us grief is not sent as a punishment for sin, so much as to make us better adorers of virtue. We are not chastised because Heaven is angry with us: there is no wrath there."

"You have not got that Christianity from popular theology," returned the Unitarian, "which makes it a faith of terror, and represents the Deity as inexorably just."

"I have got it from my own heart and from him I humbly follow," answered Harriet. "And it seems to me yours is a cold creed, if it be philosophical."

"Reason appears cold: but a rationalist may be an enthusiast, though not a fanatic. Paul was so."

"It is the combination of the two which is best, I think."

"And yet it is a question which will never be solved, perhaps, if Error lies in not going far enough, or in going too far. Whether wisdom lies in extremes is doubtful; yet infinite truth is necessarily an extreme. We, however, have no such thing. All in Time is relative, and not absolute; but in Eternity it is otherwise. My views on this subject are changed."

"Ah," cried Fanny, "what can proud reason be worth, when no opinion is universal? You cannot prove anything you say true from the

beginning; and therefore what seems to the individual Truth, *is* to him such. That is the only definition of it! How beautiful it is! It is like nothing except itself, and is fairer than moonlight, and brighter than the sun; penetrating the soul, as a beam of light is taken in by the eye. Truth is Deity, and Deity is Truth. It is the poetry and the philosophy of the Divine Mind, and sufficient for his happiness who is essential felicity. Yet we in our weakness would question the wisdom which is of the soul and not the sense. Who but thinks he could have made a better world?"

"Ay," said the Rationalist; "but who could do it? Unless man were a brute he could not be perfectly happy, with his two distinct natures. And the faith we follow can alone explain why those two natures exist. Humanity is the great mystery of creation: and though there may be loftier beings than we *are*, I do not think there can be higher than we may *become*."—Great Truth!

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF FANNY'S LIFE.

The acquaintance of Harriet and Fanny ripened into affectionate and earnest sympathy, and they confided each other's mournful history to the bosom which could so deeply sympathize, from similar misfortune. Williamson was glad to be the means of bringing two such beings together, and encouraged their intimacy; so that Fanny spent half her time with Harriet in her lonely cottage. The birth of friendship is beautiful and full of consolation, and its stedfast zeal and kindness is potent to alleviate affliction.

It was a summer's noon, and the sky was intensely blue, the air was balmy and serene, and a gentle breeze cooled the atmosphere, as Harriet and her new friend sat together under an ancient elm, and enjoyed the glorious weather. A stream coursed gently onward at a little distance, and its ripples were both bright and frequent, like the smiles in Beauty's eye. Flowers of all hues and of rich perfume were in great abundance within a few feet of them, and if they could have been made happy with the radiance of Nature, no cloud would have obscured their bliss. The influence of the external world is deep: but there is always a melancholy attached even to the brightest of external things; because, unlike the mind, we know they must wither and perish. Yet as the two friends looked up through the grateful verdure of the huge boughs, and caught glimpses of the azure heaven, a pensive joy entered their souls.

"Assuredly there is pleasure too deep for tears," said Fanny, on a sud-

den. "There is a heart in all the universe in unison with our own; and when we contemplate all this unutterable loveliness, when we behold the serenity and smilingness of the great frame of things, we are apt to ask ourselves whether darkness and gloom and sorrow be not a delusion? You shake your head: but why not? We know nothing of what we are; we know nothing of what we call reality: and I persuade myself that what is most divine to our spirits must be true."

"May there not be divineness beyond what *seems?*"

"I like that idea: but what is in the soul does not *seem* at all: it *is.* I dreamed *that* when I was a child, and have never deserted the principle, though I change, and am so fickle to your sight. No, nothing changes in Mind; it is impossible. But I promised to give you an insight into my peculiar feelings, and I think I can do so now, as we recline here: only do not laugh at me."

"Thank you: I shall not laugh, indeed, Fanny."

"Then I will begin what I shall call the

"HISTORY OF MY MIND.

"When I was a child, from my earliest recollection—and I remember a very long while ago—I lived on dreams and shadows. Every gale had for me an indescribable charm, and spirits seemed to whisper to me in my day-dreams. I would lie awake during the long summer nights, trying to count the stars, and wondering what they were, that they looked so bright and pure. Why did they seem so happy and so joyous? They must have a finer and heavenlier life than man. Then why were there tears on earth, when the stars do not weep? And I would compose strange melodies in my brain, and attribute them to subtle spirits, with which I peopled the universe. It was my delight to lie under some hedge and dream and sing, striving to emulate the blackbird, and longing for wings to fly. And I believed a guardian spirit was ever near me, and I loved to listen in imagination to his divine voice, and breathe prayers to him. Then there came a thought into my being—'What is Love?' I could not be satisfied until I found this out: but I could not. Oh, who has ever found it? Children have ideas of passion much earlier than is supposed, and very early I pined for love. Why did not the being of my soul come as I slept, and embrace me, and press kisses on my lips, and utter such things as only Love can breathe or fathom?* And I looked out of my heart, and *saw all things must love!* A great thought flashed on me in a dream; and I said, 'God is Love.' Then we should love God, and so be happy. But how? We cannot see him, except in the universe. 'Ah,' said one, in a vision, 'see him in your *soul:*' and I rejoiced. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, a dream of heaven

* This is, in fact, the birth of the *poetry* of passion.

I had twenty years ago: but it is so abstract you will hardly comprehend my meaning—for there are things we can feel in ourselves, and yet cannot express by words, which are but types. Love was everywhere. That was the locality of heaven. We are all a part of Love—a speck in its immense being, as we are in the universe of matter an atom in it. And God is throned in the heart of Love—the centre of all. And out of Love all is hell. What things visions are! But that was an era in my existence, and I asked the more passionately for love. I was no longer a child in reality, though I was in years: and the birth of passion commenced. I tried to live in the heart of love; but, alas, I could not. How can we get into God, unless he will take us? I wept. Oh, I found bliss in tears: my sorrows vanished like the showers and gloom of April, and smiles, dear smiles succeeded, even before my cheek was dry. * * * * * *

"It was on a wildly glorious and starry night: the feast of the stars I called it; for they must have partaken of immortal essences to repair their wasted glories. And there was a crowned star in the midst of them, who from his throne looked down upon me. And I said, 'O Star, reveal!' And methought I heard a voice, saying, 'We are the eternal destinies: as yonder pale orb brightens or dims, so will you be happy or wretched.' And I believed. Why should we not believe all things that high thoughts and dreams suggest? WE are but dreams. And the destinies told me I should love but to despair. In heaven alone could my clinging hope, my dear vision, and my idol ever be present in substance; and so I fell!"

"How strange!" here murmured Harriet.

"What is strange?"

"That one so pure should have fallen!"

Fanny sighed deeply. "I thought Love makes all things pure," she said. "But there are two principles in the universe; good and evil. If I had understood my nature, I should not have made so fatal an error as I did: but who can struggle against Fate? You shake your head, as much as to say, 'There is *no* Fate!' How is that possible? Show me what is not Fate? The flower blooms: and wherefore? Could it have been otherwise? Can you conceive, when one thing depends upon another, but that all must depend? Suppose there were no fate, all would be blind chance, and the globe itself would not perform its everlasting circle round the sun. There must be laws to the atom as much as to the world; there must be laws to a congregation of atoms as much as to the unit. Upon this subject I have thought much, and though I have but little reasoning power, think I can defend it as well as a philosopher. My theory of the universe is, that each part hanging upon another, it is quite inconceivable that man should not hang on what is superior to man, as the material atom does, and we being atoms of God—who is the One Soul—must do as God wills we should—or else we are not in him."

"That is a dangerous error," said Harriet, gently. "If we are in God, who is all good, how is it we sin?"

"Because God himself is alone perfect, as being *All*, and man is imperfect, as being *One*. What says the poet?

'All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart,
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.'

That Essay on Man, from which I have quoted, was one of the first books, requiring thought to understand, I ever read, and I have taken the little philosophy I pretend to from it. Those things we read of in early life make most impression on us."

"But," interposed Harriet, "my dear child, should we not endeavour to progress in knowledge and wisdom, and should we be content with what convinced our reason before it was mature. I have read the work which you allude to, and think it contains truth and error. Is man to suppose he can understand how the immense machine of creation moves, when he hardly comprehends one made by himself?"

"We are the springs of that machine," replied Fanny, fixing her large, bright eyes on the face of Harriet. "We do not understand the whole wondrous mechanism: but we know there is a whole, and we are parts of it, or else not in it. What is a part? Behold this finger of mine—it is a portion of me. By the incomprehensible power of life in the soul, the finger is compelled to move as I desire; it has no choice of its own. This is the analogy between a part and a whole; and until you can prove a portion does not depend, it is obvious that the universe is a series of links."

"But why may not the soul be as a God in the centre of its own creation? The soul is not the life, it is not the mind, but pervades them both. Oh, Fanny, to what do you reduce the spirit by this miserable doctrine? It is a cipher, a mere shadow."

"Not so: because it is God. Yet there is a sublime truth in what you call Will. It is Motion, it is vivific power, and set in action by the

great main-spring of existence—that is, fate. I compare it to a watch, fate the main-spring, man a less spring. But the motion itself? First, there is the mysterious will which creates all motion, and from whence we derive our motion. It is a divine essence, altogether beautiful and vast. *This* regulates the very stars which rule our destiny; it is their light and life and immortality. Still we are distinct from God, though we are in him. We are of one substance; but there is the individuality—the I—throned in central being. Do you ever think what that consciousness *is?* What but a spirit away from us? It lives far away, yet ever present, it is our joy and our woe; it is in us, but not of us, and never sleeps. When we dream—when the senses are locked up by the spell of that Great Magician whose balmy breath heals the wounds of the sore and bruised heart, still the spirit is busy in distant worlds, and brings from far regions the passion, the dream, and beauty. Blessed be the consciousness, which is not subject to the fever and the unrest! When we go home, we shall become *all* consciousness, and being itself will be enough for bliss. We shall be all *that* spirit which does not sleep, and which God sends down the instant that we are living creatures to guide us, if we will, to peace and home.—The peace in love, the home in heaven!—And I have wandered weary and desolate for long, long years, without love, except as a dark vision and a shadow! I asked to forget: but a sad, cold voice echoed through the chambers of the brain, the voice of the eternal consciousness, and it said, 'In Death alone there is oblivion.' Then said I to sweet Death, 'Come, and nestle in my bosom, then! Come, gentle Death, and waft me to the Invisible beyond the stars;—O, give me the sleep and the rest!' But Death shook his hoary head, and answered, 'I love the bright, and the happy, and the beloved, that I may take them away from woes to come! I take them away from sin and sorrow; I take the pure flowers from the foul lap of the earth, and I place them in gardens where they do not fade, among the amaranths of heaven.' So I despaired. And I said to the Life above my life, 'Give me then *vitality:* for I am as a ghost among the living.' But LIFE answered nothing. 'Wilt thou not speak a word, O LIFE?' I cried in the bitterness of my anguish. And methought a voice, a winged voice, came down from heaven, and rebuked me. '*I* am the Life,' it said, 'from whence all life! I walk in the shadow of darkness, like a star through the black firmament. I am the Life which is in thee, the God of thy god—Fate!' So I replied, 'Why do I live, O Life, since I never asked to be? And why may I not seek death? I have erred, I have sinned: canst thou wipe away sin, canst thou restore me to myself? Behold, the universe is like a charnel to me, and I walk slowly and wearily, as through the valley of the shadow of death! Make me anything but what I am, and I will bless thee.' But the inexorable Life replied, 'Where is the power thou requirest? Annihilation of being is annihila-

tion of Omnipotence. God can no more destroy thee, than he can destroy himself: but I will give thee wisdom, instead of happiness! Adore!' . . . This adoration has supported me much: but I am wretched, still. All seems to me but a phantom and a regret."

"What did you adore, Fanny?" asked Harriet. "The voice of Life told you right: but you have adored yourself, because you believe you are God. It is the worship *out* of yourself which is peace! *I* have found it, and am happy."

"Do you love still? He who wronged——"

"Hush!" interrupted Harriet, with stifled emotion. "Ah, Fanny, I cannot forget the past; but heaven bids me turn away from memory, and seek hope."

"Hope!" echoed Fanny: "It is a false dream, though it is so beautiful. It seems an angel, but—alas!"

"It is an angel!" said Harriet, fervently; "for without it, where were heaven? If you hope in this life, it is 'a false dream,' because from its very nature, hope implies what is ever beyond possession. Do I love him still,—that great and evil one?—I know not what to say. I believe Love cannot die: but it is not what it has been. May he be forgiven, as *I* forgive him; may he turn from the paths of darkness, and find the road of Light. I have suffered much; but I repeat that I am happy now: for I lay my aching head on the bosom of the Redeemer, and he removes the pain. Seek Him, dearest Fanny, in whom is love beyond conception, in whom is everlasting life."

"He was a divine man," murmured Fanny; "but I cannot understand your religion. Some of it is indeed like nothing but itself; full of ethereal wisdom and tenderness to man. But then God does not seem like Christ to *my* soul."

"Fanny, the humanity in one is the divinity in the other, and the connexion that subsists between the two forms the Trinity. But if you will come to me next Sunday, I will take you to one who can explain away your difficulties—one who seems inspired by heaven to smooth the road to it."

CHAPTER XC.

THE MADHOUSE—THE YOUNG POET AND THE PHILOSOPHER—THE SOUL.

It was in as lovely a spot as ever poet's imagination conceived, there stood a house, buried in deep solitude, and embosomed among hills, covered with luxuriant trees, at the bases of which flowed streams to their own delicious music. Here were shady walls of great extent, and the night-

ingales sang in them as sweetly as if they were in Paradise. It was a dream of beauty, almost impossible to be realized in any other spot;—and as you wandered among the labyrinths formed by nature, and inhaled the odour of flowers, and gazed on the green pastures which stretched away to the extremity of the horizon, it was next to impossible not to stop and feast the eye on the picture, exclaiming with the devout Milton, in fervent rapture—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good!"

Yes, it was as beautiful as when nature sprang fresh from the hand of the Creator. The earth never can diminish in its glorious and eternal youth, the birds can never sing less melodiously, the flowers can never smell less fragrantly; in the universal sense

"Its loveliness increaseth——"

there is always something more magnificent to the sense, there is always something more stupendous to the mind, and in the favoured spot to which I would convey the imagination of my readers, Nature seemed to delight in presenting an endless diversity of hues, and an infinite succession of peerless charms. But there were other sounds than those of the nightingale to be heard—sounds full of mourning and agony; full of that desolation and that cold mirth which smite the heart down until it is humiliated beneath the crushing sense of the nothingness of the mortal, even into dust and abject despair. That house was a receptacle for lunatics! Yes, the song of some poor stricken creature might be heard in the still and solemn nights, when the yellow moon was shining, and not a whisper disturbed the serenity of the great universe, so sweet, so sad, so wild, that it made the spirit weep to listen. Alas for human destiny! The crime, the frenzy, the passion, and the cold, icy feeling, worse than all—that indifference, that apathy, that worse than heart-ache, when all is exhausted, when nothing remains to hope, to fear, to desire, or to love! But madness is worth thinking of! Why did God ever strike a reasonable man mad,—take the everlasting soul away, and jar the strings of the poor brain? For there is a suspension of all the intellectual functions which can evince the mind is immortal; a maniac is not accountable for his actions,—and yet he is not like an idiot:—he has great and fine thoughts sometimes in the midst of his incoherencies. Well, Sophist, what say you? Why did God create insanity? Why did he ever mar his own most divine work? We are all subject to the curse, and nothing can remove it. The mystery is not light: he does not "make but to destroy." But we find there is a necessity for evil, to create a very great good:—a great good implies the absence of an evil;—it must be negative. Reason we find no *ordinary* pleasure in, because it is com-

mon, even though through its instrumentality we derive so much felicity. Yet it is a positive good, though we can only value it negatively. But madness is a mystery? I answer, so is reason. Ay, but heaven creates good, and not evil. Assuredly: but if you can conceive eternal light, warmth, and so on, giving satisfaction to a finite being, you can conceive anomaly. Is madness, then, as the poet says, a pleasure to the madman? It is a great good to him very often, because he so frequently forgets he is wretched, forgets he has been deceived and injured irrevocably. It is in fact to our moral being what a mighty revolution is to the world, a landmark to steer by, a beacon to warn; and much also "beyond the reaching of our souls."

It was a summer's evening, and all was breathlessly serene. The sun was sinking beneath the lofty hills which skirted the fair champaign, and the stillness and the beauty of all things created that feeling which the imaginative so frequently experience, that intense but not painful melancholy which throws a veil over the brightness of the universe, but sees through it glimpses of something higher and holier. Melancholy, when it is not accompanied by a dark degree of gloom, is a delightful state of mind to some persons. We recal the past with its joys and endearments—the forms we loved, the smiles we worshipped, and though that loveliness have faded, that light have vanished, that glory fled for ever, we cherish the recollection far more than the present: for, in human life, our feelings are marked by past and future; we regret the one, and we anticipate the other; vainly we love, vainly we hope.

And sitting at a window, strongly grated, was a fair young being of not more than seventeen. The face of him was more than boyish; it was girlish in its beauty, its delicacy, and tenderness. And that face was upturned to the sky with a mournful earnestness which invested it with ethereal grace. The forehead was high, but rather narrow, and extremely white, showing all the veins in it, the nose was straight and small, the mouth little, the face thin, and the hair very long, of the finest golden hue. But the eyes—the soft, wild, lustrous eyes, like those of a gazelle, swimming in a sea of liquid light, were his most remarkable features. None but a dreamer could have such orbs, and nothing but a degree of insanity could give them *such* radiance. He held a guitar in his hand, and running his slender fingers over the strings, he produced some sweet and plaintive sounds, not unlike the cadences of the nightingale's song; and then he broke forth in a low musical voice into these strains:—

"They tell me that Heaven is far, far away;
They tell me that Angels no longer are here;
But I see the sweet Heaven's ineffable ray,
And I know that the Angels in visions appear.

"There is one, robed in light, whom my spirit adores,
She is gentle and loving, is pure and divine,
And my spirit with her thro' the universe soars—
She is here in her splendor, and come to be mine."

"Yes," he exclaimed, "I will have none but an angel for my bride! The angels alone are faithful and wise. So, sweet seraph, I will love thee with such a love that even thy purity shall not be offended. My spirit shall embrace thee; I will kiss thy chaste lips without the passion of an earthly love, and whisper such things as a burning seraph's eyes could alone inspire.—O, there is love in heaven!—passionate but holy: love is the immortality within our being's life."

That is a sacred truth, deeper than deepest thought. There *can* be no immortality without love, and there can be no love without immortality. Consider what the immortal is! That which never dies, which never sleeps, which cannot diminish. Love that dies, is not love, but passion: love knows not death, it is essentially life itself, because creation emanated thence. Love is aspiration, not desire; it is hope and faith in endless amity:—Plato never conceived its perfect excellence, Solomon never dreamed it: the golden harps of the bright ones we believe in, could scarcely send forth sounds to intimate what it is. And the boy-minstrel had gone mad from love!—To proceed.

A stern gaoler opened the door and addressed the delicate lad harshly. He bade him go forth and walk. He bent his head submissively, and with folded arms followed the keeper into a garden surrounded with walls of great height. The man locked a gate behind the boy, and then departed, while he entered an arbour and sat down. Presently a tall form advanced, and the young creature started up joyfully, and flung himself into the arms of the new comer.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you!" he said. "You are like sunlight in my path. Come and sit down."

"Poor boy," returned the other, kindly, "you look pale and ill."

"Do I? Well, I dreamed last night of the angel I told you of. It was the form of my spirit; the worshipped and the lovely. I said I would tell you all about that, and I will do so now. It is happiness to unbosom the soul to one like you, so full of genius and of goodness. Yes, I loved that Being from a child, and she smiled on me. So I said, 'I will love none but the angel, and so I shall grow to *be* one.'* Was not that wise? I said to my soul, 'Love thou—and do not love—that is, adore the abstract. So I went forth into the world, loving the immensity of things. And lo, I was lost!——I found the world one mighty wilderness full of wild beasts, yet I beheld some gentle creatures whom I thought loved well. But they melted from the earth like the dew of morning, and

* Some of these thoughts were suggested by Browning's noble Paracelsus.

then I asked my angel to comfort me, but I was desolate. Then they said I was mad—poor fools! Whenever a high and deep spirit soars above the earthly, earthlings cry out, 'Insanity is here!' They called me mad, but I heeded them not, and fled into solitude to love Nature and God. I was haunted by the presence of Beauty, my path through the desert was lit up by spirits, and I was happy. But I wanted to love more, and I could not, because of myself. Oh, that we should idolize that self! It is a wretched frenzy, to say the best of it. Do you know what I mean, dear friend, by all this? I am a great Mystic, and can only be understood by those who believe me profoundly."

"Do you know what to believe is? You are good at definitions."

"Yes, to believe is to have confidence in the soul more than the senses —which is religion. A sensual man can have no faith, a spiritual man cannot be without it. So I have a great faith, and am rewarded. If you take your soul into the heart of the universe, shall not Nature tell you true? But if you merely watch the beatings of her pulse, what should you know of the inner frame, so full of wonder? We grope about in the dark, and yet we have candles which emit a constant flame in the caverns of sublime existence, and show us the things above. We will not use the candles, but are ambitious to climb at once to the heights of serene wisdom: and so we fall, through presumption. But, if you have faith, it is continual ascent, and superior intelligences help us up, and warn us from the dark places. You smile: how beautiful a smile like that is! I have sometimes thought a moonbeam was an angel's smile, and yours is like it." And the young man put his arm round his companion's neck, and gazed into his fine and splendid face. The countenance of the one was full of intellect and repose, that of the other was yet more beautiful, but wild in its character of imagination, more even than was habitual. "What say you," continued the boy, "to come with me, and search for that river I told you of, to drink of which is to be immortal? And then we will glide down the quiet stream beneath the trees whose heads touch heaven, and discourse of poetry and love. You shall teach me your high philosophy, and I, in return, will tell you of the marvellous things revealed to me from above in my visions. I will tell you about my heavenly bride, if you will promise to be very secret."

Here a keeper advanced, and summoned the two youths into the house, as the physician who attended it was there. The minute the elder of the two was in the presence of the son of Æsculapius, he exclaimed in French,

"How is it, and by whom am I detained in this place? I demand to be released instantly, and the penalty will be severe if you—"

"Take that poor wretch away," interrupted the physician, "and put him on a strait waistcoat: he is violent."

And the person in question was immediately hurried off. He submitted

with quiet dignity, finding that resistance would be useless, and was soon in a narrow cell, through the high grated window of which the light was streaming. He did not utter a remonstrance to the brutal gaolers, but allowed them to confine his arms with perfect patience and in lofty contempt. When they were gone, he contemplated the blue sky with the serenity of a mind at rest, his eyes seeming to seek a heaven beyond the firmament; and then he spoke in the following words, with the dignity of a sublime and philosophic mind:—

"Heart of the universe! oh, mighty heart! of which our being is a portion, how painfully thou must beat, if thou art what we are. Eternal soul! Thou alone art free from agony, thou alone canst smile at storm and tempest. The soul, the heart! What is the soul! Oh, who shall tell me? What radiant angel shall speak its glory? But the heart is so weak, no tongue can utter its frailty. Behold the human race, so full of misery and despair! What tricks of malice and of fortune attack us at every step! And yet *all* have a soul. Strange! It is indeed "an unweeded garden that grows to seed." By man we suffer: by God we live—by death we know God. The empty slaves of this gross world, who worship dust and ashes, know not of the eternity within them: but I feel my reason is not in time, that it cannot be in a sphere of change and corruption: so that whatever betide, I fear not.—God is with me, and the great globe is but a speck in immensity to the mind that aspires and adores. Oh, let the poor slaves fret and fume, command, chide, and rage. Let them persecute, let them fetter:—how can the mind be subject to chains and dungeons? Oh, Heaven! I thank thee for this divine reason—the first of all good gifts. Here is my refuge, here my solace. Reason, religion, fancy, are sufficient for felicity. By reason we know the mind is immortal: by religion we know it shall be *blessedly* immortal; and by fancy we picture the joyous worlds beyond the stars—we picture scenes of love and peace. Religion is philosophy and poetry combined: it teaches us to bear and to hope. That is the greatest wisdom to which the deepest intellect can ever attain. To be in charity even with our enemies, to forgive, to endure, and to love—by these we live in the bosom of Deity, by these we grow from sorrow into bliss."

CHAPTER XCI.

LORD WHARTON—THE PAST—AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR—THE STATESMAN AND THE ENTHUSIAST.

It is to Lord Wharton the narrative returns. The mighty spirit of the minister, although it was untamed, had undergone a change. He was

sick of life—more sick than he had ever been, and yet he felt conscious his powers of mind and body had suffered but little diminution. In tracing the course of events in the life of that extraordinary man, it is singular to observe how very different the action of external causes was upon him, from that which might have been expected from his character. The truth is, Lord Wharton was not a person of undivided good or evil. The elements in him were ever mixed: and though his nobler and more generous qualities were inevitably much deteriorated by his course of life, the original bias of his mind could not be totally extinguished; and, like the Satan of Milton after his fall, he could never be "less than Archangel ruined," in the idea we must form of fallen greatness. The ruin of a mighty heart, the destruction of a majestic mind, or a fiery imagination, is so august a wreck, angels might almost weep over it. Even we ourselves perceive how much of brightness and glory we have either neglected or despised: for *all* might be good.

"So," said the Minister to himself, as he was one evening engaged in looking over papers, and occasionally making notes, "I have come to this! These were the papers which I wrote in my boyhood, before—Harriet was known to me. Then the eagle soul seemed dropped from some high sphere, and full of immortal vigour. Then I thought I might be a Tully—ay, it may be, a Cæsar: for I was born to aspire and dare. I thought to rule the minds of men by the might of genius and the force of intellect—to crush my foes, to rise over the ruins which myself had made. Yet there was nothing low and vile in that ambition. It was nobler than the Corsican's:—yes, by Heaven, it was a glorious thing!—Napoleon thought to carry his triumphs through the world by the sword and the bayonet—*I* would have triumphed by the tongue, the head; the subtle argument, the deep sophism, or the profound dissimulation. Nothing is ever gained by war, I know. It only hastens the inevitable downfall of an empire: yet it is a great thing—a sublime thing: it is an expedient to blind the vulgar, and answers. But that will not last now. No—the war of thought, wisdom, experience—that is it."

Lord Wharton smiled bitterly as he spoke thus. "Vacillating slave that I am!" he exclaimed. "What should I want with glory—that boy's empty dream? Power is the only thing to which the wise aspire. Yet would omnipotence make me happy? Ay, I would annihilate these serpent memories! Oh, is it possible for almighty power to annihilate? Years vanish, and I see what I was, as in a glass! I see the gigantic energies I possessed squandered away on the vile, rotting things of this pestilential world—heaven forgotten, heaven's Majesty insulted and defied! I dared to do this! I would not submit to God himself. There we fall, never to rise again. The pride which hurls its gauntlet into the

teeth of Omnipotence, is the true spirit of Lucifer: it is indomitable and immortal. So, Heaven is lost!"

The Statesman pressed his burning brow in agony. It was not irresolution, it was not fear, which possessed him; but conscience and eternity were stronger than his will. That is the great secret of all dramatic interest:—the contest of the passions with the soul;—and all high poets know *there* is the source of sublimity. They have experienced the same feelings, the worm of remorse is busy in their hearts when they embody similar sensations: *all* have sinned. The curtain will soon fall now: and the Macbeth and Sardanapalus combined, rise no more.

"I shall not live long," muttered Wharton to himself, after a silence of some minutes, during which his strong frame shook as with spasms of pain. "I know I shall not live long:—nor do I wish. I wonder what will follow after death:—the judgment or the sleep! That judgment which will fall on all alike—the ermined murderer, the thievish beggar in his rags—I wish I could be fool enough to disbelieve it. As God lives, I would purchase the belief in annihilation at any price. We do not *now* think with the noble libertine of France, that God Almighty reflects twice before he condemns a lord. Cursed thought! away. Why was I given passions like these? I did not ask for them! These volcanic fires, these inextinguishable flames, why have they burned? If I had had my choice I would not have been made with a feeling or a desire: I would have been a stone—a block—anything but what I am. But it is nearly over now—and soon will come the eternal despair—I cannot repent—I will not recede. The bold villain become the poor and despised—never. No; out on this cowardice! Thou whining slave, my soul: there is something higher than thou thyself in me! I will serve no power in earth, in heaven, or in hell."

Such were the Titanic throes and convulsions in the fiery heart of the Statesman. He was subject, as most such men are, to deep fits of remorse, and sometimes, under the influence of them, was on the brink of repentance and amendment. Yet ever something interposed, and Fate, if not Heaven, marked out a victim to evil passion, as a warning to us all. Few there are among those whom the world calls great, who have been on the whole much better than Lord Wharton. An Alexander was no better, say what you will: and many in modern times might be cited as instances of the fact that with strong passions and temptations, crime almost always ensues. Virtue is not found, with but rare exceptions, in high stations. But what sublime cases there are, and of frequent occurrence too, among the lowliest, of sorrows borne with patience, of sufferings greatly sustained, of wrongs firmly resisted, but not revenged by deeds. "Blessed are the poor," indeed, who have these opportunities for the display of high and divine qualities, and to whom there is imparted such a measure of strength. Every good chance of fortune is dangerous to such a being

as man: all elevation is attended with its miseries, whether it be that of mind, rank, or wealth. God is just—and more than just. Beggar in the public streets! hug your rags, and thank God, if you are *starving*, you are not a Lord Wharton.

The Peer was roused by a knock at the door, and a servant entering announced "a gentleman wished to speak with his lordship," and almost simultaneously a tall, thin form entered, and bowed. Lord Wharton was on the point of giving his unceremonious visitor a haughty dismissal; but on looking at him again, he perceived that he was no other than the old man he had recently encountered on the bridge; and there was something in him so singular that no one could treat him with indignity. The servant therefore went, and Lord Wharton, with some surprise on his face, pointed to a seat, and said,

"To what am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

The old man replied—"I must apologise to your lordship for the abruptness of my conduct; but I hope my mission will excuse me. After I lost you on the bridge, my heart reproached me for not having striven more earnestly against the evil spirit which possesses you. I resolved to endeavour to find you out; but I could not. It so happens that I was requested by a Society recently established to wait upon your lordship, for the purpose of requesting you to patronise it. To-morrow I should have come to that end: but a few hours ago you were pointed out to me as Lord Wharton in the street. Aware that I should have some difficulty in any private capacity in obtaining access to you, but anxious not to be remiss in the good cause, I resolved to break through a custom of the world, and have intruded myself, hoping it will not be in vain. I own no custom but that of Christ; and therefore am I here. Lord Wharton, I am not unacquainted with your character; and, though you would call me a fanatic, yet am I not so irrational as to suppose I should be able to effect a miracle. You consider me little better than a lunatic: but I recollect that night."—

"Old man," returned Lord Wharton, coolly, "your labour is in vain. But I will speak with you. So you believe I *may* be converted, ha? Excellent. I admire the boldness of your undertaking. The idea of a Minister of State turning Methodist! Ha, ha! What do you see in me to excite hope?"

"I see you are unhappy, and that is sufficient. If I, who have held such principles as I once did, have become what I am, surely, there is no reason why I should despair of yourself. My lord, I come not here in the quality of a priest or a confessor: but we are all brethren in Christ, and it is my duty to stretch forth an arm to save you, as much as it would be if you were drowning by water. I was an infidel of the atheistical school: I am a burning brand——"

"Snatched from the fire," interrupted Lord Wharton. "I know it—

the cant of your sect. Suppose I were to offer you £1000 a-year to desert your tenets, do you think you would reject it? Tut, man! I know man's heart."

The old enthusiast's pale cheek flushed for an instant: but the colour passed away, and he said—

"What should *I* want with the riches of this world who am passing into eternity? I want nothing of your lordship: but if you will spare me half an hour, I will thank you. I know, my lord, you are unhappy: and I marvel not. You have not loved God better than your own heart; you have not sought truth where only it is to be found. The religion of most men is merely nominal: they know, and they believe not. I must speak harsh words: and if I probe the wound too severely, pardon me."

"I tell you, it is all in vain," answered the statesman. "The heart of man is incomprehensible as the universe. And you—how should *you* know it? How should you know it better than myself; and be able to prescribe remedies for disease? Poor fool! Can you make life out of death, extract the poison, when it has eaten into the vitals and destroyed all wholesome life and strength? Resuscitate a corpse?—O!"

"You are conscious you are a sinner? Then, my lord, the first step is taken. 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Despise not the joyous invitation. 'Though your sins be as scarlet——'"

"Prithee, begone!" ejaculated the Statesman. "This religion is out of fashion: we must have reason, and not the pathetics of old women. Leave me now."

"'Come, then, and let us reason together,' as Paul reasoned," said the enthusiast. "O, blindness, there is a ray that can reach thee even in thy most gloomy depths! A music from eternity is in the voice of that reason from on high. Hear me, O man of sorrow and sin! I *could* tell thee of that which might reach thy heart: but no, that must not be! Suppose an angel—or suppose one that was a mortal and most dear to thee had charged me with a message as from the tomb: suppose one who suffered wrong at thy hands—lost fame, and reason, all that is most dear, all that is most divine, one that was crushed by the hand she adored—"

"No more, no more—I'll hear no more," interrupted Lord Wharton. "This is not reason."

"O, but it is, and solemn reason, sir! This being who was so good and so unhappy would say, by patience alone can God forgive. It is not too late: but the hour is at hand. You think me mad: but I would to God you had never given cause for madness. I am not mad: but you have made others so. Yes, my lord, I must rebuke you, I must tell you of broken hearts and of blighted souls, I must tell you of your misdeeds, for they have been many. I say, as the Apostle said, 'I am not mad; but speak the words of truth and soberness.' God can forgive all, pro-

vided you accept his mercy. He cannot forgive, except on principle. Why do you turn from me? Hear your own heart, and it returns an echo to my words. I have no need of eloquence, of the arts of rhetoric or of logic to convince you. But you are proud—you are too proud to listen to the poor old enthusiast you would fain deem a dotard."

Here another visitor was announced. It was the Prime Minister; and Lord Wharton, shaking off the impression made on him by the fervour of the aged man, said—

"You may call on me again some other day, if you like," and left the room.

The enthusiast murmured—"It avails not. She must come herself," and departed. But it was a considerable time ere he again obtained access to the Peer.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE PREMIER—THE DEBATE—SHARP—THE LETTER.

"My lord," said the Prime Minister, as the Irish peer entered the apartment where he was, "we are undone. Nothing can save us. There are traitors in our camp; and we shall find ourselves in an immense minority on the great question we have staked so much upon. Come down to the House, and do what you can: but it is vain."

Lord Wharton smiled. "Your lordship is an alarmist," he said, (he cordially hated the Premier, who feared him not a little, though he was very rich himself; and it was known Lord Wharton was a beggar.)

"I am no alarmist," returned the Premier. "I've got the proof of it all. That d—d fellow, Sharp, has corrupted I know not how many with his gold and his subtlety: we have been idling, while he for years has been undermining us. Here are some papers which you can look over: but I repeat, all is lost: we shall be outvoted, and must resign. Who could have thought Sharp was playing such a game! Curse his ambition."

"I shall not be taken unawares," replied Lord Wharton. "Give me the particulars of it all."

"No, you had better go down to the Commons, now, while I proceed to the Lords. Look over two or three of those papers on your way; and for the present, good night. It is all up."

The Premier hurried off, and Lord Wharton rang the bell and ordered a coach. He was somewhat startled on glancing at the papers left with him, but he had so deep a reliance on his powers of thought and action that he would not permit himself to believe that any person could out-

manœuvre him: and though this very arrogance gave him strength, it rendered him too confident of success, and laid him open to the secret machinations of his foes. But he was toppling down indeed.

When he arrived at the House, he found the debates were hot, and all was eager attention. The wealthy lawyer was speaking. Lord Wharton was astonished at the fiery eloquence of Sharp: he did not think he had such powers of oratory. Invective and argument were poured out by the lawyer with a brilliancy and a strength that rivalled his own; he seemed like one inspired; you would scarcely have recognised the cold, keen, Sharp. Lord Wharton threw off every feeling which might have numbed his energies, and listened to his foe. There the old man stood erect, the fire of his eye and the passion of his elocution forming a striking contrast with his white hairs and withered face. He was rejuvenated: he poured out soul and being in his speech.

"But, Gentlemen," said the orator, as Lord Wharton strode to his seat, "though I have animadverted in strong terms on the baseness and pusillanimity of that party which has proposed the iniquitous measure I have exposed in all its hideous nakedness, there is *one* of that party" (and he fixed his piercing eye on the haughty countenance of Lord Wharton) "whose conduct has been so shameless, whose actions have been so villanous, that were I to say all I think of them"—(Here some M. P. rose to order; but Sharp heeded not the interruption.) "I have to do my duty to my constituency," he continued, "and to my country; and I claim my right to denounce any traitor to England, however great his reputation, however mighty his intellect. The party which has ruled England up to this time is virtually dead: and the nation sends forth an indignant protest against a ministry which has betrayed its most sacred interests; and would have sold its liberties to oligarchy and monopoly. I am not one to speak more than I think; but on this occasion I will speak all I *do* think, without reservation. I *will* say that the freedom of my country has been betrayed, that its noblest institutions have been perverted, its revenues shamefully misapplied, and the voice of the nation with one accord, and with a trumpet sound, demands to be liberated from misrule and tyranny: it rises up, like a giant from its sleep, and shouts 'We will be free, we will trample under foot the monsters Slavery and Oppression!' But we owe the measures, from the consequences of which the nation has been groaning, not to the vacillating policy of the present Prime Minister, who would not have dared to insult and defy the country, who would not have dared to outrage justice and to encourage a profligate expenditure in the teeth of a great opposition; but to one who is here, who sits opposite to me, in his pride, and pomp, and scorn,—that bad Minister, whose talents have enabled him to do much more harm than any other individual in England; who has thrown dust into the eyes of the honest who opposed him, and hoodwinked the judgment of

his partisans, who has insulted some, and offered shame to others; bold in his iniquity, been in the van of the battle, but never brave enough to show at what he was aiming, masked his batteries and poisoned his arrows—sneered, frowned, and cajoled down those who would have spoken truth, and crushed the voice of reason and honesty." (Long continued and reiterated cheering from the benches of the opposition, during which Lord Wharton sat in perfect calmness and indifference.) "Not one blush of shame," proceeded Sharp, "I know, can rise to the brow of him I must call *my* enemy, because he is the foe of England. I did not conceive the full measure of his treachery till this detestable Bill was introduced among us. But now we can trace the whole cause of his past and present policy—now a light is thrown on what was once open to discussion—his conduct stands revealed to the gaze of all men; and every patriotic heart, whether Whig or Tory, determines never to be ruled by the counsels of such a man."

Sharp then proceeded to statistics, and spent some breath on the bad management and profligacy shown in the expenditure; and having spoken for above two hours with great eloquence, sat down exhausted.

Lord Wharton rose amid a portentous silence, after the shouts which had rent the vaulted roof when Sharp had concluded. Nothing could be read in his grand countenance, but slight contempt towards the lawyer, and he spoke. "The honorable gentleman has for once deviated from his course," he said, "and entertained you with his philippics. He has inveighed against me in no measured terms, and accused me of having pillaged from the poor, in order to serve the rich. I never yet, as it is pretty well known, courted the favor of the wealthy; I never sought the smiles of the great, or stooped to win popularity in any case. I was born among the noblest aristocracy in the world, and I own, was proud of belonging to it; I have ever wished to maintain inviolate the interests of my order, because by so doing I considered I was promoting, not injuring the welfare of all. Unless aristocracy flourish, unless wealth be protected from aggression, and agriculture be supported, no country like England can ever be well governed, and no people be saved from anarchy. On those principles I have always acted, and I am prepared to defend them, in the teeth of opposition and detraction."

It were impossible to follow Lord Wharton through a long and brilliant speech; but he made less impression than was customary, and the effect of his eloquence was neutralised by a speaker who followed, a young member of great abilities, on the side of the opposition, who as a barrister had been patronised by Sharp. The House divided at a late hour, and the Ministry were defeated ignominiously.

It was a cabinet question of more importance than any which had preceded it, and Lord Wharton had not believed the Premier that they would be outvoted. The measure was one which Lord Wharton had long

been aiming to carry, and he thought it would, if passed, make him all powerful: but now he saw only ruin and disgrace. He was reduced even to extremity by this defeat. His fortune had never been at such an ebb; and how was he to repair them in such a case? He returned home with a throbbing brain and a feverish pulse. It was early morning when he reached his residence, and the hum and stir of life were just beginning. On entering his chamber he found a letter for him. He opened it listlessly; but the contents soon riveted his attention. It was in a disguised and tremulous hand-writing, and the style, as will be seen, was strange.

"The clouds are coming over you! A little while, and the glory will have departed—and all be darkness. Lord Wharton, you are a great man in the world's opinion; but do you think Heaven sees you so? Do you think that the sweet angels love you? Do you think, poor man, your Maker approves your actions? Ah me! Look into your heart; and you will find a spectacle there that might make the glad seraphs mourn, if they *could* mourn! I have known you in buried years, and have participated in your guilt. I was one of your many victims;—but, through sorrow and frenzy, God has led me into the paths of peace, and I hope to be forgiven. O that my soul could reach you! O that I could pour out all that I have felt, and thought, and suffered! I cannot see you again—I must not tell you who I am; but in spite of all your cruelty—I love you—not with passion; but I love you: and I could not be happy in eternity, if you were not so, with my present feelings——Are you happy, *now?* Impossible! I see you, as you read these things, and I hear you exclaim—'HAPPY!' None but the good can be so—none but those who love God, and whom God loves. None but those who love man, and hate the evil that is in us. You are wretched! Disguise it from yourself as you will, you know it is so. Poor soul! If my tears could gain you over to the side of virtue, you should have oceans.—I know not what I write. Sometimes my poor brain is weak, and when I think of the past—O, but for heaven, I should despair!—We are all sinners, Wharton, even the best of us;—then think what you are—and repent. You have a heart—I know you have a heart: and it was once noble, despite its errors. I will speak to your heart! O, let it open; let the doors which have been closed for years be thrown wide apart, and let the well-spring of your spirit gush with life! You have a human heart; and adversity will do much. You have sinned much, and guilty pleasure is pain to you now; then seek virtue, and find joy and hope. Each hour of being brings us nearer to the grave. Only think of death and heaven! I will not—I need not speak of hell: all *may* be pardoned. Yes, dear Wharton, there is a heaven for all of us. Think of that—think of God's love for us—the guilty and the lost! Come unto him, and say, 'I have sinned; but I will sin no more'—and you will be happy, *so* happy! *I* am, who have done such evil! I will pray for you. Farewell."

"Who can this be?" cried the statesman, wonderingly. "Anna—can it be Anna? No! I never knew but *one* who could have written thus! Strange—that it should affect me so! I cannot throw off this feeling. What! a tear? A tear in *my* eye! I'll not believe it. Ha, ha! I drivel! What, Thomas Wharton be touched *thus!*

> "'Try what repentance can! What can it not?
> But what can it, when one cannot repent?
> O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
> O wretched soul, that struggling to be free
> Art more engaged!'"

He covered his face with his hands, and was silent. "I am one of Shakspeare's villains, then," he said, after some minutes. "A damned villain, I know. There is nothing sound left in me! From the top to the toe I am a plague-spot on creation! Why was I made? To play this devil's part, that good might come of it? Must Heaven have demons as well as angels to work its will? What! from all eternity was it known a man named Wharton should live, and sin; and then despair and die? Has it come to *this?* The iron will, the haughty courage, the stern manhood, crushed by a weak woman's words? 'I am fallen, indeed!' He is a coward who repents. It is not but that he would continue to sin if he dared; but he is scared by the thought of Death and Eternity! Why, let them come! I have driven them from my brain for years: and I will not now, if on the brink, become a slave and a recreant."

CHAPTER XCIII.

FANNY AND HARRIET, AND AN ADVENTURE.

FROM the august heights of contemplation, from scrutinizing the inner workings of a great, though perverted mind, we descend to more lowly themes. We say a thing is lowly which does not excite sublime sensations in us; but nothing in the universe is really so. There is as much scope for thought and investigation, as Wordsworth and as Shakspeare have shown, in the lowest portions of our nature, and in the least apparently subtle workings of the mind, in certain cases, as in the grand and shadowy drama of the Greek poets. A Prometheus is a sublime thing to contemplate, a being above mortality, and yet not above *humanity.* A star is a sublime thing, and a mighty hill: but to search into the depths of a peasant's soul, to delineate his sorrows, his hopes, and struggles; to trace the source of his opinions and feelings; or to analyse the delicate

portions of matter which in the aggregate may compose a world, is worthy any mind. A man of genius and imagination perceives in all the world matter for deep and solemn, or pleasant and gentle thought. He has many sorrows and much melancholy, I doubt not, which those of duller spirits may escape; but who that possesses the slightest feeling for beauty, and sympathy with man, would sacrifice any of his gifts of intellect and fancy, of heart and soul, to be a monarch. If I were asked who in the world that ever lived I would soonest be, I think I should answer, Shakspeare. He had such universality in him, that his mind must have been continually occupied with feelings and associations such as must have made him happy. Perhaps a noble idea when it strikes us, and we think it original, infuses felicity in a greater degree into our being, and is more durable in its nature, than any thing to which we can attain.

The same night that witnessed the great political events glanced at in the last chapter, Harriet was sitting at a window in her solitary apartment. Tears trickled down her wasted cheek, but she did not utter a sound, though her lips moved, and her thin hands clasped, and thought was evidently busy in her brain. At last, she left the window, and sat down; but the train of ideas she had been before pursuing was not interrupted, only they embodied themselves in words.

"He will repent," she murmured, "an angel whispered to me in my sleep, he will repent. It will be a bitter draught for him to drink, when he finds his power gone, when he is poor and needy! But gall is the only medicine for the sick soul. I wonder if that letter will move him! My words are so weak, alas! But weakness, when greatest, has sometimes a power we dream not of. And if my prayers avail aught—" She left the sentence unfinished, and knelt down and besought Heaven to do what she had not ability to effect.

Though some Rationalists consider that praying for others is a superstition, because the act supposes that the eternal purpose can ever change, there is something so beautiful in imploring forgiveness for those who have wronged us, that the coldest heart must be touched by it. Prayer implies no doubt of the Creator's goodness, nor supposes him in any manner vacillating in his providence and justice. It is because we are weak, and want wisdom, that we ask it, and the very act creates a motive for action. No rational believer conceives that by praying, *not* acting, he can do any good to himself or others; but as there must be a motive or principle to exalt any deed, so prayer is the precursor of action, and by its influence on ourselves creating similar influence on others, is the pivot of the soul. Something there is beyond our understanding herein, but the effects are evident, and mystery is our only want of knowledge: so that if we object to a thing because we cannot comprehend it, what shall we receive? If in nature so much is incomprehensible, if matter

baffle our researches, how much more the economy of Providence and the essence of mind!

Harriet was yet on her knees, when a light footstep approached; but she was so intent on her devotions, that she heard it not, but poured forth her fervent aspirations and requests, with the natural and simple eloquence peculiarly her own. How that act of piety relieves the over-charged heart, and fills the breast with hope, and the bruised spirit with gladness! No one ever really despaired after praying in such a way. When Harriet rose at last, she encountered the liquid and radiant eyes of Fanny, and ejaculating—"What! are you here, my child?" kissed her.

"I wish I could pray," said Fanny. "I am come to take leave of you—for I shall see you no more. I am going to leave London to-morrow; and my star has foretold that before another moon has waned my soul will be *one* with nature. I have often longed for death, though I have feared it. What wondrous things may be revealed to me in a few more hours. The mystic mazes of the planets, and how they affect our human destiny, will be shown; I shall see the spirit of the universe, and no more weep, no more despair. I have had a dreary being here."

"Poor child!" said Harriet, tenderly, "you have, indeed. But why do you leave London? Why not remain with me? And wherefore such forebodings? You look wildly, Fanny—and talk, as you are wont, vainly."

The Gipsy shook her head. "To-morrow," she said, "will be a great day in my existence. But what is earth? Look you, the shadow of heaven and the mysterious spirit-life are cast down from immensity! In this shadow we walk until the sleep of death; and the waking is—eternity."

"What vague, though beautiful ideas you have, my little girl! You ardly seem to understand what is real," said Harriet.

"There is no reality," was the reply. The conversation was dropped, and after a few minutes, Fanny exclaimed, "And now, my kind friend, adieu! I have something still to finish. Many, many thanks for all your kindness—may you be happy: and when we meet in that invisible beyond the grave, where all is music's essence, where passion is as pure as the soft gales of spring, and life is love, and love is immortality, you will know more of my spirit than I can now reveal. We shall meet no more till then; but I will visit you, if it may be, in your dreams, and hold converse with you while you remain beneath the stars."

"But Fanny, why all this solemnity? Where go you? You told me that the Prince was about to take you into the country, but these boding notions—"

"Were not born! No; but I knew the time was nearly come. It is ten o'clock! Farewell. How much I owe you! There, adieu for ever!" And escaping from the embrace of Harriet, she went.

"She is almost mad," mused Harriet. "Not as I was, indeed: but *most* strange. Nothing that you say reaches her reason, because her fancy is so wild, she makes the most common things dreamy and poetical. But this is mere fantasy." And she went forth into the open air, and caught a glimpse of a receding form.

The night, which had hitherto been irradiated by the beams of the moon, became dark, and the wind moaned mournfully through the trees. A few drops of rain fell on the head of Harriet, but she did not heed them, and she walked some little distance from her cottage, until she reached a place which must be briefly described.

The brushwood grew thickly in that direction, and the boughs of the stunted trees intertwined so densely that they excluded the faint light there was entirely. There was a small excavation in the earth underneath these trees, sufficiently high to admit of a man standing upright in it, and during the heats of summer Harriet occasionally would sit on a rustic bench that was placed there. But she certainly would not have entered the cave at that time, when it was so dark, if the rain had not suddenly fallen very heavily. She saw that it was only a passing shower, and stepped into the place until it was over. As she did so, she fancied she heard a breathing at no great distance from her; but it was impossible to distinguish any object in the gloomy abode. But here there came footsteps, and a gruff voice said, "Let us inquire if they have seen him in the cottage yonder. He can't be far off." After this, the persons who had so spoken, took their departure; but the rain still continued.

Becoming rather impatient, however, that the rain had not ceased, and supposing that if her ear had not deceived her, the breathing which had attracted her notice was only that of some animal, Harriet would have quitted her shelter, if the clouds which had obscured the moon had not dispersed, and the bright planet bursting forth shone directly into the cave.—And there, stretched on the bench on which she was accustomed to sit, was the form of a man—of a young man, whose appearance indicated great fatigue and exhaustion.

"Unhappy creature!" thought Harriet, "and perhaps he is starving."

She approached and gazed upon a face,—a noble face, stamped indelibly with the characters of intellect and integrity. There was an expression in it at that moment such as we seldom see, and never, save in the sleep of a good man with fine mind. It was a study for a painter. Harriet gazed on him with indescribable interest.

"How beautiful!" she thought, "how still! Not a trace of passion: so composed and deathlike! Yet, surely, he is one who has known sorrow. Poor soul! Perhaps I may be of use to him. Yet I cannot find it in my heart to disturb a rest like that. What state so blest as sleep? —Ah, he stirs—he will wake! What says he?"

"Helen, dear Helen!" cried the stranger, half dreaming and half waking. "Where are you?"

There was something in that voice which thrilled the heart of Harriet profoundly, like a remembered harmony endeared by many associations. She stretched forth her hand, mechanically, as to a friend. The man regained his feet, and looked a little wildly about him. The tall form of Harriet met his eyes, but she was standing in such a manner he could only very imperfectly distinguish the outline of her features. It was at this juncture footsteps again approached.

"I have found his hat in this labyrinth," was the exclamation of some man. "He can't be far off."

"They have tracked me," ejaculated the stranger. "But I will not lose liberty without a struggle."

"This way, this way," said a voice, still nearer than the last. "He has held us a long chase to-day, but we'll have him now. Be smart."

"What does this mean?" said Harriet, eagerly. But the person before her made no answer.

He was proceeding out of the cave, when some one arrived within a few paces of it. To pass out unnoticed was now impracticable. But the truth flashed on Harriet. The individual who had excited so much interest in her bosom was pursued by the hirelings of the law. With that face he could not be guilty. She would save him.

"Here, good youth," she whispered, "I will be your friend. Crawl down that low passage. Take this garment of mine; and trust to me for the rest. Be quick!—another moment, and it will be too late."

The man hesitated only an instant, and then obeyed the directions thus given him. Scarcely had he disappeared, when two or three constables entered the cave. The hole through which the fugitive had crept was very small, and by standing before it Harriet entirely concealed it from view in that imperfect light. The constables were much astonished to find a woman of Harriet's appearance in such a place, and but for something extraordinary in her looks, might have laid rough hands on her. She inquired their business, however, calmly—for the cave was almost in her own grounds—and said that none but herself was there. This was strictly true, for having passed through the hole, the fugitive was in a miniature copse, surrounded by stagnant water. Harriet gave the men to understand she had taken refuge from the rain, and that the adjacent cottage belonged to her, and the men, with more civility than might have been expected from them, apologised for intruding, and told her they were in pursuit of a convicted felon.

"Is it possible?" thought Harriet. "But the face in sleep cannot lie, and I never saw anything more sublimely truthful than his."

CHAPTER XCIV.

LORD WHARTON HEARS NEWS. JENKINS—AND THE REGENT.

It is the peculiarity of some minds, that the very intensity of remorse creates the elements of that evil from which the feeling sprung; for to escape from the avenging angel, they will pursue with yet more desperation the path of perdition.

So it was with Lord Wharton, and so it had ever been during his whole course of guilt and crime. He had plunged too deeply into iniquity, he thought, to recede, and one great effort alone remained to him. He did not go to bed after the long debates; but soon after it was light, left his house, thinking to cool the fever which burned his brain with the fresh morning air—for even in London, before the smoke begins, the air is sweet and invigorating. He was living near the suburbs, however, and proceeded towards the country:—he wanted silence. Heeding not whither he went, he crossed two or three fields, and walked briskly forwards, revolving his plans. All was still, save for the notes of the early lark, and the soft whisper of the gale. The sun poured its light upon meadow, stream, and hill, and nature seemed eloquent of but peace and love. There was a burning life in the breast of the statesman, which prevented the voice of creation and the light of heaven from sinking into his soul, and kindling there the pleasant dreams which are the poetry of all existence. Without poetry, all is death; the dumbness of the heart and the imagination creates a tomb for the universe. Many miles did the statesman walk, and endless were the schemes he devised to save himself from ruin. But with none of them was he perfectly satisfied. He cast himself under a tree, in a sequestered spot, and burying his face in his hands, and leaning against the trunk, a kind of torpor insensibly crept over him,—he slept a deep but troubled sleep; for nature was exhausted. He dreamed fearful visions; he thought the whole world was passing away, and he was struggling alone in the universe. The thunders and the lightnings were about him, and awful shapes were on every side. He saw the mountains roll and heave like giants in agony, and the huge billows overwhelming all things. And he was on a rock, he thought, high above the flood; but the windows of heaven opened, and the scene of the universal deluge was renewed. But he did not tremble, and like Ajax looked beneath, and said to himself, "I shall escape, in spite of the Gods!" Then came a deep silence over the globe, and the billows ceased to roar, and all was very still. He could count the beatings of his own heart in the

great hush of nature,—and an awe stole over his soul. Everything but himself seemed dead. Then a low and solemn voice thrilled his blood.

"O, man of crime," it said, "this is thy doom,—to wander along the world which is no more for ever. No sound shall come unto thee, no light shall visit thee, and memory shall turn back as on a charnel." And the dreamer smiled darkly.

"Be it so," he said. "I desire to be *alone*; I need no sympathy."

Then all was a dead blank wherever he turned his eyes; not a whisper, not a ray;—life in death. He shuddered. The ghosts of the departed alone remained. He saw them rise in a ghastly array, they haunted him perpetually; it was a vision of the shades, such as Dante or Virgil might have had. To live and see nothing live—how terrible! But he struggled to release himself from the dark spell which bound him, struggled fiercely, and at length successfully. He woke after a sleep of some hours. And there, within two paces of him, was a huge form; he knew it instantly, it was that of the Son of the Blacksmith, who had so reapeatedly attempted his life. He started to his feet, and the man advanced one step. And there, as they stood confronting each other, eye meeting eye, and mighty form within arm's length of mighty form, it seemed as if the very genius of aristocracy and democracy had become embodied, and the strength of the past and the power of the future scorning and daring each other. It appeared as if that power which has so long ruled the world, had wakened up, and found that democracy had grown a giant during its sleep. And it *has* grown a giant, a crushless Titan, which can only be appeased by the surrender of usurped rights, and privileges, alone the people's.

"You know me, Lord Wharton," said John Jenkins. "I have often wished to meet you thus. Not a living soul is within hearing of us—we are man to man, and you must acknowledge our equality here. You are a great man—a Minister of State, and I am a hunted Felon; but where is your greatness now? I might have murdered you, as you lay asleep: but I am not an assassin." Jenkins placed his hand on the Peer's arm.

"Ruffian!" exclaimed Lord Wharton, raising his hand; but John caught it, ere it descended on him.

"I want to talk with you," he said, "and then the mortal struggle, if you will. I do not want your life now, or I might have had it. I could tell you strange things, if I liked. What would you say if I told you you have a son?"

"I dare say I have many," returned the Peer, contemptuously. "Fellow, I have no time to waste on such as you are. Unhand me, instantly."

"You knew a woman named Harriet once—"

"Ha!" exclaimed the Statesman. "Say on."

"She had a son by you."

In an instant the face of Lord Wharton changed, as if by magic. He gasped for breath, and cried, "What? where is he? Bring me to him directly!"

"You think you loved that woman: and you drove her mad—you murdered her," said John Jenkins.

"What do you know of her—what of my son?" demanded the Statesman. "But it is a lie!"

"That woman Harriet was my father's sister," said Jenkins, calmly. "It was a great condescension in your lordship, doubtless, to seduce such a girl! But as I live, Lord Wharton, the humblest beggar in the world, who has rags to hide her nakedness, were she of my mind, would think a titled villain, such as you are, as much—"

"Where is the boy?" here interrupted the Peer.

"He is a felon, a convicted felon," answered Jenkins, "but oh, how far more noble is his meanest action, than the best *you* ever did! You can look back on triumphs over virtue, on victories over honesty and principle! You can look back on oppression and injustice of every sort. It is such as you are who have made men, far better than yourselves, even as I am: for, with all my crimes, I would not be the thing you are, even to possess the universe. A felon can despise you."

"My son a felon!" ejaculated Lord Wharton. "But I can save him, perhaps, even yet. Tell me where he is, and I will reward you."

"I want not your rewards; but, for the lad's sake, I will tell you where he is. He who might have graced your station, and saved the name of Peer from infamy, is now pursued by the vile hounds of the law. You know him, and he knows you but too well. That boy once saved your life."

"Is it possible that *he* was my son? Strange—most strange! That marvellous likeness which once struck me, but which I never saw in the same degree afterwards! But tell me the history of his birth—tell me of the death of his mother, if you can."

"Of her I know nothing. The lad was brought up by my father, and a greater heart than his, never beat in human bosom. But for *his* sake, I would only have told you he was a condemned criminal; but he is innocent; you must save him. Lord Wharton, I hate you deeply, I despise you from my soul; I think you have been false to your country and your kind, and that you are stained with all imaginable crimes; but I see you have a spark of humanity still left in you, and that I have touched it. We part then as we met—enemies, and I hope never to meet again. You go to involve yourself in intrigue, to rule the world by lies, and to be ruled yourself by damned passions. I go to run my career also, and perhaps to die on the gibbet—or if not *that*, by my own hand ignominiously."

There was something in that fierce bold nature of John Jenkins which

excited the admiration of Lord Wharton; there was a rugged strength and fearless daring about the outlaw, not altogether unlike his own, and he exclaimed—

"But cannot I save you too? Come with me; I have much to ask you—take me to this young man—you shall go abroad, and perhaps may redeem your character and be happy."

"I would not stoop to receive your favor," returned John Jenkins, sternly, "even if I were dying, or rotting on a dunghill. What is there that you see in me that you think I have such a spaniel spirit? Tut, man, are you able to assist me, even if I would let you? The man whose life I would have taken, the man who seduced my aunt, the man who has oppressed my class, and injured me in every imaginable way—save *one* my most execrated foe,—can never expect from me aught but hostility and hatred unto death."

"I would repair some of those wrongs, by redeeming you from this way of life," said Lord Wharton.

"It is as honest as your own, at the worst," was the rejoinder. "You shall hear from me again, if it is necessary. At present your son is hiding, if he be not taken by the officers; so it is impossible for me to direct you to him. You would have remained ignorant of all this, but that I see no hope for Stephen, save from you. Now proceed your way, and I will go mine."

At this moment a carriage was seen approaching by a somewhat precipitous road, and John Jenkins plunged into a thicket at a short distance, and was instantly lost to sight. The mind of Lord Wharton was left a complete chaos—a whirling mass of sensation, without any distinct images; for the whole current of his life, and all his schemes and designs were averted by the communication just made to him. To save his hapless son was, however, the thought most prominent in his mind, as soon as the excitement caused by the knowledge of the existence of such a tie had in some degree subsided. But how was it to be done? He must be got out of the country without delay, and all he could do was to employ some confidential person to effect this for him.

Plunged in this new train of ideas, the Peer was walking in the direction of the road, heedless of all external objects, when he heard his name cried out, and lifting up his eyes, he beheld no less a personage than the Prince Regent in the carriage which came in sight as Jenkins departed from him.

"Can I believe my eyes?" said the Regent. "Lord Wharton here at ten o'clock in the morning! I have just heard of the news, and am hurrying to town. Come into the carriage, and we will return together. May I ask if Venus was the Goddess who brought you hither on foot at such a time? You look pale, my dear Wharton! Have you been up all night?" The Statesman rallied himself, and smiled. "You are a sad

fellow, still," continued the Prince, as they rolled on towadrs the metropolis. "Age will never cool that blood of yours. I verily believe Love has no hotter votary in England, when at such a crisis as this you can adore——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Lord Wharton. "I might say with Rochester, I believe, of a *subject* I have no superior in my worship of pleasure: but I have not been pursuing it."

The Prince shook his head incredulously. "But, Wharton," he said, "this is a devilish bad business of last night. We should have bribed that fellow Sharp—made him a Peer, if nothing else would do. I am afraid our party is ruined."

"At present past redemption, I fear," returned Lord Wharton. "But Sharp will never keep those he has stolen from us together. They are the most discontented dogs alive. Conservatism must be our watch-word: it is the spirit of the age, say what you will to the contrary. Whiggism is a bastard thing, and has no real vitality in it. No one knows what it is."

"Why the one party wishes to keep all that is good, the other to find what is better, or worse."

"No, 'a change has come over the spirit of that dream,' since the French Revolution. People dread change now, and we must take care to encourage it by every means. We want to keep what is good, and not to permit that which is bad to be changed until it becomes absolutely necessary, lest in removing one part of the edifice the whole should fall to the ground. But it were vain to conceal the fact from ourselves that a mighty spirit of thought is busy against us: we must keep pace with the age. And we must do this, not by affecting to be more philosophical than the vulgar, not by asserting the right of custom, not by relying solely on physical force; but by taking advantage of whatever prejudices do yet exist, by pretending to have the welfare of the operatives at heart, by showing we know something of finance, and by prostrating the energies of our adversaries by every means, fair or foul; by bribery, by flattery and intrigue, and by sowing dissension among them, when we can do no more. You shake your head; but your royal highness is a Prince. The time is at hand when the name of Monarch will either be nominal, or else synonimous for the head of a Republic."

CHAPTER XCV.

POLITICS—LORD WHARTON AND THE MAN OF NO PARTY.

It was singular that Lord Wharton with the strong Toryism of his nature should have been so clear-sighted in his views of the spirit of the age. The royalty of mind must ever be acknowledged, however, by all men of great intellect, and he spoke what he thought, because he perceived that the Regent considered blood might be a set-off against brains. A clever writer of the day, Mr. D'Israeli, in his novel of Coningsby, seems to consider the tendency of the age is towards absolute Monarchy —that the *one* mind is to be worshipped like a God; but he errs. Absolute Monarchy never existed, and never can exist, unless a man were infinite. Was Napoleon an absolute monarch? He was the greatest ruler of modern times: but the voice of the People can never be controlled either by genius in statesmanship, or by military despotism. "The Press," says D' Israeli, "is the representative of the People." Of course it is: but then where is absolute Monarchy? There is no such thing in nature or in mind as the supremacy of a principle or an individual over all others. If it were so, we might blush at the efforts of man for liberty, we might abase ourselves as to an idol, and bow beneath the face of the deity we have ourselves erected; but if man is not to assert his equality with man, where he has mind, and thought, and knowledge, better to remain in the ancient state of bondage and of ignorance, better to live and die without daring to strive and to soar, than have a political religion of Anthropomorphism, crushing the vitality of that noble patriotism which would never permit a freeborn spirit to have "Slave and Bigot" written upon his soul. There is no wisdom in a form of government like this, in any point of view: neither for monarch, aristocracy, nor people. When Pope said that only fools would contend for *forms* of government, of course he meant that no form of government could be good, which was not adapted to the age: and as absolute monarchy was the spirit of semi-civilized nations, not fit to govern themselves, republican institutions must of course be universalized when man has arrived at such a point as he *must* arrive at. But at present, in spite of all that has been done, I would not trust *implicitly* to the working classes: they have not been educated to think: it is only the few who have thought, notwithstanding all defects of education: and it is to these—it is to mind and principle, not to wealth, nor anything else, I would confide the welfare of the People. That is a foolish cry for liberty which does not consider

the fitness of a people to be entrusted with a very large share of it; but once show me that all are fit to have a vote, and I say there *must* be universal suffrage—until then, it were as wise to make a man of a child as to grant such a thing; for they would only be misled by demagogues, they would not know their own interest, or be able to discriminate. Happy shall we be when all are fit to govern, when all live under their own laws, and keep them. Until which time, there can be no reasonable hope of any amelioration in the moral or physical condition of the world. But to proceed.

Lord Wharton, with the restlessness of such a mind as his, acted violently upon as it had been within the last few hours, could not be content with inertness. It was extraordinary how soon he rose to meet all exigencies, and to keep together his party as long as it might be done. But he knew the wavering would now desert him, and that he would soon be left alone. Yet he was resolved to make one last stand ere the retreat was beaten, as something was expected from such a general as he was. He knew the effect of a brilliant *dash* on weak minds; and he always built on the weakness, not on the strength of mankind. Most men would have been anxious to avoid the appearance of discomfiture by resigning at once, but our Statesman hated to do like other people. The Ministry was virtually defunct; but there were some sanguine spirits in it who thought it might be patched up, and looked to Lord Wharton to accomplish the work. But this he knew was a vain hope; every day must diminish their power. A dissolution would only give a larger majority to the opposition, and almost the whole cabinet was so unpopular, that without entirely remodelling it, it was a hopeless case, and there were none others to take office with him. But in spite of all these disastrous circumstances the Statesman thought he might make a stand and shake the strength of his adversaries, and he was resolved to attempt it. Shaking off all the feelings which had previously clung to him, after speaking with one of his most confidential agents on the subject of Stephen, in order to facilitate his escape, if he were not in the power of the authorities, he determined to pay a visit to a man of great influence in the House of Commons, who lived at a short distance from London, and ordered his horse. He mounted, and was riding at a round pace towards Hyde Park, which it was requisite to cross, when he perceived a member of Parliament, who was said to possess considerable influence also, but was attached to no party, proceeding in the same direction as himself. Lord Wharton suspected every person who was not a partizan played a deeper game than the vulgar for his aggrandizement, and having met this individual at the house of Travers, accosted him, with the view of sounding his depth.

"Good morning, Mr. Reynolds," he said, "you are riding early, like myself. Will you favor me with your company as we trot across the Park? I see you are going towards Kensington."

"I shall be very happy. It is a pleasant day."

"Delightful!—I think I saw you in the House last night. It is a pity, with your talents, you never take part in the debates. But you don't like speaking in the House! It is a great bore."

"I have not the power of doing so, had I the will. But what is ever effected by a speech?"

"It keeps up the heart of one's party, that's all," replied the Peer. "I wish that I could count among my friends so excellent a man as yourself;—that would do more to strengthen us than all the eloquence in the world. But you are a Whig?"

"I do not think there is more truth in Whiggism, than in Toryism," was the answer. "I am the representative of no party, and never will be so. I must be free to act as I think best."

"I admire your independence of spirit. But it is impossible to act without party."

"I do not quite agree with your lordship. But I belong to that school of politics which we owe in a great measure to Mr. Travers. I conceive that no constituency has a right to dictate to me for what men or measures I shall vote, because I cannot be certain that my views will undergo no modification for a single month. I am also what you practical men term a visionary in my political philosophy. What I want to see is this. Indirectly, I would give the suffrage to every honest man; but not at the present time, directly. In every village there are a few persons superior to their class, and looked up to by their fellows as men of integrity and good sense. These men should be the actual representatives of their order. They should form a distant electoral body, and should be the organ of the people. We should then know the real minds of our constituencies; they would talk with their electors, and through them we should have a medium of communication and a means of interpretation whose practical utility would, in my estimation, be incalculable."

"But the working of it," returned Lord Wharton; "you would find so many petty jealousies, and so many discordant views among such persons."

"Not at all. They might entertain the most dissimilar views, and yet all unite on a principle."

Desirous of drawing out Mr. Reynolds, the Peer replied—

"But this principle you talk of, which is, I know, the hobby of Travers; what is it to be?"

"The principle of association, similar to that we find in every manufactory, and on every farm. The people are to have their interests guarded. Men of intelligence and integrity are to declare the sentiments of the masses; another power will be raised in the state; and instead of having to argue with the ignorant and the discontented, we shall have the chosen friends of industry to reason FOR us, and WITH us. Then,

fair, honest argument may be the real power of the people; at present, wealth is the director of England."

"I think that it is all ingenious impracticability. Why should those men you would entrust with so much power, be honest? They would be bribed by each party, and their electors be betrayed for gold: so that, in any case, money is a god."

"In a well-regulated state, bribery is utterly impossible. Besides, not to count on the honesty of such men as I speak of, they would be too numerous, and the check on them too great to admit of corruption. The fact is, that even now, this class of intelligent operatives wields a great power in the state; and it is the policy of every government to organize power, and not permit it to outgrow its own resources, which this must some day do."

"I do not recognise such a power," returned the statesman. "And if there were established all that you wish, I cannot see what benefit would accrue to the working classes. Wherever there is most intelligence there should be most authority."

"You see, my lord, that power rightly considered (as Travers has defined it), is the aggregation of small portions, or what we commonly call weakness. There is no real power in creation, only in the Creator. Where would be the power of a state without workmen? The one class may be the head, but the other is the hand, both necessary to each other. If then a medium of communication between the hand and head be opened, so as to make them willingly co-operate, and not struggle vainly, as they must, with each other, the condition of both will be very greatly meliorated. We are all contending, like barbarians, against what is our own interest; for the welfare of the poor and rich is indivisible. The principle that on the poverty of one class is built the wealth of the other is idle and absurd; for, although in some instances there may be enormously wealthy monopolists and starving operatives, only watch the course of events, and perceive how the money that is wrung from the heart's blood of the producers is scattered to the winds, and how it flows in new channels invariably."

"I admire your philanthropy and right-heartedness, Mr. Reynolds; and I acknowledge that your views are comprehensive and not unphilosophical: but the mischief is, that philosophy can never be admitted into politics till all the world, or more than half of it, is philosophized. I am now endeavouring to form a great constitutional party, previous to the breaking up of the present Ministry. Will you join us? Ultimately, Conservatism must prevail, for almost all the wealth, and I must add, the larger portion of intellect in this country are enlisted in it. You will then have wider scope for the diffusion of your principles, and we shall never call on you to vote with us, when you think we are wrong. With ten such men as you are, I would crush Whiggism for ever, or, at all events, prevent its doing harm."

"My lord, you can never crush Whiggism, unless you crush Toryism. They are as necessary to each other as light and darkness, while governments are carried on as they are now. I cannot consent to join you. Great as your talents are, my lord, I confess I have no faith in the Ministry to which you belong. I do not agree entirely with Mr. Sharp: but his speech, last night, confirmed me in the opinion I had formed of the policy which our Premier has hitherto pursued. I am a plain man, Lord Wharton, who has risen from a humble station in society to one of consideration. I have sprung from the people, and I will not desert them, in spite of their errors—for they have sprung from ignorance.—I am not your enemy, nor the enemy of your party. Conservatism is becoming something better, I hope, than the old Toryism, which, it is my opinion, cannot survive. May I like your future policy better than that you have pursued during the last few years! Good morning."

The Peer and the Commoner had arrived at Kensington as this conversation ended, and the former continued his ride, buried in moody reverie.

"There is something I do not understand in all this," he thought. "The elements of a great change are visible; but whither shall it tend? To the destruction of aristocracy? Never! There always has been, and there always must be, aristocracy."

The Statesman was right, and he was wrong. Aristocracy is indestructible, but in scarcely civilized states, physical force, (*wealth* is physical force) high descent, or some other extrinsic accident, create aristocracy, which can only end in oligarchy, and then—in air; but the nobility of mind is God's peerage, and must outlive the ruins of the world—enthroned above change—immortal.

CHAPTER XCVI.

THE PEER SAVES JULIA—SHARP'S VISIT.

Lord Wharton was continuing his way, and had arrived within a short distance of his destination, when he heard a female scream, and perceived within a few furlongs a horse galloping furiously away with a woman towards a broad stream opposite. The chivalry of his nature towards the fair never subsided entirely in the statesman's breast, and he instantly spurred on to the aid of the female. The horse on which she was mounted gained the banks of the river, and plunged into the water, throwing his rider into the middle of the current. In another minute Lord Wharton followed; at some risk he caught the drowning woman, as she rose for the second time; but what was his amazement,

as he conveyed her insensible to the shore, to recognize Julia Seymour, his ward.

At this juncture a lady, on horseback also, arrived, and throwing herself down, clasped the maiden in her arms. "Good God, she is dead!" was her exclamation; but, even as she spoke, Julia exhibited symptoms of returning life.

How beautiful is being, when it thus appears to arise from the slumbers of death, and the faint hue of the rose flushes the pale cheek! There lay the lovely girl, supported by Wharton and the lady, her hair dishevelled. She soon became conscious of her situation, and found she was indebted for existence to the Peer. Poor soul! She did not wake to all the luxury of hope, to feel that she was not indifferent to life, that she had sympathies reciprocated, and that her heart was not alone in the wide world!

It was some time since she had seen Lord Wharton, and she had recently been induced to stay with a friend of her childhood, who lived a secluded life, within twenty miles of the metropolis. They had been taking their accustomed exercise on horseback, and the beast she rode had taken fright at some passing object, and ran away with her. Of all persons in the world she would rather not have been saved from a watery grave by the statesman; but he bent over her with intense interest, calling her by passionate names until she was able to rise. He supported her to the nearest cottage, where she was assisted to bed, and a medical man sent for, as she had sustained some small external injuries, and Lord Wharton said they did not know how far the mischief might extend. The surgeon, however, when he arrived, declared she had received no material hurt, and that she only wanted quiet to restore her. The Peer thought the accident a fortunate one, as it had thus terminated. He calculated that a romantic girl, like Julia, must feel some gratitude, some warm sentiment towards one who had preserved her life, and he was resolved to take advantage of it. If he could but marry Julia, all would yet be well. It was his last and only hope, one which he had never deserted, and which he had determined to risk all things to realise. He had been obliged for a short time to abandon the pursuit, because he felt that in such circumstances as they were placed, Julia would not immediately suffer his attentions.

But now he could see no obstacle to the consummation of his wishes: he thought she would acknowledge her folly in having yielded her soul to a boy who had proved so unworthy of her, and even his own loss of power might plead in his behalf with one of her character. He schemed to dazzle and bewilder her brain, to make an attempt to seize on her imagination and seduce her fancy, relying upon those arts which he so seldom found fail. But he would never have been the man to win Julia Seymour; he was not sufficiently ideal for her soul, and after Reginald

Travers, she could not admire the qualities of his mind, powerful as they were. And she still, I know not how, clung to the hope which had become part of her being, though all said her idol was false. She loved once, and ever.

Such women as Julia are those who most deeply admire the abstract and the dreamy; their high and generous enthusiasm, their vivid feelings, and bright imaginations are more worked upon by the lofty ideal than by the unbending energies, the sweeping passions, the towering ambition of a Lord Wharton. Consummate as was the art of the Statesman, he did not understand Julia; he thought her a silly girl, with some quickness and vivacity, and that her tastes were yet unformed. He thought to win her by flattery well applied; but he should have laid open the rich stores of his intellect, he should have tried to make her participate with him in mighty thoughts, to feel that his was a master mind, and that he devoted all its greatness to her. *Then*, if she had never loved, her admiration might have blinded her judgment. Certain it is that though the Peer now obtained access to Julia, and had many opportunities of conversation with her (for he preserved such a demeanour that she could not refuse to see him after such a service as he had rendered her), he made not the least progress in her affections. He managed to ride to see her every day, even neglecting affairs of some moment to do so, and he fancied she began to like his attentions because she did not avoid his presence.

Meanwhile the resignation of Ministers had been tendered and accepted; and it only remained to wind up affairs. It was confidently reported that Mr. Sharp was to be Premier; but Lord Wharton smiled at *that*. It was a week after the memorable defeat of the Ministry that the world was startled by a sudden announcement that the great Irish Peer was about to bring forward a measure, as the winding up of the administration, one in which all parties might unite—a masterpiece of statesmanship. Nothing else was talked of. Some said it was a *ruse* of the Tories; but the measure *did* come forward, though it was an unprecedented thing at such a posture of affairs. The hopes of the Tories began to revive, and more confidence was placed in Lord Wharton than he had possessed for a period of many years.

"After all," said some of the old Aristocrats, "he is one of us, and he can alone keep together our party: he is the only man of absolute genius among us. It is better he should be Premier than that we should have those rascally Whigs."

And so it was reported that the consequence of the brilliant policy of Lord Wharton would be that a new ministry would be formed under his direction, and that he would at last attain to that station he had so long aspired to; they said nothing could crush such a man.

During this time Lord Wharton had prosecuted his inquiries after his

son with ardor; but all that he could discover was, that he was not in custody. Somehow his heart yearned towards the young man, in spite of himself, and although he was conscious of not having acted well by him. And yet he was only one of many children who owed their existence to him, and he had remained in ignorance until within a very short time that there was such a being. But he had once seen him look so like her he had once loved, she whose strange and awful presence had haunted him so fearfully, but whose memory was not like that of other frail ones who had yielded to his persuasions. When he loved her there was much in his nature, which though he now affected to despise it, he secretly felt made him something higher than he had become, though he was virtually the ruler of the destinies of England. His mind would often turn to the image of that son whose noble qualities he had once known: but he was too much occupied to brood greatly on it.

He had divested himself for the time being of all that could clog his strength: he was all that is full of energy and high resolve; altogether, perhaps, those days were the most brilliant of his career.

He was too keen a calculator of chances himself, to imagine that the temporary diversion in his favor which he had effected, could really raise him to the eminence he had so often missed: but the powers it was requisite to put forth, gave him such confidence in himself, that the rare splendour of his intellect blazed forth with a meteoric light:—it was the expiring flame.

"Well, Sharp," said an old friend of the rich lawyer to him one morning, "what will all this come to? Lord Wharton is on his mettle."

"It will soon be tamed," returned the *millionaire*. "Let him go forward a little longer, and then he shall fall, never to rise again. I have come into possession of papers which will crush the old serpent into dust, when they are made public."

"Ah! a little peculation, probably? Is it so?"

"I can blast him both as a public and a private man, whenever I choose," returned Sharp.

This was on the morning when all the Tory papers were crying up the Irish Peer, and anticipating a signal triumph over the Whigs. But strange rumours got afloat in the evening, and the Tories became alarmed. Lord Wharton lost ground in their estimation, though there were nothing but whispers and mysterious paragraphs—meaning nothing. But that same evening Sharp visited the Peer.

Lord Wharton received his visitor courteously, but with much surprise. He could only attribute the visit to political causes, and was puzzled to know what they might be. Was his rancorous enemy about to propose a coalition, actually frightened after all by the final dash he had made? Could the keen-sighted Sharp be so gulled? It was hardly possible. The lawyer began thus—

"Your lordship has just returned from riding into the country. You do Miss Seymour honor." The Peer bent his head stiffly, unable to perceive the drift of his adversary; who added—"I wait upon your lordship in order to say a few words relative to our mutual charge, whom I have only been able to see once since the accident. I must request you, under existing circumstances, to discontinue your visits, distressing to her, and——"

"How!" interrupted the Statesman, haughtily. "This to me, Mr. Sharp! Remember your station, sir, and that you address one to whom you owe all."

The lawyer smiled scornfully, and then advanced slowly, until he was close to the Peer. Not a muscle of his face moved, as he replied thus—

"What I am and what you were or are, Lord Wharton, is nothing to me. You have fallen from the eminence——"

"I will not be insulted," here cried Lord Wharton, with flashing eyes. "By heaven, but for your grey hairs, I would order menials to expel you hence."

"Would you?" returned Sharp, in a low but clear voice. "Not when you have heard all I shall tell. Proud man, you are now beneath my feet. I have the strongest proofs possible of your public, your official profligacy, which I always suspected, and witnesses to blast your honor as a private person. You say I owe all I have to you! I confess it: if I had not hated you from my soul of life, I should have remained a poor drudge, instead of soaring to your quarry. All that I wanted is done: the great drama of my life is finished: never, never can you rise from the abasement into which I shall plunge you.—What, are you stricken dumb? Is the haughty Wharton, whose towering spirit nothing could crush, prostrate before the low attorney? Poor wretch! I am avenged—Harriet is avenged!"

"Ha!" cried the Statesman, at the name of Harriet, though previously not an emotion was visible on his white face. "Ha!" and he shook as if in an ague. "What say you? Did you know the dead?"

"I know it all," responded Sharp, in tones more like a husky whisper than aught else. "Villain! I loved that girl, whose sweet soul you would have stamped with the seal of perdition, whose heart—more pure than the gale of spring—you did pollute, like a fiend—whose gentle life you poisoned!—God of Heaven! What I have endured, what *she* endured! It is avenged."

The form of the Statesman became suddenly rigid; he stood like a sublime statue, utterly moveless. Sharp, also, was preternaturally calm; but his eyes glared like a wild beast's on his enemy. It was a fearful scene, from that very stillness. The grand outline of Lord Wharton's figure was shadowy in the uncertain twilight, as he stood with his back to the window, and the blanched cheek, the fixed eye, the stern lip, and

the marble brow, showed not a passion;—but ever and anon strange shadows would pass over the haughty and commanding face of the Minister, like dim clouds over the heaven of night, when all is dark and hushed. And there was the lawyer with his cold countenance, his white hairs, and that fierce eye—the quenchless fires of the master passion which had consumed him, burning below the surface—ice above, and volcanic fires below.

"She *is* avenged," muttered Lord Wharton, as if totally forgetful of the presence of another. "What more vengeance could the eternal hell have desired? She is here, and there, and everywhere. I fly from that tremendous phantom: but it is like the shadow of myself. From the dark immensities it ever rises, day and night. Not a thought, but has avenged her. I rush away from thought—and drink, and seek women. The wine-cup brings her to my view—the wanton caress blasts me with her visible face. Vengeance! O, for years and years *all* has been vengeance! Which way I went, what world I lived in, what pleasure I sought, what pang I endured, the wrath of the avenger came to me. Ha! miserable fool, do you think your petty sting can add a torment to the festering venom of the snake *here*, within my brain? Ha, ha! The wasp and the serpent! Slave! Do you come with your little malice, and say—'*I* can annihilate.' Come, I will show my soul to you. Suppose it were there in its dark essence, as if it had received the final judgment, and that was damnation. Look at my soul—so great, so vile—a Satan soul! Behold its mighty passions, sweeping through the universe—its pride, its glory, and its despair! See what it has dared, see what it has defied! *Itself!* In itself, the everlasting God! The soul that battles with its conscience, and towers over it, even while it is subdued, the soul that hurls defiance at hope, and in rushing from crime to crime, in striding from passion to passion, and clutching despair and infinite remorse, rather than fall down and worship—that soul can never bend before a universe, or a Deity! And you—you think, vile worm, a Thomas Wharton can be vanquished by such as you are! He who has not shrunk before the blasting frown of heaven, the withering eye of God! And so you have been pursuing one already pursued by the furies. Thinking to damn the being—damned to inextinguishable flames!—The world! What care I for the world, or the world's splendors! I sought them—true: but I knew they would only heap anguish on anguish. I only preferred this mode of misery to suffering the worm that never dies to crawl within my soul without cessation.—The world! Where is it? The lying, rotting world, that is a speck on the ocean of immensity! It ties us down—this world—it corrupts, it vanquishes: but the victor of conquerors is so much rubbish thrown together in a few hours, and like a breath in the vastness of eternity. *That* is my despair! Fool! I want annihilation! If you could take away the glory of my name, and

brand me with a felon's mark, if you could deprive me of my strength, my mind, my genius, and only give me an idiot's brain, I would thank you. I only want to cease to be. You have had my spirit laid bare before you. That restless spirit which nothing can tame, that haughty soul which can find no joy,—that mind which owns no greater—though greater there may be—the indomitable will, the unconquerable pride, the fell remorse, the infinite despair—how should you touch it? The world crumbles beneath me—life shrivels: BUT I AM."

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE CHANGE OF HEART—AND A SURPRISE.

"VENGEANCE is mine, saith the Lord," thought Sharp, whose mind so rarely recurred to religion, that it had scarcely exercised the slightest influence over him, as the Minister concluded his dark confession. "I have fooled my time away—God has avenged."

But a long silence ensued. The Peer at last spoke once again.

"Now, if you will," he said, in an altered voice, "you may go and do your worst. What you have discovered, I care not. My name you cannot destroy, and if you could, I care not. I am as one of the dead. I care not for love, for hate, for riches, for pain. I will battle it out with you to the last: I will never be a coward; but your victory will avail you nothing: my defeat will not create a new pang. Those who have suffered to the last degree of sufferings possible, which madden, yet drive not mad, are at least removed from the susceptibility to more."

"The last link in my chain of evidence against you," returned the lawyer, "I found but an hour or two ago,—and I came, thinking to gloat over your wretchedness: but that is past now. I have looked upon the agony of your writhing face, and it is enough. Strange, most strange. In one instant the cherished hatred of years seems to have perished—all that I deemed imperishable is gone. I mistook myself. Lord Wharton, I pity you, even as a condemned malefactor. The revenge which has pursued you so long, is gone. Good night."

"Sharp," said Lord Wharton, suddenly detaining the lawyer, "answer me one question. What has afforded you the greatest pleasure of existence? Hate?"

"It was a frenzy," returned the rich man: "I could not have hated. Now I have to seek a new life. I am old, and all is objectless. Being is a dead blank. Hate! No! It never was pleasure. It was a cheat of the imagination. I looked forward to this hour, when I thought to

see your proud spirit quail beneath him you despised, as a very heaven of enjoyment: but it was a miserable blunder. I have wasted energies, thought—till thought was racking pain—squandered all that is best in the wealth of mind and heart away—and all for *this!* Farewell, my lord. I think I can forgive you. That a man who might have been so great——"

"Enough," said Lord Wharton, calmly. "When I am dead, you may palliate my crimes, if you like, and the world shall think you a generous foe. *I* seek not to extenuate them, or have them extenuated: what I have done, I have done. In vices, in crimes, as well as in great deeds—*Exegi monumentum perennius ære.*" The lawyer bent his head, and withdrew. "Yes," muttered the Statesman, "in years to come, old women will shrink with pious horror at the mention of my name; I shall be coupled with Lyttleton and Mirabeau; and priests will tell of my death-bed!—What will that be?"

It was not to his own house that the lawyer bent his steps. Hardly conscious of the way he took he only avoided the crowded streets. What should we do in certain eras of existence but for solitude? And the night descended serene and glorious. The solemn stars came trooping into light, and the young moon shed her choicest lustre. The air was mild and balmy, and the lawyer felt as though it conveyed a peace to his heart which he had not known for years. He thought—

"Yes, I forgive him now. Where is evaporated all that deadly rancour I thought was seated in my heart of hearts? Poor wretch! Never did I look upon such despair. What a noble soul has been wrecked in him! Such fiery passions as he had were not to be controlled by common motives of duty, of morality, of humanity. If he had been a Christian, perhaps!—How strange it is that I have neglected so utterly all religion! And he too;—while poor Harriet has found such happiness in it. But the world teaches not, the heart of man teaches not faith. Ay, that should be the motive. I see it now. Faith is nothing more than a better motive than earth will afford. The love of man for the love of God! The love of infinite perfection is the only power to draw us up from the adoration of the finite. The sacrifice demanded of us is the subjection of passion to reason. Till now I have lived for passion."

Sharp had arrived at the great truth, than which there is on earth no higher. The soul and the body are ever at war: to subdue the physical to the spiritual is the price of immortality. And faith is the only power by which we can overcome the body. Is faith, then, highest reason? Where reason ends, there faith begins: and as the soul perceives it is in essential infinity, as the body is in necessary finity, it adores the infinite, whether it will or not. Christ was the infinite embodiment of the subduction of passion to mind. Christianity differs only from Moral Deism, in predicating that love of God is faith, while Deism, assuming that

belief is impossible, ends with adoration of finite reason—in fact a principle framed by human intelligence,—an abstract idea—instead of a Being *beyond* reason. Yet all is faith in the region of first principles: a reason there is for faith, or else it would be bigotry or superstition; but there is no more difficulty in belief, than doubt or negation, at all events. Therefore I believe in the truth of Christianity, for the same reason as the Deist in a God, or the Atheist in Necessity: because, otherwise to me creation is incomprehensible, because the difficulties reason must otherwise experience are overcome by a partial insight into the divine economy.

It is the want of faith in the goodness of some great principle, from which springs doubt and error. Sharp might have traced the passion of revenge to its true source, the littleness of his own heart. The august thinker, the true, great-minded individual, cannot harbour revenge: with them it is justice. And justice, tempered by mercy, is Heaven's philosophy. Vengeance is always a pitiful vanity—nothing more than the desire of seeing an enemy less than oneself. Justice is ever a principle: it is founded on reason, instead of passion; but when justice and love coalesce, the human becomes divine. Think you these things are the coinage of man's brain? No: but for God we could never get beyond a certain point. It would be reason and justice, but love and forgiveness of wrongs could not be. God has taught, and in Christ realized the teaching. Oh, that man could also illustrate such ethics!

The lawyer thought and felt deeply. The scales of truth and reason balanced the essences of things before his eyes, and the blindness and the leprosy of the absorbing passion, the morbid feelings he had harboured for years of unavailing labor vanished. A sweet peace fell upon his withered heart, and a prayer was on his lips. There was a tear in that cold, hard eye, which was upraised to heaven: what enthusiasts call conversion (making a mistake in the midst of a truth of lofty meaning) came on him.

"Heaven forgive *him*, and *me* also," he murmured. And from that moment the lawyer's heart was changed. There was nothing miraculous in the transformation of this man, unless we call every great change in nature a miracle. In the abstract philosophical sense, *all* is a miracle: but the age of miracles is passed. He asked Heaven to forgive the man whom but two hours ago he hated beyond all living men. The cause of the effect is easy to be understood, He wanted to make Lord Wharton wretched. He found him miserable beyond conception, he saw the hand of God in the inevitable retribution the guilty must pay, and he felt abased beneath Omnipotence's. Verily indeed man may revenge, but the Deity is just. Thus may we trace the progress of things; with the eye of the philosopher, and the faith of the believer, rational yet humble, inquire into the mysteries of the human mind; and the more we think,

adore the wisdom and the beneficence of that great Being who alone rules. The lawyer had never before experienced those sublime feelings which gushed through his heart. The universe appeared to have a greater and more solemn meaning: he was humbled but exalted.

"From henceforth," he thought, "I will live for man and not for myself; for virtue and not for vengeance." And so the change was wrought in the breast of the man, and he repented deeply of his past life. We shall see but little more of Sharp, a being not without good and evil in his nature, worldly only for the sake of a great passion, extinguished for ever. "One hour may change us to the end of time."

To his surprise he found he had walked a great distance, though he fancied he had left Lord Wharton but a very short time; for though he lived through a world of new experiences, the scene which had so changed the aspect of his fate, seemed continually to rise before him. He could hardly divest himself of the idea that he actually heard the thrilling voice of Wharton still, and gazed upon that terrible face. Never, never could *they* be obliterated from his soul. But he turned homewards. He had walked some distance beyond the cottage of Harriet,—for when we are wrapt in deep abstraction we usually take the path must habitual to us, especially in the country,—and he thought he would just ask her how she was, knowing she did not generally go early to bed. He reached her garden and entered. Voices were borne to his ear by the low breeze. They came from an arbour at a few paces distance, and though not much above the pitch of a whisper, distinctly heard words of endearment.

It is almost impossible to describe his astonishment, when he perceived Harriet in the arbour, locked in the embrace of a fine young man in humble attire, but of noble presence. He stood like one stricken into a statue. Harriet suddenly raised her eyes, and perceived the lawyer's shadow. A scream rose to her lips; but she recognized her friend almost immediately, and exclaimed—

"O, I am so glad you are here, my benefactor! This boy, this blessed boy—look at him—is my son! God has restored him to me wonderfully. Is he not a noble fellow? Stephen, this gentleman has been father, brother, everything to me."—And she took the lawyer's hand and bedewed it with tears.

The lawyer looked first to Harriet, and then to the young man: that singular expression, so like his mother's, was upon Stephen's face. Sharp recollected him after a few seconds, and uttered,

"*This* your son, Harriet? It must be so: and yet it is incredible."

"He has mentioned facts about the brother whom I thought dead which identify him," returned Harriet. "But, alas! my poor boy is in great peril! I know not what we shall do. The officers of justice are in pursuit of him still. Heaven grant he is not restored to me only to be taken away again! I could bear all things but *that*."

"Fear not," returned Sharp. "He shall escape, were he ten times guilty,—which I trust he is not."

"O, no, no!" cried Harriet. "Look but at his face!"

"It is a book which *may* deceive, but rarely," replied the lawyer, looking at the young man, as the flush of honest indignation colored his cheek. Scarcely had the words left the rich man's lips, when footsteps were heard approaching. Harriet started and clasped her hands together.

"Father of mercies, protect my child!" she murmured fervently, as voices were now distinctly audible. "Oh," she added in a whisper to the lawyer, "what shall we do? They are coming this way: he will be taken."

"He must be here!" said a voice. "Come along."

Harriet clasped her son to her breast convulsively. She spoke not, she moved not; the very functions of life appeared suspended in the terror of the moment. O, those feelings of fear, anxiety, and love increased by dread! What pen can describe them?"

Sharp, however, retained his presence of mind. "Crawl under that bench," he whispered.

But it was too late. Two men darted from the trees behind them, and seized Stephen. Others immediately came up; and resistance would have been vain. The young man did not attempt to struggle, but supported his mother, who seemed expiring with agony. The lawyer interposed in their behalf.

"Whom seek you?" he asked of the officers of justice. "Let me see your warrant for this behaviour."

"Who are you, that ask us the question?" was the reply of one of the men; but in a moment he added—"Oh, I beg pardon! I did not know you, Mr. Sharp! This is one Stephen Jenkins, a felon who escaped from prison years ago."

"How do you know that, White? Can you identify him? Let me look at the warrant!"

"Oh, Thompson can satisfy you, sir! Here he is."

A short man approached at this juncture, and Sharp, leaving the officers with their prisoner, addressed the new comer in a low tone, saying—"A word in your ear, Mr. Thompson. Before you say anything against that young man, you had better recal the transactions of your life for the last few weeks. Lord Wharton will not be able to protect you; and I have got such an amount of evidence against you, that any jury must convict. You know what transportation is." The short man turned very pale, while Sharp continued—"I alone can save you, or procure your condemnation. If you wish to escape, say that you have been mistaken about this young man. Otherwise, I give you into custody without delay. You know what I am." Thompson stood irresolute; but when he saw the calm, stern face of the lawyer, so terrible in its passionless menace, his heart failed.

"Well, Thompson," said another officer, "here is our bird, at last! Of course you can swear to his person. Mr. Sharp isn't satisfied: but you can prove— —"

"That's not the man," interrupted Thompson. "You stupid fellows, I never saw him before."

"The devil you haven't!" was the rejoinder. "Why, he exactly answers the description you gave. Six feet high, eyes, hair, every thing the same."

"Do you think there a'nt others six feet high, with the same colored eyes, and hair?" said Thompson. "I'm very sorry this mistake has happened. The person I want differs in many respects from this young man, who is known to Mr. Sharp."

The officers looked mystified. "But," observed one, "you told us yourself we should find him here; that you had tracked him—that he was like this lady, with whom you had seen him—and sure enough he is. Nay his very dress corresponds."

"I tell you I don't know him," returned the short man, doggedly. "And if I can't swear to him, there the matter ends. Mr. Sharp will tell you who he is, perhaps, to satisfy you."

"Certainly," answered the lawyer, readily, "He is the son of one of my clients, a highly respectable person, and I will answer for his appearance. There, take that money, and get yourselves something to drink. I hope you will find the right man. Thompson, call on me to-morrow. Good night, friends."

CHAPTER XCVIII.

A DISSERTATION ON LOVE—MORAL *v.* PHYSICAL FORCE.

If the reader recollects the events of twenty chapters ago, he will recal to mind the escape of the Jenkinses from their pursuers; and it is now requisite to take up the narrative from that period. After various turnings and windings, which the boy Jem made with unerring accuracy, in spite of the gloom in the thicket, Stephen and Nell found themselves before a ruinous building, apparently uninhabited. The lad, however, contrived to open a door and admit them, and he then bade them follow him down a flight of steps.

"They wouldn't find us here in a hurry," said Jem, as he opened a door, so contrived as to appear a portion of the black wall, and discovered a small room in which there was a chimney and some decayed furniture. "If they *should* find us, even," added the boy, "we can run for it. There is another outlet here." So saying he opened another door, similar to

that by which they had entered. "You see, there is a passage of some length," concluded Jem; "it is hid by furze, and not far off on that side is the river. I shall be obliged to leave you soon; but I shan't be long away. Here is some bread and cheese, and there some spirits. This is where old Hermes comes to remain snug."

"And so you are my little friend, Jem Thompson," said Stephen. "And you have lived with Hermes! I have often thought of you and your forlorn fate."

"Oh," said Jem, "I do very well. I'm not much with Hermes, who's crazy. I know some fellows of the right sort, and I'm down as the knocker of Newgate. I advise you to keep close for the present. I shall go out as a girl." And the boy opened a chest at the corner of the room, and took out of it some female attire, which he put over his own clothes; which having done, he said—"Now I must be off. Good bye; I'm glad to see ye again." The boy quitted the place by the subterranean path, and Stephen and his wife were left alone. The weak frame of Nell was now quite worn out, and it was not long before she fell into a heavy sleep.

"Poor girl!" murmured the husband, as he fondly contemplated the serene, sad face reposing thus. "She, who deserves to possess all that this world can give, is an outcast for my sake. But how brightly her virtues shine in adversity! Oh, what a noble soul she has! Thank Heaven for having given her to me! Oh, God, watch over her dear head!"

Shallow-hearted beings tell you that love soon expires, when possession destroys the charm of novelty: but these persons know nothing of love. The great of soul, whose mighty feelings are concentrated on one dear object, love till death,—yea, after the grave has closed over the lost one. The poet adores his ideal, the painter his: and it has been said this adoration is the greater because it cannot be realized. But there is something diviner than the Ideal, something loftier even than imagination itself—passion in its purity! O, the devotion of that clinging love, that high, generous and self-denying affection, with its bright humanity clothed by heaven, in chaste union, even with divinity! The mystic depth of such passion transcends the "brief fathom line of thought;" for it continually soars from the mortal to the immortal, it feels that it can never die; but through change, and death, and isolation, must keep within itself the perfect element of a being sublimer than the stars!

Love die? Poor fool! "What Plato thought" outlived Plato: then do you imagine that what one with a heart as deep as Plato's mind stamped with a heavenly image, perishes like dust? If not one atom of matter can be destroyed, can one feeling that elevates the nature of man, who is better than all the world of dust, as he received a portion of God's breath, vanish into nothingness? If "a thing of beauty" is such for

ever: if a star is indestructible: if the life of genius breathing in old Homer contains an eternity of vitality,—joy unto those who love! Yea, joy unto them even in the final hour! That faith in the eternity of love may make the Sceptic believe. I cannot help thinking with the eloquent Jean Paul, that love leads to faith in immortality; or else it is but a passion of earth. It is this great faith which makes a believer adore love. There is always poetry in the passion of such a high nature as that of Stephen. He was not a dreamer, he was not, strictly speaking, anything of an enthusiast; but his fervent heart, his exalted principles, which had towered over circumstances, and evinced the potency of will against fortune;—these were the qualities which imbued his love with the strength and endurance that create the poetic truth.

The age is too actual and pseudo-utilitarian to relish the faith without which passion is but desire, yet how can the age make or destroy; since one thing will pass away, and another arise? No, the universal heart is really above the age: appeal to the abstract and the beautiful, and mingle them with the common and unideal, and you will see a public can be created. All great minds must create a public. Shakspeare did, above all: he counteracts the tendencies of the false philosophy of materialism, by thus blending, as it were, earth and heaven; he has done more to raise love in the eyes of man even than all the august dreams of the Grecian. Wycherley, Farquhar—almost all the dramatists of the era of Charles the Second, degraded love into lust; but they have had their day: the faith Heaven has implanted in man's nature has been too strong for their infidelity, or for Byron's scepticism: it has been too strong for jibe, sarcasm and sophistry.

In the middle of the night Helen awoke. "Ah, dearest," she exclaimed, looking up at Stephen, on whose bosom she had been pillowed, "have you not slept? I have been dreaming of our poor child. Oh, that I could see him once more! But that is impossible. Your safety is my fate."

"Yet, in this disguise, I think I might escape detection," returned Stephen. "I will consult John, when he comes, whether I might venture; and we would bring the body here. I wonder John is not come: I hope no evil has befallen him."

"You shall not go," cried Nell, "unless I go with you. Ah, what is that noise? Surely, I heard voices."

As she spoke, footsteps came down the passage through which Jem Thompson had gone; but, to the great satisfaction of the fugitives, they found John Jenkins, accompanied by the old King of the Gipsies, had come. Black Bill was gone to London, and John and he had found some difficulty in baffling pursuit.

"And now, John," said Stephen to his cousin, "tell us your adventures since we escaped from prison."

"We have been in all parts of the world," returned John Jenkins. "I thought I should have liked to settle in America, and we went to the back-woods; but we could not endure *that*. Somehow, people such as we are cannot bear solitude. Stillness has an awful voice."

"But what are you doing now? England is perilous."

"What matters peril?" returned John. "It is in peril I live. When all is at peace around me, when there is no danger, I am in hell. I am a prize-fighter: the brute in my nature is worshipped as a God. Yes, I am become like one of those fierce Roman gladiators—but you know there was a man called Spartacus—even such a man as I am—among them. I want to emulate that Thracian robber. What say you, Stephen, will you strike a blow for liberty? I have prepared something that may shake this realm of England: in a short time all will be ripe. I mean to take advantage of a popular tumult—which there can be no difficulty in exciting with the wrongs we endure—and then we will burn and slay: our oppressors shall fall as the tyrants of France fell twenty years ago, and the banners of Liberty be spread, inscribed with 'Live the Republic!' The time is coming," continued the prize-fighter, fiercely clenching his mighty hand, which he lifted up until it touched the low roof. "Yes, the time is coming when the name of noble, when titles, when rank, shall be hurled down, and trodden under feet. I will do this, or perish. Will you join the band?"

"No," replied Stephen. "You rave, John. Even if you could succeed, I would never strike a blow! For heaven's sake, consider."

"I will consider nothing," interrupted John Jenkins. "My cry is Revolution—the cry of every man, except the slave, the knave, and the bigot is revolution! The people outnumber the rulers by millions, and when once they are stirred up, when once from the end of the land the universal passion is for freedom, all the cannon, the bayonets, the hirelings in the universe will be annihilated for ever, or turned against those who employ them. I say, we will have a Revolution! You exclaim, there will be such crimes committed—there will be so many lives lost! Well, look at the state these precious tyrants have reduced us to—look at the crimes they compel us to permit. Read the papers, walk the streets—regard the robberies, the destitution, the famine, the excessive toil, the prostitution in existence. I say no crimes can equal those which the villains who oppress us perpetrate, or cause to be perpetrated every day. Revolution, I say."

"Be it so," replied Stephen, calmly. "I wish to destroy crime; but not to commit it. Use the moral force; use mind, reason, virtue——"

"Damn mind, reason, and virtue!" cried John. "What have they ever done? All great and glorious changes have been wrought by steel against steel, life against life."

"I deny it," was the rejoinder. "Nothing good has ever been, or ever

will be, accomplished by the sword. Look at the history of nations! Progress has not been effected by any wars, or insurrections. Genius and science have triumphed over ignorance and error; the words of those great men God sends as prophets—the words of the inspired thinkers go forth to battle with dogmas and fallacies. How can civilization ever be the consequence of bloodshed and of anarchy? Crime begets crime, hate begets hate, and discord, discord."

"And we who suffer are to sit down tamely and philosophize!" sneered John Jenkins. "Because we may create misery to others, we are to endure the more ourselves! I would go down to perdition, before I would remain tamely to submit to tyranny. I thought you had a nobler soul in you."

"No, John! Tame submission is not for the free and the brave. The press speaks for us now, and with a voice of thunder. Its might is irresistible. The weight of conviction carried by demonstration is heavier than that enforced by armies and by hosts. I will not join you. I will use my head to redress the wrongs of my fellow men; but I will not raise my hand against even the worst of my enemies. Reason is the only weapon fit for a man to wield; when he has recourse to gunpowder, his arguments must be weak!"

John Jenkins did not reply for some moments, but at last said, "They will not hear the loud cry of the people, therefore they shall be *made* to hear. They will not redress grievances, and so we will redress them ourselves. What right have they to govern? The right of superior goodness? No. They pillage, they seduce, they lie, and they scorn those who by the sweat of their brows support them in idleness. The right of wisdom? Show me where it is. Those who have intellect only humbug and deceive the more. The right of what, then, but *custom?* Who created custom? Did we? Are the fools who are in their graves to be our rulers? Is the ignorance and slavishness of a thousand years ago to hold us in bondage? Never—I say, never. And blood alone can make us what we ought to be. We must wade through the blood of aristocracy to freedom unbounded. And will you not add one to the patriot band? Are you so much enamoured of the system of things that you had rather live a bondman, than die as a man ought? Shame!"

"You have got infinite falsehood and infinite truth combined," answered Stephen quietly. "The People eventually *must* rule, as they are so far the greater number: but it will not be by menace or force they can attain their rights. When they show they can exercise power, they will attain what they want—equal rights, and equal legislation."

Here John felt the hand of his sister on his shoulder. She opened her lips, and said, imploringly, "Do not engage in such a hopeless struggle, dear John! We will seek safety away from England again. Oh, why should you thirst for blood?"

"This damned aristocracy," returned the prize-fighter, "has ruined me, you—all of us. Who was it that stole my life's life away from me? One of the aristocracy—God save the mark! Who is an aristocrat? I say, the man that works is far nobler than the idle wretch who leads a butterfly existence, useless to all. The man who works has a right to live, and he only."

"True, most true," exclaimed Stephen, warmly. "The honest operative (whether he work with brain or muscle) is God Almighty's noble. We will work, John—and we shall be happy."

"Never, never," cried Jenkins. "Never can I be happy more. The fibres of my heart are torn away, and I am grown a savage. I might have been something better, I know. But it matters not. Now let us arrange our future plans. I think you had better lie here for the present, unless you will join my band. The search will be diligent. Ha! did you hear anything then? No, I mistook; and yet, by heaven, some people—and many, too—are coming down these steps from the building! But they shall not take us."

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE LEAP—STEPHEN REMEMBERS HARRIET.

"Fly, Stephen, for the love of heaven, fly!" exclaimed poor Nell, in an almost inarticulate voice. "Me they will not hurt. Go, if you love me."

"Yes," said John, "Hermes will take care of her."

So saying, he took the arm of Stephen, who pressed a passionate kiss on the lip of his wife, and followed whither John led. They opened the other door, and closed it after them, as the pursuers reached the wall which concealed the room. Losing no time, they made for the water; but before they passed from the excavation, John Jenkins abruptly stopped.

"There are others here," he whispered. "We shall have to fight for it; but it's not the first time we've done that together. Take this pistol. Now, then, I'll reconnoitre." He put aside the furze that concealed the mouth of the cave, and perceived two or three men at no great distance, in whom his practised eye detected officers of justice. "It is possible they mayn't see us," said John Jenkins; "while those we've left behind may be some time before they find the door. There is a boat hid among the rushes you may see yonder, and if we can gain that, we shall easily baffle them. If not, I will die rather than be taken. The officers turn

their backs to us, and I may get to the boat unseen by them. When all's ready, you follow, too. I must shove gently off."

With these words the pugilist crept out of the cave, and he had not gone many yards before Stephen heard sounds as if the pursuers had discovered the secret of the first door, and were breaking through. At the same moment the constables turned round; but John Jenkins was now walking upright, and his person was not known to them. Nevertheless, they instantly approached him, while he, seeming to take no notice, made for the rushes. Stephen did not know how to act; for, if he left his place of concealment, the suspicions of those before him would become certainty, while, if he should stay any longer, the pursuers would gain on him. At this juncture who should make his appearance but young Jem Thompson, who swaggered up to John Jenkins, while the officers of justice bawled out to the latter to stop. The boat was reached by the pugilist while those who followed were midway between the cave and him, effectually cutting off the possibility of communication between the cousins, unless there were to be a struggle. Meanwhile, those behind were evidently on the right scent, and Stephen fancied he heard his wife's voice raised in supplicating accents. He was resolved, if possible, to avoid a contest with the officers, and taking his resolution, left the cave at a favorable moment.

He ran swiftly down a narrow path along precipitous banks which rose to a great height above the stream, and by great exertion of speed reached a spot from whence John could see him, before the enemy could get to the place where the boat was moored. He motioned to John, who, without taking the least notice of the officers, was getting out the oars, and cried to him to push off. By this time the men he had left in the cave rushed out of it, and their numbers were such as to have made resistance useless. The quick eye of Jem Thompson saw these latter, as he heard the cry of Stephen, and he shoved off before the other officers could interfere.

"Run for it, Stephen," ejaculated the prize-fighter, lustily. "A few furlongs further on you can jump in, and we will pick you up. Quick."

The constables were now in full pursuit, and fire-arms were discharged, but ineffectually, at the fugitives in the boat. Stephen ran swiftly along the overhanging banks, but some time before he could reach the spot where John Jenkins proposed to take him up, he saw some labouring men before him, and the officers in pursuit shouted "Stop thief!" Changing his intention in an instant—for he felt the working men would frustrate his leap into the river, Stephen vociferated to John to row away without him, and bounded along a path which took a slanting direction, but the footing of which was perilous. "We have him now," exclaimed the pursuers, the foremost of whom had reached the slanting path, just as the fugitive found too late there was a wide gulf in the

direction he had taken. The chasm was nearly twenty feet wide, and it was at least thirty to the ground, crags with sharp points preventing the possibility of descent. But on the other side of the chasm the ground was much softer, and if he could once gain that, Stephen thought he should escape. He took a few paces backwards, strung his muscles up to their extremest tension, and then, without a moment's hesitation, took the fearful leap. A cry escaped from the officers as they witnessed this awful feat of daring, for they thought the young man must be dashed to pieces in the attempt. But he sprang through the air with the bound of an antelope—he reached the opposite banks in safety. He murmured a prayer of thanksgiving, and continued his flight. But one man, no less swift of foot than Stephen, had taken a path which brought him within a few paces of the fugitive below the jutting crags. Eager to obtain the reward for his apprehension, this fellow followed.

Stephen was very nearly exhausted; he did not think he was in danger of immediate pursuit, and he thought he would rest one minute, when he reached a dark avenue perhaps a mile distant from the cave, and half a mile from the river. He sat down, therefore, to think what course it was advisable to pursue, when a man sprang on him like a tiger, and attempted to pinion his arms. Stephen was on his legs in an instant. He was an admirable wrestler, and though his opponent was fresher and quite as strong as himself, he succeeded in throwing him; but the fellow clutched at his head, thinking to detain him by the hair. The wig he had worn came off, and he was once more free. Fortunately for him, the place in which he was afforded facilities of escape, and he succeeded in baffling the eyes of the officer among the thick wood.

But the pursuers, who could not follow John Jenkins for want of a boat, relaxed not in their exertions to capture Stephen, who was ignorant of the country, and very weary. Nearly all that day Stephen was pursued; but towards evening he succeeded in getting into the open country, almost exhausted. Yet he walked on in the road to London. But nature could support him no longer, and when he was within two or three miles of the city he observed by accident a place in which he thought he might rest. . . . Here it was that he was seen by Harriet.

But he had inadvertently left his hat behind him, and this it was that betrayed him. Harriet, it will be remembered, gave him a garment of her own to disguise him, and enveloping himself in this mantle, which, from the great height of its owner, almost reached to his feet, having emerged from his previous lurking place, refreshed by some hours' sleep, he walked away, concealed by the trees of the copse. There was an outhouse at the end of the trees, which was a part of Harriet's property, and Stephen doubting not that the coppice would be searched, and that if he left it in the bright moonlight he would be seen by the enemy, entered the place.

On the other side of this outhouse he saw there were two rows of trees, planted in parallel lines, at the extremity of which there was a pretty cottage. But he resolved to remain in the shelter he had gained, unless driven from it. But who was the lady who had been his guardian spirit? Then it flashed upon him he had seen her before; and that marvellous faculty of association was busy within him. That tall form—that voice; he could not be deceived; she could be no other than the maniac he knew in years past. But, even while thus cogitating, footsteps approached. It was by this time again dark; but Stephen could see enough to discover a woman of low stature was approaching from the cottage, while there was no sign of pursuit. Yet, if he were found there, what suspicions would be raised? There was a hood to the mantle Harriet had given him, and in this he enveloped his face, and putting a bold front on the business was marching forth, when the female alluded to, noticed him, and exclaimed—

"Dear me, my dear ma'am, you had better come into the house; the air's very damp."

And picking up some kitchen utensil, the servant returned towards the cottage. Eager to learn more of the singular circumstances connected with Harriet, Stephen took advantage of the woman's mistake, and followed her to the house. He entered a small room, and had not been there above five minutes, when the real mistress of the dwelling came in. It were unnecessary to particularise the exact circumstances which led to the discovery of their relationship; neither would it be possible to delineate all the mother's emotions, when she found she had a son.

CHAPTER C.

REGINALD TRAVERS ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE—THE MANIAC—THE FIRE.

A considerable time has elapsed since we lost sight of Reginald Travers. In the ninetieth chapter he was left the inmate of a lunatic asylum, and some days had elapsed since that period. The potion he had taken, in the infamous house into which he had been entrapped, left a great languor about him. Poignant regret for his imprudent conduct, the uncertainty of his fate, the possibility of being for ever confined in that miserable place, torn from his father and from Julia, weighed heavily upon his spirits. But never was he driven to utter despair: a deeper sense of his own weakness, and a diviner spirit of faith, entered his being, and he bore his misfortunes with majesty and dignity, such as none but of high soul and lofty intellect could have exhibited under such circumstances.

He resolved to make an effort to escape, though he was aware that he was watched with peculiar vigilance; and one dark, rainy night, began to put his intention into effect. He foresaw the difficulties he should have to encounter, but he did not shrink from them, thinking anything preferable to such a confinement as he had been subjected to. He had been removed to a cell of great security. The window was very high, and grated; but he succeeded in clambering up by means of his bedstead, and in looking out. To his great joy, he discovered that one of the bars was loose, and in a few minutes he succeeded in removing it. But, slight as he was, it was necessary to remove another bar, and then the height from the ground was immense. He feared it would not be possible for him to descend there. Should he then attempt to escape when he was allowed to walk in the garden? Impossible. He knew there were sentinels at every avenue of escape at that time. By dint of hard labour, and with the aid of the bar he had removed, Reginald, in the course of an hour, had destroyed the other impediment to his egress, and then got out of window. It was a very easy matter to gain the roof from where he was; but he did not see that that would facilitate his escape. However he clambered up to the top of the house, by holding on to a leaden pipe and the parapet, and thus far was free. He then looked for a trap-door, but for some time could find none. At length he did so, at the extremity of the building, and with the bar he still kept, broke in with but little noise. He cautiously descended. All was at rest within the dark abode; but now and then strange, but faint laughter might be distinguished. How dreary it sounded at that hour! A maniac's laughter in the dead of the night—and no other sound whatever: it is a fearful thing. But Reginald perceived he was in a square cell, which was unoccupied, and he feared he should be able to get no further. At this juncture he heard a female voice singing a sweet Italian air, and he was astonished to find that there was a door in the cell he then occupied which communicated with an inner room. The door was bolted on the side he was, and through this alone could he pass; for a second door on the opposite side was secured too strongly for him to open. But on drawing the bolt, he experienced no other obstacle to his progress, and entered an apartment in which there was a bed, upon which reposed a female form. The minstrel continued singing very sweetly—so sweetly that her strains drew tears from the eyes of Reginald. She started up in bed, and suddenly addressed him, as he was about to apologise for his intrusion, though he knew she must be a maniac.

"So, you have come," she said, in French. "What news have you brought me, my good friend? Have you been in Heaven, or in Hell? You look like a messenger from the skies. Will they release my lover's soul from purgatory or not? I have been singing to the Virgin that she may intercede. Song is all prayer."

"Poor thing!" murmured Reginald, contemplating the faded face of a female still young, but whose hair was turning grey. "God pity her."

"God pities us all," said the maniac, whose quick ear overheard him. "He struck me mad, because my lover was killed fighting the battles of the Republic—and I was then almost a child. I am glad I do not know what I might: for I know more than others of the spiritual world."

While the poor creature was speaking, Reginald's nose was suddenly assailed with the smell of burning. He heard flames crackling at a very little distance.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "the house is on fire! What shall I do?"

He rushed to another door at the end of the room, he broke in the panels with the bar he held; but to his dismay he found another cell from which there was no mode of egress save that by which he entered. He raised his voice, and shouted with all his might; but a great tempest had suddenly arisen. And still he distinctly heard the progress of the devouring element—on—on, while the mighty thunders boomed and seemed to shake the universe. Surely the artillery of heaven would awake the keepers, and they would be released! But the very loudness of the storm prevented them hearing the flames. Finding his shouts were useless, Reginald determined to attempt to descend to the ground. He re-entered the maniac's cell. She was still singing in her wild way, amid all that din and terror. He could not desert her—for he saw the flames were bursting in at one side of the room, and he bade her follow him. But she heeded not what he said. Catching her slight form up, he hastily glanced out of the window to see if a descent was practicable from thence. It was only possible to drop to a lower story on that side: and how could he do this, with such a burthen as he held in his arms? And then the thought of the poor young poet (whom he had not seen for some time), whose conversation with him may be recollected, flashed upon him. But some of the maniacs (the raving mad) had detected the fiery element, and they shouted with frantic glee, aggravating the horrors of the scene.

"God of Heaven! How awful this is!" thought Reginald. There was no time to lose; the heat was already insupportable, and tying some of the bedclothes together, the young man determined to drop with the lady in his arms. It was a hazardous experiment; but it succeeded, and he gained the lower story. Screams and blasphemy now came to his ear. The gaolers were at length roused. But there had been a debauch among them an hour or two before, and scarcely any were sufficiently sober to act as they ought. As Reginald reached the projecting window-sill, he saw a face at the bars which protected the casement. It was that of the poor boy who loved him, whose madness was so gentle and so touching.

"Save me!" he said to Reginald. "The flames of hell are coming to devour me."

The progress of the fire was fearfully rapid, and nothing was done to check it. The flames were bursting from the windows, and some of the unhappy beings in confinement were actually burning. Such a fate menaced Reginald and the two maniacs he wanted to save. Putting down the female, the window-sill fortunately being broad, Reginald with a desperate exertion of his strength succeeded in breaking through to the lad; but, as he did so, perceived the fire was bursting into that place also. He jumped in, carrying the woman, who was perfectly passive, with him; and with the bar he dashed through a door, beyond which there was a gallery. This too was partially on fire. He rushed on to the staircase with the two maniacs, and darted down it just in time to escape the flames. But at the bottom was a brutal gaoler, who exclaimed,

"Where are you going? You shall not pass here, I promise you."

Reginald struck him down with a blow—the first he had ever given—and made for a great door which opened into the garden. This he found was locked and bolted; but the keys were at hand, and the door was soon thrown wide. And now should he attempt to save others? He feared it was impossible; for the staircase was one sheet of fire by this time. Yet he could not stand tamely by, when numbers of his afflicted fellow creatures might be in the agonies of a dreadful death. But as he was considering what to do he looked up. Good Heaven! the roof was about to fall. He had only time to rush away with the female and the lad when a crash louder than the loud thunders was heard; a burning mass of timber fell, and he was almost suffocated with the smoke, and narrowly escaped from the blazing splinters. Then he heard a shriek as from one voice—a laugh, like the yell of fiends—the madmen in their agonies. High above the thunders it rose, and rang in his ear as if it had been the blast of the last trump. O, never, never could he forget that cry; it haunted him to his last hour; he sank down on his knees, and covered his face with his hands, as soon as he was out of the reach of the devouring flames. It was a scene of terrible sublimity, such as an ancient Painter of the greatest power could have hardly realized. The lightnings shot athwart the dark sky, and played with the spiral column of fire from the burning house. The whole expanse of country around, lovely beyond description, seemed on fire; the tall trees appearing to lick up the flames; and the verdure coloured with crimson. The rain fell in one continuous sheet, but it had scarcely any power against the demon which was consuming the goodly pile. On it spread; and the walls fell with a great noise like the rush of billows. High in the heaven the red flame seemed to mingle with the blackness of night, and the sky almost looked as if it were consuming in one direction. And there was Reginald, there were the two maniacs, with looks of strange interest,

their long hair dishevelled—one on each side of him. Still he knelt appalled; but when he rose at last, the wind, which had been roaring, sunk as if by magic; the thunders and the lightnings ended, and the flames ceased their howling. A spirit of peace descended on the universe, and of all the life and turmoil, the horror and agony, nothing was left but smoking ruins to tell the fate of the mad-house.

CHAPTER CI.

CHATEAU OF D.—PERE LA CHAISE—PARIS.

After such a scene as that which I have attempted to describe in the last chapter, how the proud heart of man is withered beneath the sense of our material insignificance in the great whole; what a deep and crushing humiliation of spirit is experienced, when we see how vain is all the intellect of man to combat with those elements which he makes his slaves; the bonds being once broken, we are at their mercy. But Reginald did not linger long after the fatal conflagration was over, but led away his poor companions, endeavouring to shut out from his mind the horrors of the scene he had witnessed. But all he could do was to raise his soul to the regions of eternity.

"Why was this tremendous thing permitted?" he thought. "God is good and omnipotent. Could not such a calamity have been prevented? It seems so easy to us; but it could not have been done without creating some greater evil, or preventing some vast amount of good. I suppose that the sufferings of the poor race of humankind are no more to the eye of infinite wisdom than are the pangs of the ephemeron to us. But were I not a believer, these visitations would make me doubt whether a God exists. O for a loftier faith!"

"My dear friend," said the youth by the side of Reginald, speaking rationally, and as if he could read his companion's thoughts, "do you think a fire is so dreadful *without* as *within?*"

"The fire of insanity!" murmured Reginald, "ay, *that* is a greater mystery. The suspension of the faculties of the immortal soul! Poor things!"

"Yes, they are at rest," returned the youth. "I do not weep for them, because their pangs are over. And it was the guilty consumed with them. Do you mourn over evil? Nay, I rejoice! On the ruins of beauty are built the mansions of eternity. I was stricken mad: but in these lucid intervals I see the goodness of God to me. For might I not have been driven into crime by despair? I cherished a vain love, though but a boy, and—and—" The cloud came over the lad's brain again, and

he murmured incoherently; but Reginald was deeply affected by what he had said to him. "Ah," rambled on the boy, "I loved and I lived. For long months I have been buried under the cold earth, with the worms crawling in my brain and heart: but I have heard sweet music, and that comforted me. They said it was absurd that a boy should be driven mad by love; but why not? The spirit is deep when fresh in the immensities of thought and aspiration! I woke suddenly, as from a dream, and the shadow of my being went forth, and I worshipped it. It was like a sunbeam reflecting a bright angel's smile; but the ray was hid from me, and I fled into the house of Night."

The gentle melancholy of the young maniac fell with a soothing influence on the sense of Reginald, and tears sprang into his eyes—tears which his own miseries had not wrung from his breast, but which human sympathy drew forth so easily. The boy looked wistfully at him, and said,

"Do you weep for me? I cannot weep, because I have been to heaven in my dreams, and those who have felt the light of the Eternal's face weep no more."

"You have been in heaven!" suddenly exclaimed the female. "What did you see there? How can I get up? Are wings to be had,—pray tell me?"

"Yes, the wings of faith and love! The saints will give you wings," returned the youth. "They never refuse them, because God gives them an infinite supply; and they are generous:—not like those who have riches upon earth. Alas! Every beggar is relieved by the rich saints: all who beg for God's choice bounty do receive it."

"How beautiful madness is, sometimes," thought Reginald. "It teaches us sublime lessons of peace and hope.—But where shall I go now? Far as my eye can see, there is not a vestige of a habitation.—Ah, yes, now I am on the top of this hill, I can distinguish a village sleeping in the moonlight. How beautiful! After all the terrors of the storm, the world seems hushed, and the heart of Nature loves again. All *is* love—all is infinite love, if we had but eyes to see through the universe. Faith is the only thing for man, when reason pauses."

It was the village of D—— that Reginald saw. But finding by a sign-post that he was not far from Paris, and his companions showing no symptoms of fatigue, he resolved to repair thither, where he knew he should find friends. He was surprised to discover he had been living so far inland, recollecting nothing from the time he was landed until he found himself in the madhouse. But he was glad it so happened, and continued his way. It yet wanted two or three hours of day-break, and he thought he might reach Paris as soon as it was light. He did not enter the village, but paused for a minute to gaze at a beautiful *chateau*, close to which he was passing. The moon shone full upon it, and shed a

soft lustre on the tall trees, on the grass, and beds of fair flowers. Well does the author recollect that spot, and better still, the forms that endeared it to him. The memory of those hours he has spent there lingers like a vivid music in his brain; a spirit of beauty appears to hang enamoured over the domain, where mind, and taste, and poetry have combined in its possessor to beautify the favoured region, radiant as her smile.

Reginald was free again; and horrible as was the scene he had left behind, where every human being, except himself and those with him, were destroyed, he could not but feel grateful to Heaven for his deliverance from the painful imprisonment, and his wonderful escape from the agonizing death of fire. His thoughts reverted to Julia, to his father, and to England; and he wondered what had chanced since his mysterious disappearance. And then he asked himself who had been the instigator of the villainous affair: but he was unconscious of having made an enemy, and vain were his conjectures as to the motive of the deed. Silently they proceeded at a good pace for a considerable distance, when the female maniac uttered an exclamation.

"There," she said to Reginald, "they buried my hero! Let me go and kneel on his grave."

Reginald lifted up his eyes, and saw at his feet the lovely Père la Chaise. Beautiful as a dream it is, and peaceful as a vision of Elysium it looked in the moonlight, the stars appearing to linger fondly over the pretty tombs erected by love and sorrow. There it slumbered—in whose gentle bosom so many slumber;—the bright, the gay, the young, the glorious:—forms of airy grace, eyes of tender lustre, hearts of noble ambition, minds of ethereal imagination—philosophers, poets, lovers, in one immense receptacle.

Those who have seen that cemetery, have experienced a rush of feelings hardly to be described. Hundreds of thousands repose there probably till the hour that shall strike Eternity. Genius might utter its thronging ideas for ever, and hardly excite the sensations created by the spot. And even as Reginald contemplated it, thus so suddenly presented to him, after all he had witnessed, the moon sunk down—the first faint streaks of dawn appeared; and presently the golden floods of light from the gates of immortality were showered upon the monuments.

It was a glorious sunrise; and the transition was magical. Even then, as the birds awoke and began to sing gaily, the voice of the female maniac ascended in a gush of wild and thrilling music. She was kneeling by a tomb adorned with flowers, her thin hands clasped together, her long hair sweeping the ground. Wonderful was the contrast of this scene, where the dead lay so calmly, and all was so tranquil, with the recent conflagration, the shrieks, the mad mirth, and the horrid curses. "Here," thought Reginald, "the wicked cease from troubling, and the

weary are at rest." There was radiance above, and peace below; not a sound of discord, not a breath of human passion.

> "But see, the morn is up, the dewy morn,
> With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
> Laughing away the clouds in playful scorn,
> And smiling—as if Earth contain'd no tomb."

And it looks not like what its associations would otherwise make it—grim and gloomy. We think not of the grisly skeletons, the grave-clothes and corruption here. "It might almost make one in love with death, to be buried in so sweet a spot." The French seem to delight in making all things radiant; in their religion there is imposing splendor; and in their great Burial-ground, we can only think of graceful creatures lying in a still sleep, and only waiting for the summons to wake in Paradise. The soul of Reginald Travers was busy; but he spoke not. The insane boy whispered to him—

"Death is a sacred thing,—the portal to Life."

But the scholar wanted to reach Paris as soon as possible, anxious to communicate with his friends, and led his stricken companions away. Presently they beheld the brilliant city, with its towers, its domes, its gilded columns, shining in the light of the early morning. Splendid city of gaiety and of pleasure! So full of taste, of life, and animation! How it bursts upon one for the first time in its aërial lightness, like one vast smile on the face of the earth! There is the triumphal arch of Napoleon, a monument to eternity; there is the Louvre with its treasures, there is Notre Dame, there the gardens of the Tuilleries, there the Boulevards—churches, palaces, streets alive with people—altogether, seen for the first time, nothing less than enchantment.

CHAPTER CII.

THE FIGHT—THE DEATH—AND VICTORY.

It was a grand day among the pugilists of England. The great fight of the season was about to "come off," and betting proceeded at a brisk rate. My readers may conceive, if they will, a large room, above fifty feet by forty, at one extremity of which there was a stage erected. Here the betters repaired and conversed with the leading men of the ring. This stage was of some size, and adapted to the purposes of pugilism, the place belonging to a celebrated professor of the science of "Self-Defence." This personage was talking with several gentlemen collected

round him, and especially addressing a young man, whose fine and imaginative face contrasted with the coarse, brutal features of the prize-fighters and the vapid countenances of the noble patrons.

"Ah, Byron, my dear fellow," drawled a new comer, a little man, exquisitely dressed, "who the devil would have thought of seeing *you* here? Where's Wharton? O, here he comes! Let us make up our bets. Will your lordship bet?"

"Not with you, Sharp," returned the poet. "I will take Wharton's opinion on the men."

"Why, haven't you been talking with Jack?" said the individual alluded to in the last sentence of Lord Byron. "*He* thinks science all in all. What do you say, old boy? The red one has an arm, eh—a splendid lad?"

"I think he's a plucky one," responded the professional critic; "he stands partickler strong on his pins; but the drayman's got a fist, and knows how to use it. He has been trained primely."

"But the arm, Jack," said Travers Wharton, "did you ever see such an arm? You haven't seen him yet, Byron. I'm very proud of having been the first to notice his merits. Will you bet? I know you think highly of the big one's arm."

"Not at present," returned Byron. "Where is he, Jack?"

"Oh, he's in the back room, my lord, a-stripping hisself," answered the professor. "I think it'll be a goodish stand-up, as far as I'm a judge; but I think your lordship's right not to bet at a hazard."

While they were yet talking, the huge fellow who was to be one of the combatants entered. He was in fine condition, and looked a moving mountain of bone and flesh and muscle, his fierce eye looking defiance, and confidence in himself, as he waited for his antagonist's appearance.

"By Jove! the blackguard looks magnificent," said the noble poet to Sir Algernon Sharp, who nodded assent. "I think I'll bet on him."

"Very well," said the baronet, "I'll find you betters. The knowing ones give odds on the big one, but there's no lack of takers on the other side."

And as the buz of admiration excited by the bones and sinews of the immense drayman subsided, his adversary came on the stage.

"Well, Jack," said Lord Byron to the professor, "this isn't such a strapper as the other, eh?"

"I'd rather bet on him myself," whispered Jack to his noble patron; "but it may be a hard go."

"Do you think, then, the red-haired rascal can beat that man-mountain? But he isn't stripped."

"There goes his coat off, my lord. You see he's all prepared. He's got the very devil of a *sperrit*."

"Ah, yes, I like his look. A tiger and a lion! Now, then, they begin: what devils they are!"

"Now, then, my helephant," said a pugilist who backed the big one, "up with yer mawleys."

"Into him, red one," said a little Marquess of seventeen from Eton, to the other, "punch his life out! Curse me—how they relish the fun!"

"Bravo, my lad," cried Travers Wharton to the man he had chosen, "there's science for you, Algernon! What a splendid blow;—well guarded!"

The vast arm of the drayman seemed as if it would annihilate his adversary; but not an inch did he give way, not a symptom of caring for the matter did he exhibit, until blood was drawn from him by a terrific blow, and then he roused up. He planted his fist in the chest of the drayman, and a sound as loud as the report of a pistol proceeded thence. Following up his advantage, he pressed with all his energy on the giant, —who was obliged to give way—and finally struck him down.

A shout of applause from the betters on the side of the "red one" rent the roof, and two to one on his side was immediately offered. The force of public opinion veered instantly, when it was seen with what apparent ease Butler had felled his huge antagonist. But the big fellow rose with dogged resolution, and the fight proceeded. It was evident that he was injured by the first round; yet he struggled terribly to regain his position as the strongest man in the ring, and if his science had been equal to his opponent's, might have done so. But in this he was defective; he trusted all to his vast bulk and muscles, and was gradually worn out by the attacks of Butler. He fought on, with compressed lips and bloodshot eyes, in desperation. The gore was streaming from him, and covered his whole person; but, though requested to give in, he refused. He reeled, he staggered, and, blinded with his own blood, struck wide of his enemy. Butler would not have taken advantage of the vain fury of his foe, who, when he found his powers failing fast, rushed on him like a bull, but he was obliged in his own defence to strike him, and after a contest of nearly an hour and a half, he gave him a blow in the face. With a groan the giant fell senseless to the ground. But he recovered from the stun, and uttered incoherent menaces against Butler.

"I *will* fight again," he said, with a curse.

"Nonsense, man, you can't," said a pugilist.

"Let him, if he will," rejoined an aristocratic patron. "I shall lose a thousand pounds, if he is beaten. Up, my *little* one."

"No, no, he has had enough," said the veteran professor. "Look how the blood gushes from him."

"I *will* fight, I say," said the giant, choking with gore. "Come on, Mister Butler! I'm game—blood's nothing, —— me!"

He staggered towards the other man, who did not raise a hand; but, before he could reach Butler, an awful pallor came over him; his enormous frame shook, and was convulsed. He gasped for breath, and fell.

"By Heaven, he's dying!" exclaimed Wharton.

"No, no, he revives; he'll have another round yet," returned the individual who had before encouraged the drayman. But the fierce eyes of the prize-fighter became glassy, his lips moved, but no sound escaped from them. Yet once again he started up to the full height of his stature; he threw his huge arms aloft—he uttered one threat—one curse, and then for the last time fell a dead weight down. That giant form, so lately full of vast strength and energy, was a corpse. Butler lifted him up, and an expression of deep remorse came over his face.

"Poor wretch!" he murmured.

"You must be off, Butler," said Travers Wharton. "This has been an unlucky business. Take your money, and cut your stick. I didn't think any one could kill that great beast! Off with you!"

Butler lingered a moment, and then retired from the stage, just as a posse of constables arrived too late, for the purpose of preventing the brutal conflict. Most of the patrons of "the sport" also disappeared; but in general the death of the pugilist excited no more feeling than the fall of a gladiator did in Rome.

Butler escaped, having won for his backers great sums of money, and having established for himself the reputation of being one of the first men in his profession. Even to this day there are those who retain reminiscences of the fatal "set-to" and some of these shake their heads at the mention of Crawley, of Tom Spring, of Belcher, of Burke, and of Dutch Sam. "We saw a lad," they say, "who if he had followed up his successes, would have established a wider fame than any of them. He *was* a man!" But from that day, Butler was never more heard of as a pugilist. Some prosecutions followed the affair, and a temporary stop was put to such savage amusements; but they revived again and for many years flourished, so that the pugilists actually sent a representative to the House of Commons! Enlightened age!

CHAPTER CIII.

FANNY'S FORTUNE—WILLIAMSON AND QUICK.

"THE Fate is coming," murmured Fanny to herself, as she sat in her chamber, looking out of window, some hours after her last interview with Harriet. "There is my natal star shining in the deep immensity. Sweet star, how sad you look on me! I have seen thee in thy nakedness in my wild and passionate dreams, and thou hast hovered over my spirit in the hush of the solemn night, until it has blended with thy being. A few more hours, perchance, and my soul will indeed mingle with thy

subtile essences. Then I shall be a portion of that immortal brightness, and love and adore. Yes, the stars were placed there with their reproachful radiance, to tell us how high the soul should soar above the earth, and to win us to purity and adoration. I will come to thee, dear worlds, I will come to thee, my sister spirits! I hear thy strains of love now, as ye fade from the firmament, and the blue-eyed morning laughs from her throne of light! Hark! Yes, it is the hymn of the immortal ones! They look their ineffable welcome; they say to me, 'We shine for ever! The earth is dim, and but a shadow of the pure substance of our sacred being.' Glory unto ye, O stars, sitting on your thrones of gold in the pathless space! Genius has worshipped ye, in the years of inspiration, when the Egyptian sages sought the revelation of your mysterious mazes! Countless orbs! How wonderful! Rulers of the INCOMPREHENSIBLE within us, whose unseen influence is everywhere! Where is the invisible essence of your immense being? The Soul of the Universe. O, solemn mystery! Innumerable worlds, blazing with the light of spirit! Is not this earth the lowest of all in the scale of existence? It must be so. Beyond, there is no more pain and sin. The royalty of mind governs, the poetry of love subdues, the spell of music binds, the magic of genius exalts—all is aspiration, all is wonder, all is perpetual truth and sacred wisdom!"

The pale stars were gone, and all was light. The busy world awoke, and the hum of life began; it seemed not possible that there could exist a mourning heart or a desolate bosom in the vivid splendor of the imperial day, when creation smiled, and sang. The fever and the unrest, the passion and the despair—where were they? Alas, they awoke from brief oblivion, and toil and sorrow commenced afresh; the starving beggar felt the pangs of hunger, though he had been dreaming of lands of plenty, and the unhappy criminal found his visions of pardon and penitence dispersed. To a reflective mind the spectacle of a gorgeous morning is not one of mere brilliancy: for it rouses breaking hearts, and withers unreal joys. The poor poet wakes from dreams of glory, and finds starvation staring him in the face; the young maiden rises from visions of love, and discovers coldness, and perhaps desertion; examine how you may, go wherever you will, disease, anguish, and crime are busy; the victims of temptation despair, and there is Night in radiance. The good are alone cheerful, resigned, and happy; but out of the myriads of the earth how many are there we can with reason call good? The best of us sometimes wander from heaven; our passions blind, our ignorance and our weakness plunge into error; and but for some celestial hand to help, 'how few would rise to virtue more!'

"I have got strange news for you, Fanny," said a person who entered to her very early in the morning. It was Williamson; who added—"You are aware that I visit the houses of the poor, being employed by a

philanthropic Society to discover objects of charity; and last night as I was walking in a wretched quarter of the town, I heard a groaning which proceeded from a vault, such as is let out to the very poor at the lowest rate. This being repeated, I knocked at the door of the squalid abode, and made inquiries about the person who was suffering. I was informed that it was a dying woman whose conscience pricked her. I asked to see her, announcing what I was, and I was conducted to the wretched cellar where the expiring person was lying. I did not know her at first, but she recognised me, and uttered my name. I then recognised in her that woman who brought you up, in the tents of the gipsies; and she eagerly inquired of me if I knew anything about you. My answer was in the affirmative; and she said she had a confession to make, and wished to make a clean breast of it. Accordingly, she told me that she had stolen you from your parents, when you were a child, out of revenge to your mother, who was her sister, and that she thought you are entitled to some property——"

"Who were my parents?" exclaimed Fanny.

"Your mother married a person with a good fortune, who died. Afterwards she was mated to a man named Richards, whom I knew. I think I can obtain your property for you."

"I want it not," said Fanny. "I want it not. You shall take it for the poor. My parents are dead, then? I thought it was so. My aunt still lives?"

"I know not if she does so still. She has led a life of intemperance, and is in a dreadful state. She has confessed many things, and I have set them down, having procured respectable witnesses. Fanny, you are the sister of her whom I loved and lost: who went astray, and who has repented."

"Ah! I have a sister?" exclaimed Fanny, eagerly.

"Yes, you have a sister among the penitents of the institution recently established. She was seduced, when almost a child, by one Sir Algernon Sharp." Williamson struggled with emotion, but proceeded, "The father of your sister, although extremely poor, would never touch the money, which is lawfully yours. He husbanded it carefully; and on his death, which was about ten years ago, he charged one Mr. Quick, a relation, to husband it, in case you should be found at last. This I know he has done with great success and integrity; so that you will be the mistress of a considerable fortune. I will go to him, immediately. Will you come with me?"

"If you can conduct me to my sister," said Fanny."— And she fell, like me! Poor thing!"

"Angels may fall, Fanny; mortals may *repent*. I will take you to your sister, and go on to Mr. Quick. If I may advise you, when you

have money of your own, you will quit the Prince's protection. I believe you are innocent; but the world will not."

"You speak to me as if I were one of the world," returned Fanny. "But I know it not, I never knew it. What is the world but a wilderness and a ruin? I wish to see my sister, before I quit the visible sphere, that I may take her likeness up with me to the stars. Will she receive me as a sister?"

"I am certain she will. Let us proceed to her."

* * * * * * *

"It's all right, Williamson," said little Quick. "I'm very glad the girl's found. Made a capital affair of her money—here's the account, you see, £10,000. You'll find it all perfectly correct. Wish poor Rose had had it. So *she's* living in the same house as Lord Wharton's old mistress. Tried to make her leave that Sir Algernon, years ago, but couldn't. Strange thing, woman! You're certain the girl's the proper person. I'm in the law, you know, and must be up to snuff. Ten thousand pounds is a pretty thing."

"I did not expect to find she was entitled to so much, though I know your good management. It is singular——"

"What's *not* singular?" interrupted Sharp's head Clerk. "Sad business in Mr. Sharp's house—poor Miss Julia—sweet creature as ever lived. You've heard of that business about Mr. R. Travers? Couldn't have thought it possible; but there's no knowing man's heart. And you, Williamson! How you are changed! What induced you to leave your old course, and take to visiting the poor, and all that?"

"I lost my treasure," returned Williamson, "and I was smitten down to dust. Treasures are not for us."

"Ah! the real jewels are in heaven! Yes," said the little man fervently, "*there* you will not lose them. 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where thieves break in and steal.' Very beautiful truth, Mr. Williamson! I'm not an enthusiast in religion; but I feel it in my old heart, and it has comforted me, very often. Thank God, I have good health in an eminent degree, I have more money than I want, my employment suits me, and I'm happy in myself. But still there's something wanting. We can seldom be *more* than content on earth. I'll tell you what's the best thing God has given to man, as regards his temporal good. Employment. When you are occupied, the functions of the animal economy go on right—the thoughts don't prey on you when they come, because you can't give them much time; so they may throng on you as much as they will; but it won't do. A man who's occupied is more than a match for his thoughts—more than a match for his passions, more than a match for his nonsense, more than a match for his cleverness, and more than a match for the devil. That's my philosophy. Well, good bye. Hope, some day, you'll be as happy as you deserve. I mean to go and

see Rose now. Poor thing! I dare say she has suffered a good deal. As the poet says—only I don't recollect it all—

'When lovely woman stoops to folly!'"

CHAPTER CIV.

THE INSURRECTION AND THE LEADER OF IT.

"I SAY we will have their blood!" vociferated a stentorian voice, in the midst of an assemblage of about two hundred persons, for the most part composed of the very dregs of society. He was speaking in a filthy place, which had once been a barn—this mob-orator. He was a dark, brawny man, of middle age, with a ferocious countenance, his dark hair grizzled, and his face strongly marked. "France set us the example, twenty years ago," he continued, "and Englishmen can do more than the French, when their blood's up. We are here banded together, and we will never lay down our arms, till we see our enemies under our feet, and the prisons, the chains, and the gibbets which they have prepared for us, used for their proper purposes. (Cheers.) We are desperate men," proceeded the orator, "and our ouly hope is that the sound of our voices will stir up a flame that will spread through the length and breadth of the land. But noise alone, and big words will do nothing. We must proceed to deeds. Within a few miles of this very place, there is a house which contains the treasures of the world. One half of our band shall attack and pillage this, while the rest, with such arms as we have got—even with pitchforks and bludgeons, will attack the gaol and liberate some of the brave fellows there. We will raise the standard of revolt, and I know that in a few hours thousands will join it."

Loud applause followed this speech; and when it was over, a taller and a younger man than the last orator arose. He was armed with a pike, a sword, and pistols, and drawing the blade, he held it up aloft, exclaiming in a deep clear voice, "Never will I sheathe this weapon more, save in the hearts of our oppressors! Men of England! I am here this day with the intention of leading you on to a great and glorious career. I would propose nobler aims than pillage and blood; but, in order to accomplish all that we want, there must be plunder, there must be bloodshed. We must induce those, fired by no patriotic feelings, to join us through their avarice; and if it is objected against us that we are robbers and assasins, I answer, 'Tyrants, and not ourselves, have made us so.'" (Loud cheering.) "We shall be obliged to burn and slay; but we will not do so, where we can avoid it. We will spare the aged and

infirm, women and children; but those who dare to meet us with bayonets, we will destroy. And in this district we shall experience but little resistance. The military are dispersed, and their numbers are few in comparison with ours. Nay, some of them will join us, for many among them are friends and relatives of your own. The constables cannot make a stand against us, and if they attempt it, we must not spare them. All are traitors to their country who oppose us. Come on, then —come on to victory, or death. I see before me starving operatives, whose children have died a death of lingering famine, whose wives have perished prematurely, whose daughters have been driven to a life of infamy, in order to live—I see men with minds not to be crushed by the vile despotism of titled scoundrels (Cheers)—with hearts beating to liberty, with desires to be raised in the scale of civilization—poor men; but endowed with courage not to be subdued, with resolution not to be overcome—men who have felt and endured, who have been driven by desperation to commit acts they would otherwise have shrunk from: and I am certain my words will not fall dead upon such beings; I am certain the universal cry will be 'Liberty or Death!' O, yes, we will not work, that the slaves we scorn may roll in their carriages, and mock our sufferings! The time has come when endurance would be a crime; and we have sworn by the sacred name of freedom to fight until the last gasp, for the rights which have been withheld from us. Nothing is left to us but this. We will not serve in the hireling armies of our oppressors, we will not enter their workhouses, we will not beg with abject souls for a morsel from their charity: but we will seize upon their unrighteous wealth, we will make them disgorge what they have wrung from the sinews and the blood of the miserable people, and erect a republic on the ruins of monarchy, of aristocracy, and monopoly!"

A perfect yell of approbation succeeded the fiery declamation of the second speaker, whose gestures, whose voice, whose countenance were such as to command the attention of such an audience, and who, though hardly to be called an eloquent man, possessed the secret of rousing the passions of a mob, and directing them as he chose. He was superior, in every respect, to all there present, and was tacitly allowed to be the leader, although there were several demagogues present, who in his absence would have severally put forth their claims to leadership. The round of applause had scarcely subsided, when there arose shouts from without, and the leader cried—

"Our comrades have come, according to their promise. Let us go forth, and form into order." About a hundred more of the *sans culottes* were approaching, and the greeting was vociferous. "Now," said the chief, "I will distribute our forces. Remember, we are all free and equal, and own no superior; but it is requisite to have officers, and with your permission I will appoint them. My father and one hundred men shall

attack the gaolers, who amount to no more than a dozen. My friend, Black Bill here, will accompany me and fifty bold hearts more. Our other leaders have agreed what to do. Once more I repeat, we must fight even to death. If you escape the bayonet, you will not escape the dungeon; if a bullet is sure, recollect so is a hangman's noose."

"Liberty or Death!" shouted the mob. On they went, with their noise and their blustering, their irregular tread, so unlike the measured march of infantry; but yet they endeavoured to maintain something like order, and unfurled their dirty banners, with revolutionary inscriptions. And of such men were composed the larger masses of that populace who created the great French Revolution. Workmen out of employ, and discontented idlers of every grade of blackguardism; only the French had far more cause for their insurrection, and there were leaders of experience. But otherwise, the mobs of Danton were as sanguinary, as ignorant, as desperate in every respect.

Some magistrates, having got an inkling of the unlawful assemblage, collected a score of constables, and met the band at the head of which was John Jenkins (for the reader has recognised him as the popular leader), and began to read the Riot Act. But they were assailed with missiles of every description, and were obliged to make a precipitate retreat. The mob charged the constables, and completely dispersed them; but John Jenkins interfered when he thought they were pursuing the victory too far, reminding them that there was booty in prospect. Their avarice was inflamed instantly, and they fell into their ranks, and continued their march. Gradually their numbers swelled, the news of the first victory having spread, and the hesitating coming forth. In a little time, they arrived within a short distance of a goodly pile, which stood in the centre of a large park, encircled by a lofty wall. They entered the park by forcing the gates, and surrounded the building. They were protected by trees, in case of the inhabitants of the house firing on them, but they imagined they should encounter no repulse. John Jenkins advanced from among his men, and said,

"I will demand admittance. If they do not resist, no outrage shall be committed."

But he had not taken many steps towards the house, when a volley of musketry was discharged, and he escaped very narrowly from being shot. "Come on," vociferated the leader of the mob to his followers, "before they can reload." The insurrectionists rushed forwards, and attempted to break through the massive doors, but thier strength baffled them.

"Bring forward that fallen tree," exclaimed John Jenkins. "We will soon batter down the doors."

But as the heterogeneous mob of rebels hastened to obey the mandate, a second and better directed volley took effect, and several fell. "Bring

the tree!" shouted Jenkins, as he struck against the doors with a pick-axe. The tree was brought, and dashed by a score of strong arms against the door, which at length fell with an awful crash.

CHAPTER CV.

THE ROYAL FAVORITE—THE COXCOMB—FATE OF FANNY.

"ANYTHING to oblige your Royal Highness," said the former Lady Rivers to the Regent. "And as I am going into the country immediately, perhaps it will not be very difficult to introduce her. You say she isn't known?"

"Many thanks, my dear madam," returned the Prince. "She is the most bewitching little creature in the world. No one will know her, and her manner would grace a court."

Soon after the Regent's departure from the town residence of Sir Algernon Sharp and his lady, Travers Wharton entered. He was on perfectly good terms with the lady who had jilted him, and the kind friend who had cajoled him, and was going to pay them a visit in the country. What a great man the Coxcomb was, thus to forgive injuries! But in our modern civilization, love and friendship are words, signifying nothing; and Travers Wharton was even before his age, in the liberality of some of his feelings.

"Well, my poor Travers," said the baronet's lady, "you wear astonishingly! How old the Prince looks at your side! But I have got a treat for you in prospect. One of the prettiest women alive is going to pay me a visit: she is exceedingly amiable, graceful, and *spirituelle*, and has £10,000. So mind you look and say your best. We shall see you in two or three days. By the by, Travers, the Prince has been talking of you to me, and he thinks of doing something for you. The lady I allude to is a protegée of his—but you look quite dispirited. Your brother's loss of office?—"

"I don't care for *that*, charming Adeline," was the Coxcomb's rejoinder. "But I've been cursedly bit at play—taken in to the tune of thousands. I don't know how I shall raise the money—for no one will trust me with a *sous* to save me from burning. Matrimony is my only hope!"

"Your hope and your despair, Travers! I'm very sorry for you; but I can't help you—except to a wife, perhaps.—But I'm in a hurry, now."

* * * * * * *

It was a festive scene at Rivers House, the magnificent abode of the newly married pair. There were not many guests present, but some of them were of distinction, and they played, they sang, they talked scan-

dal, and ate and drank by turns. It was the day after the arrival of Lady Rivers there, and the country possessed the charm of freshness for those who had just escaped from the wearisome monotony of dissipation in London. A professional singer was engaged to amuse the company who liked music, and cards and billiards were offered to those who did not.

"Ah, you should hear my little favourite sing," said Lady Rivers (who retained her prior name) to Travers Wharton, who had just arrived. "I cannot endure this woman I have hired to squall, though she's so immensely the fashion. I hope she will be down directly, and then you may try and persuade her to carol to us."

"You have excited my curiosity about this new wonder," yawned Travers Wharton, who had come on horseback from town,—a considerable distance,—that morning. As he spoke, the door opened, and a slight form entered with perfect grace. Even Travers Wharton started up when he recognised in her the long-lost Fanny. But she betrayed not the slightest symptom of embarrassment or recognition, and seemed quite at ease. Conversation proceeded, and the beautiful guest of Lady Rivers took part in it occasionally, and charmed all present with her grace and originality. Travers Wharton contrived to draw Lady Rivers aside, and to inquire how she happened to have such a visitor.

"The Prince asked me to patronise her, you know, and though there was some impropriety, yet as she's such a star, and so worshipped by him——"

"You did very right. You don't know who she is?"

"O yes: he told me it was the far-famed Etherea."

"I guessed as much," returned the Coxcomb. "Well, she is looking very pretty, and is faultlessly dressed."

Soon afterwards the party dispersed. Some went into the garden, others repaired to a billiard-room; and it so happened that Travers Wharton and Fanny entered a summer-house in a distant part of the grounds, nearly together. Travers addressed her—

"I have found the priceless pearl that I lost on the sea once more. O Fanny, you have risen from the deep like a dream of glory and passion! You have not forgotten him, whom you once——"

An expression of concentrated scorn and contempt flashed from the eyes of Fanny as she interrupted—"You are Colonel Travers Wharton," she said. "I know nothing more of you. I command you to be dumb on the past. Remember what once passed."

"But, Fanny, you did not understand. I always intended to marry you, and intoxication deprived me of my senses. Whatever reparation I can make, I am willing to perform. Forgive me!"

"Slave!" said the visionary haughtily, as if she were trampling him under foot—"Loathsome slave! out of my presence! Not the worm that

crawls the earth do I contemn so much as you. What! you would have me marry you! Is that the reparation you would offer me for long years of remorse and unavailing regret, of anguish not to be expressed, of a tortured brain, and a withered heart? Away! You have taken from me more than life, and you can heal nothing. Let us be as far asunder as earth and heaven—or heaven and hell. I know you not, and you know not me."

"Yet bethink you; I have it in my power to expose you, proud girl! You stand in a dangerous predicament, and if you want to keep your present position, I alone can preserve you in it."

"Wretched fool! You can no more harm me than the poor fly can."—

The conversation between Fanny and her lover was interrupted by an unexpected circumstance. The news of the insurrection had reached Rivers House, and a servant came flying to Travers Wharton to tell him.

"Off with you to A—— then," said the Coxcomb to the domestic, "with all speed. Your master and a troop of horse are there."

Travers Wharton hastened into the house to ascertain farther particulars. All was confusion and dismay; but the Coxcomb really acted with some presence of mind, and getting the males together, armed them. "Should they come here," he said, "we will give them a warm reception. Fortunately, from Sir Algernon being a sportsman, we have plenty of guns. Now, then, shut the doors, and place tables and chairs in the passages. We shall soon have military here."

The preparations were made, and soon after they were completed, the rebels made their appearance. . . . . As soon as the huge door fell, a volley made terrible havoc on the ranks of the assailants; but they had a dauntless leader, and were greedy of plunder. But the chairs and tables impeded their progress, and it was with great loss they at length succeeded in forcing an entrance. Then followed a scene of horror. The screams of the women, the shouts, the groans, the curses of the combatants, the clashing of arms, the discharge of guns and pistols, created a noise that baffles all description. The servants and guests of Lady Rivers kept together, and contested the ground foot by foot; but they were vastly outnumbered, and were obliged to give way beneath the furious attacks of the mob. They were driven out after a severe conflict, and their numbers diminished by one third; and while some of the rebels commenced pillaging the house, the rest charged the little phalanx which still remained.

"I will shoot the ringleader, I bet you a thousand pounds," said Travers Wharton to one of his noble friends by his side. "That tall fellow there you see, who fights like fifty devils!" And the coxcombical Colonel took aim at John Jenkins with steady nerve.

Another moment and the leader of the insurgents would have been in eternity—for he saw not the officer raise his arm—but before the ball

could reach him, a tiny form like that of a fairy rushed between Travers and Jenkins, and the bullet pierced her bosom. She fell without a groan, just as the fierce leader of the rebels turned and saw her. He beheld the uplifted arm of Travers Wharton, and comprehended all in an instant. He rushed on the Coxcomb like an avalanche, hurling all down who dared to oppose him, as if they had been children.

But Wharton saw his danger, and rushed into a labyrinth, with the intricacies of which he was acquainted. He reached the stable unseen, and found a horse saddled—in an instant he was mounted, and galloped away as fast as he could. Jenkins, who had been involved in the maze, caught a glimpse of the fugitive's figure in the distance, and muttering, " His time will come!" returned.

Fanny was dying, and lay on the grass, supported by a gentleman. The servants and the rebels were still fighting; but Jenkins bade his followers desist, and strode to the side of the expiring Fanny. She recognised her former lover, and held out her hand to him. He uttered not a word, but knelt down beside her, and pressed the small, delicate fingers of the dying woman to his lips. She smiled one of her own bright smiles on him.

" You alone loved me," she murmured. " I knew I must die—for the stars had decreed it—and to save your life——" She could not proceed.

" O God! O God!" exclaimed John Jenkins, while the big drops of agony rolled down his brow, " I have murdered you. Fanny—angel! O Heaven! save her!"

" It is past," said the visionary, with enthusiasm. " The dark portal fades from my sight, and I behold light and immortality. The golden worlds of eternity shine on my soul. The music of the bright ones flashes on my spirit. I die—or say, I live! Adieu, my friend!—The shades thicken; but I see afar an ineffable radiance! Bury me in some lonely spot, where the birds sing blithely, and the trees murmur melody in the summer air.—No more tears, no more despair, no darkness and desolation! The great Spirit who counts the pulses of the universe gazes into my being—and I go. Hark! I say, in heaven there is no winter! The winds are more sweet than songs of nightingales! Nothing but love! O beautiful! There is love in heaven! Nothing but love!"

CHAPTER CVI.

THE PURSUIT—DEATH OF JOHN AND OF THOMPSON.

"NOTHING but love!" Poor Fanny! So erring, yet so full of truth, so weak, so gentle, and imaginative! That seraphic smile still-irradiated her moveless features, as she dropped into the arms of Jenkins; and the glory of her beauty was wonderful to behold. For several minutes John Jenkins moved not, spake not. He was deaf to the noise of the raging multitude; he saw, he heard nothing but the last accents of the ill-fated dreamer. He bent down, and kissed her forehead. There was something so awful in the despair painted on his fierce face that all withdrew. Grief is indeed always sacred.

"Dead!" he ejaculated. "Her brow is cold and clammy; but the breath still hovers on her lips. *This* cannot be death!" His face became vacant and stony.

"Come, my good friend," said a voice to John, "leave that poor girl's body, and take your share of the pillage." The man might as well have spoken to the dead.

"For thee, Fanny," exclaimed Jenkins, "for thy *memory*, I suffered no spark of passion ever to enter this withered heart.—And thou art gone like a bird to thy home again! Never more will that voice of heavenly sweetness utter here. Nothing left—oh, nothing left! The tomb—the worm!—Gone, gone, gone!—Rouse thee, and speak one word to me, my murdered love!—The gloom of years departs, and I see thee—as thou wast unto me." He placed his hand on the pulseless heart. "Not a beat now," he added. "And it *once* beat so swiftly! She was the child of the sun and the lightning. She was like incarnate Morning, and now she shines in her Night of Death,—the life of motion fled! Poor child! She is at rest—while I—out on it!"

"John—John Jenkins! Don't you hear me speak," cried the voice of one of the ringleaders. "Get up."

"Away!" said the leader of the insurgents fiercely. "This is my bride—my soul, my existence! Ay, by the lord of heaven, I love this senseless dust more than all the breathing universe! And she died for me! How still she lies! The tempests may rage, and the blasts of winter roar—but as she said, *she* will hear them not. O life of being! Can nothing animate thy heart more? That tender heart—my beautiful! May Hell pursue that devil with the vengeance of fiends! I will sleep no more until I avenge her.—Hear my oath, O ye heavens—I swear, on this sacred dust—vengeance, vengeance!" And he started up, lifting his hand high in air.

"You *shall* have vengeance, friend!" said the other ringleader. "Why do you waste words in threats? Come, let us plunder and begone. The dogs of soldiers will be here anon. Hark, I think I hear the clatter of horses' hoofs—it *is!*"

And sweeping along, with their breast-plates and swords glittering in the sun, might be distinguished a troop of horse soldiers.

"Farewell, Fanny—farewell for ever!" said John Jenkins, kneeling down once more, and kissing the icy lips of the lovely corpse. "I never thought to touch WOMAN'S lips—but now! O, farewell!"

"What, have you dissolved in tears?" said the ringleader scornfully, as the hot, scalding drops of bitter anguish fell from the burning eyelid of John Jenkins on the white cheek of Fanny.

"*Tears!*" ejaculated John. "Ha! they come! I am glad of it. To the battle! Blood! blood!" Shouting the battle cry, the insurgent leader rushed away, to collect his scattered followers. On came the cavalry at full speed, their sabres and carbines menacing the rebels. At their head rode Colonel Wharton and Sir Algernon Sharp, Travers having met the dragoons on the road.

"Liberty or Death!" exclaimed John Jenkins. "Load, my men, you that have guns. This way! Keep close together. We shall soon have our friends here."

But at the first charge of the cavalry, the insurgents, who had drawn out in front of the house, were dispersed like chaff before the wind. John Jenkins and a dozen more resolute fellows retired into the house, with their faces to the foe; but the soldiers dismounting attacked them. Wherever danger was most imminent, might be seen the tall form of the insurgent leader, who fought with the fury of a maniac, exposing his person to every blow, and yet escaping unscathed. One by one the bold band fell beneath the blades of the dragoons, but John maintained the conflict to the last. When he saw that all but two or three were hewn down or overcome, and that he alone was not wounded, he resolved to seek out Travers Wharton, and slay him, or perish in the attempt. He saw the elegant form of the Coxcomb at no great distance outside the house, and rushing like a lion through the thickest of the foe, receiving some slight wounds in doing so, he dashed towards Travers Wharton.

The Colonel prudently retired behind some stalwart troopers, and discharged a pistol at Jenkins, but without effect. Several men from the house sprang on the insurgent leader, who saw that he must be taken, if he persisted in his endeavour to avenge the death of Fanny. Living only for this object, and perceiving it would otherwise be frustrated, he darted into the saddle of one of the dismounted soldiers, and urged the horse on to its utmost speed. He escaped, despite all the efforts to take him: but he found the main body of the rebels had been dispersed by some yeomanry, and the insurrection was entirely quelled. His father

and himself with one or two friends betook themselves to the cave of old Hermes.

There John Jenkins had left his sister, as the reader knows, but he found her gone, and as the place no longer afforded the means of secure concealment, it was proposed to go on to London. Weary, however, with the protracted struggles of the day, and thinking for the next few hours they were safe in the cave, they resolved to remain there till morning. And all, save John Jenkins, were soon buried in sleep. But *his* spirit was overwrought, and he remained leaning on a gun, as if turned into a statue. It was almost early morning, when he was aroused by the sound of stealthy steps. He hastily awoke his comrades, and they left the cave—but only to find themselves surrounded by enemies. Resolved to resist to the last, they maintained an useless struggle with overpowering numbers. Officers from Bow Street had come in pursuit of them, and they had been led by Thompson to Hermes' cave. But John Jenkins and his father succeeded in reaching the river; and plunging in, swam across. Still they were hotly pursued, and it seemed impossible they could ultimately escape. At last, having outstripped the greater number of the pursuers, the Smith and his son turned on the enemy. Half-a-dozen men attacked them, but they did not give ground an inch. On the contrary, by a desperate charge they dispersed the constables, when a ball struck John.

It was the man Thompson who had fired. The Smith rushed on the short man ere he could escape, and with the butt-end of a gun struck him on the forehead. He fell with a deep groan, and the face of Jenkins was bespattered with his blood and brains.

"Father, come here," said the voice of John. "I am dying. Swear to me you will never rest until the miscreant Travers Wharton is dead! You swear? It is well. Kiss my mother for me, and—and—if it be possible, bury me near *her* I loved.—Now fly! O Fanny—gone!" The man rose from the earth for an instant, and then fell back again, and his eyes became glazed.

The Blacksmith again betook himself to flight, murmuring one farewell to John, as several mounted men came in sight; and saying to himself—"That *he* should have been killed by that damned dwarf! The strongest man in England!"

But there lay the two bodies of the Blacksmith's son and the Bow-street officer, perfectly lifeless. The face of Jenkins was calm, and his mighty limbs were perfectly composed. The tranquil moon shone down upon the bodies as the pursuing party came up, and they presented a singular contrast. It *did* seem most strange that the hand of a pigmy should have destroyed the burning life in that Herculean breast—the hand now strengthless and rigid.—There they lay, the slayer and the slaughtered together!

CHAPTER CVII.

LORD WHARTON'S ILLNESS—THE SHADOW BECOMES SUBSTANCE.

"LORD WHARTON given over by the physicians!" exclaimed Sharp the lawyer, as a newspaper which he had been reading dropped from his hand. "Is it possible? I thought that man could never die, any more than my hatred for him. Why, yesterday the account was that his illness was slight."

It was true. Nothing was heard, wherever you went, in public or private places, but—"Wharton is dying! what a blow to the Tories!" "He was a great man, after all, though we were so brow-beaten by him," said those of his own party on whom he had trampled. "I can't conceive what we shall do without him. There is certainly no man in the Commons equal to him."

But it is to the chamber of the great Minister the Reader must conduct his imagination. He was stretched on his bed, and had fallen asleep after being delirious. His attack was at first slight; but the fever had come on, and he had lost all consciousness of objects for some time. But his face was pale and calm, and but for the irregular breathing, he might have been thought in a tranquil slumber. He was surrounded by hirelings, and not a friend approached him. But messages had been left that when he regained his senses many of his colleagues in the ministry wished to see him. And how had this illness arisen? The physicians said that the mind had been overwrought; but they could not account, on physical grounds, for his alarming attack, and all the remedies they prescribed were useless. A mightier than physical disease had stricken the Statesman: his own strong mind had striven with itself, and the iron constitution had given way. Yet it was a mysterious affair. What is not mystery in the frame of man, indeed? He had been apparently well, and no warning of such an attack had been perceptible. The mind was too potent for the body—the great nerves gave way.

Ever and anon dark shadows chased each other over the haughty brow of the Minister, as he lay in that strange sleep, and he muttered fearful words. But his ravings suddenly ceased, and he lay for some minutes like the dead—insomuch that his attendants thought the mighty spirit was gone. But he was not to expire so easily. He awoke, and raised himself in his bed, the eye more bright than ever, and a concentration of power and command in his noble face.

"What does your lordship please to want?" asked an attendant. "Will you take your medicine?"

"Well, sir!" said the Statesman, "and so you have come with the papers! I will read them." He spoke in his ordinary tone, and save for the wild gleaming of his restless orbs, seemed perfectly calm, and rational. He continued—"They talk of war, do they? Let them talk! They shall have it, my lord, by Jove! I have got a good joke to tell you about the Premier's toady. Ha, ha! The Premier loves me!—but damn politics! Let us go to the Saloon. There's a woman for you, now! What a shape she has? And an eye of fire—she's the very devil, that woman. The Prince kept her, they say, at one time, but she bored him." There was something more fearful, even to the coarse minds of the hirelings round the Statesman's bed, in those light words, than in his frantic expressions. After a few minutes he spoke in an altered voice—

"I saw her there, I tell you—just by the wall! What a height she is! There's blood upon her! Don't you see how it trickles from her white bosom? One—two—three drops! I'll count no more! Why do you glare upon me thus, dread thing? What want you? And still I see it! Not a step, not a motion? I hear her speak! I loved her—by the great heaven, I swear I loved her! I would have married her, but for my pride. And now she is an angel in heaven, and I am a fiend in hell! We have changed places.—Yes, there she is! Look at her flowing hair, and her towering form. Away with you—why do you haunt me thus? Wine, ho! wine—wine!"

"Alas!" murmured a sweet voice, near the sick man. "Has he come to this! It is a fearful thing!"

The physician had just entered, accompanied by an elderly man and a female of tall stature. "He will not recognise any one yet," said the doctor to the former of these persons. "You need not fear of producing any emotion in him at present."

"How long do you think he will live, doctor!" whispered the elderly gentleman to the physician.

"It is impossible to say. Perhaps some days,—for his frame is wonderfully strong. I think I never had a patient with such vast strength."

"She is bleeding still," cried Lord Wharton again; "but you cannot say I inflicted the wounds. She left me—I never deserted her—never! I cannot bear to gaze on her unreproaching eyes. Dead—is she dead? No, look how she walks the earth in her shroud, surrounded with invisible corruption! Who sends her forth? Why comes she? To scare my senses! Ha, ha—to scare *me!*"

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed the lady.

"And then they talk to me of eternity! Why, is it not here and there, and everywhere?" continued the Statesman. "We walk in our own shadows, and call the darkness Time; yet do we not see that what *casts* the shadow is eternal! Time! That creation out of nothing! There *is* no Time. Then Death!"—

The tall lady could not restrain her sobs. Lord Wharton looked around him. It was the first sound which appeared in any degree to affect him.

"I wonder what that was?" he said. "I think I recollect something like it.—But Memory is a lying thing! What is NOT a lie? Tell me that. It is my only hope, that all is a lie. The earth! why should it not be a phantasm? Existence! *what* is real? I think on these subjects to escape from thought, though the dreams of philosophers make me laugh. Oh, Travers, my worthy speculator, give me a reason why anything we say exists, does so!—Excellent well.—So you think you have solved the problem?—out upon it! You want your son, do you! Go to the madhouse! The world is one vast madhouse—but don't you say *I* think so. We are all mad—the wisest the most so. I wonder what the devil made such a world for? I am certain God could have had no hand in it. You smile at my wicked wit, old friend! But, in my opinion, if Heaven could make nothing better than such a multitude of fools and knaves, it would have been much better to kick the whole to pieces.—Now I will go to the House. Good bye, Anna! I shan't be home for many hours. So go to bed."—What sounds were those at such a time!

"Well, beautiful Chloe!" burst forth Lord Wharton, after a pause, which was only broken by whispers;—for all feared to speak, they knew not why, then. "Is she not delicious? Such a voice, such a mouth, such a dainty waist! Ah, my little beauty! Come and sip some wine with me! So, Chloe, you won't go on the stage again! Kiss me, wench! This is to enjoy life, eh? To drink such a delicious beverage, and share it with such a divinity! Ha, ha, ha! Do I envy the Gods? Not I, faith! I have a Venus fairer than any Goddess of them all! Drink, sweet Chloe!—Ah! that accursed spectre darts on my brain now, and poisons the cup! Begone, thou strumpet—what want I with you? The *Dead* has come to claim me. O, I am lost!"

The Statesman uttered a deep groan, and fell back exhausted on his pillow. A dead silence ensued. You might hear the ticking of the physician's stop-watch at the further end of the room. But where was the tall female? She had knelt down by the side of the bed; her hands were clasped together, and her lips moved, though inarticulately, in prayer. At this juncture there was a low knock at the door. The servant who answered the summons whispered to the old gentleman who had entered a few minutes before.

"May he not come in, Doctor, now?" said that individual in the same undertone to the physician; who replied—"Yes: but the attendants must go, for the room must not be crowded."

A young man entered and stationed himself beside the kneeling woman. And they remained hushed as death, watching the changes of the Statesman's countenance. It had become vacant again, and he fixed his eyes on a particular spot, from which he never removed them. The physician felt his pulse.

"It is more regular than it was," he muttered. "I should not wonder if the delirium left him, in the course of a few hours. I must go away for a few minutes: ring the bell, if you please, Mr. Sharp, if you want the nurse." And he departed.

"They say the world is dead," ejaculated Lord Wharton suddenly, after the physician's departure. "I have seen it rotting for more than forty years! I have seen the flesh drop off, bit by bit, from its foul limbs, and expected the skeleton would stare forth! He were a fool who should try to reanimate this corpse, and make it healthy again. They talk of the world being regenerated; they talk of Science and Genius! Bah! What are Science and Genius? Rightly considered, there can be no real progress. For as we are in advance of our forefathers, so are we behind our posterity, and they will be behind theirs. So that idea of the perfectibility of man is foolish. Stick to the old cry as long as it will serve—all cries are equally absurd. Church and State! King and Constitution! Ha, ha! It is all the same. Make man a God!"

"Is it not passing strange," mused Sharp, "that he should be able to reason thus in his present state! But there is no speculation in those eyes of his."

"The world is dead!" pursued the Statesman. "Why, *when* has it been alive? It never had life, save such as we pour out into it from our fiery hearts! Glory to the enthusiast who adores this spectral universe! Glory to him who loves and is cursed! But for me, hate and scorn are all I will lavish on the rottenness of things. My life! It has not been a life—yet how full of *lives!* I have exhausted worlds of passion and thought in vain! If I had loved the world, what should I have got but ridicule and contempt? I have scorned it, and I shall die remembered. Your bad great men are ever most talked of and worshipped."

"Surely this cannot be delirium," said Sharp.

"Friends and foes are alike to me," added Wharton. "Your best friends are in fact your worst foes. Bear that in mind, and use those who would use you if you did not. There is not an honest heart left among us. Pooh! Honesty! Prate not to me of it. Why is a man honest? To serve his own ends, and not to serve others."

"Lord Wharton," said Sharp, "do you know me?"

"Ah! What do you say, sir?" returned the Peer. "I owe you money; but I can't pay it."

"My name is Sharp," said the lawyer.

The Statesman looked steadily at him, and a momentary ray of recollection returned. He held out his hand, but withdrew it again. Then he pressed his burning fingers on his brow. "What is this?" he cried. "I do not know myself. Dead! Yes I am dead—that is it—and this heat is the worm that never dies. Harriet! Where are you? Come down from heaven and cool my scorched brain!"

A thin hand was instantly placed on the forehead of the sufferer. A tear fell upon his cheek. "Pity him, ye sweet heavens!" said the woman.

"Ha!" cried the Peer. "As I live, she *has* come!"

"Withdraw—withdraw," exclaimed Sharp. "Your presence may be fatal if his senses return."

But Lord Wharton held her tight. He gazed with intense awe into the faded face turned so pityingly on him. Another instant, and every vestige of delirium had left him, and he remained contemplating the female for the space of a minute.

"She lives!" he muttered. "If *I* live, *she* does."

"O, you know me, Wharton, you know the poor Harriet! Be composed. This—this is our son!"

"She speaks—she breathes!" exclaimed the Peer. "O, injured being—how is this? It was no ghost then that haunted me—but yourself! And this is our son. Forgive me—O, forgive me!"

"Freely—freely," said Harriet. "Live and repent. The angels rejoice over the penitent!"

CHAPTER CVIII.

EXPLANATION—HOW DID THE COXCOMB PERISH?—THE DEATH-BED OF LORD WHARTON.

All was explained; and some explanation is due to the reader before the historian closes his labors, and the veil is drawn over so many crimes and woes. How often may we pause, whether in the Real or the Ideal, and moralize upon events and actions buried in the womb of time. Soon, very soon, all that we worship now will have passed away, and we ourselves shall hasten to oblivion. This is the destiny of man. Some idle dreams, some passion, and some despair, some love and some hate, virtues, vices, good resolutions—noble thoughts and grovelling desires, doubt, faith, and death. If there be nothing more, vain are all our lofty aspirations, vain our efforts and our struggles! But to my mind, the existence of great and good thoughts and pure feelings is enough to evince the immortality beyond. Where reason errs, the heart does not err: believe the heart, and you will adore.

It was by the name of Kerridge, Harriet was known to Lord Wharton, and *that* was the real appellation of the family known to the reader as the Jenkins'. The Blacksmith having been guilty of offences against the law, he thought it advisable to take another name, so that when Lord Wharton heard their name for the first time, he had no idea they could be connected with the woman he had so irremediably injured.

Lord Wharton made a diligent search for poor Harriet after she left him, and ascertained, as he thought beyond doubt, that she was dead. A person answering to her description had been seen wandering about the country, and it was supposed she was drowned. The long period of time which elapsed before the maniac appeared to her seducer confirmed him beyond the least shadow of doubt in the conclusion that she was no more. Harriet, after quitting the man for whom she had sacrificed all she possessed, made her way to her former home, but she did not find her friends there. She rambled about from place to place, and at length by the merest accident found Jenkins. She was soon afterwards delivered of a child; but after her confinement her reason left her entirely. She quitted her brother's roof, leaving the infant with him, and never remained many hours in any one place. How she lived and where she lodged it would be difficult to say; but in the summer she generally slept in the open air, and subsisted chiefly on the charity of villagers, who pitied her infirmity. As she was found to be perfectly harmless she was suffered to go where she liked. Sometimes she had partial gleams of reason, but not in a sufficient degree to enable her to shape her course aright. Enough has been said to clear away what might have seemed a mystery, and is is only requisite to add that the Smith and his wife never communicated the secret of Stephen's birth, perhaps out of some feeling of kindness towards the poor fellow—for with all their crimes they did not treat him ill. Harriet's fate they could not ascertain, and supposed with others that she was dead. And now to resume the story.

An immense weight was removed from the breast of the Statesman when the secret of that awful visitation was revealed, and it had so good an effect on his frame that he experienced no return of delirium. But he would not permit Harriet to leave his side for an instant, as if apprehensive that all might be a vision. He gazed upon her as if he could never see enough of her still lovely face, and held her hand and that of their son in his own.

"I drove you mad—wretch that I am," exclaimed Lord Wharton, after the history of Harriet had been revealed to him. "Sharp, come here! You are a noble fellow: it was not to indulge your own vindictive feelings that you pursued me! And my son—my poor son! You tell me that he is still in peril. But I hope I can save him yet. I will write a few lines to the Regent, and he will not refuse my dying request to pardon him. But where is that poor girl I wronged so deeply? I mean the niece of my poor Harriet!"

"She is safe," said Stephen, "and at my mother's house, where she discovered us by a lucky chance. She is now my wife—the truest, best of women!"

"And I can do next to nothing for you!" said the Statesman mournfully, "I have nothing left. But there is one thing you must do for me, Sharp. Seek out Travers, and tell him——"

"I can make your lordship's mind easy on that score," said the lawyer. "Mr. Travers and his son are now in London. They arrived last night from Paris, where they met each other, and I saw them a few hours ago. I can also relieve you from another thing that weighs on your mind. From the evidence of an old woman, which Taylor communicated to me, I think we shall be able to make out a case for Stephen, and get him clear off. As far as money goes, he shall never want."

"Generous man!" exclaimed Stephen. "But, thank God, I have a head, and I have hands; and if my character can be restored, I shall get employ."

"Sharp," said Lord Wharton, "give me your hand—I honour you. We have been deadly enemies—but now permit me to call you friend. Pardon me for all the injuries I have done you, and receive, if you will, my thanks for your goodness to Harriet and my son."

"I pardoned you when last we met—" began Sharp.

"Ay, and from that time," said the Peer, "remorse has been more busy than ever in my soul. One thing yet remains. A foul story was fabricated about my nephew, Reginald Travers. I saw that Julia Seymour loved him, and I thought the only effectual way to extinguish the passion was to disgrace him in her eyes. I fancied she would marry me out of resentment to him. I will conceal nothing now from you. Why should I? Am I not going to that world where no secrets are hid? Yes, I am dying! Before another sun has gone, its splendours may light up the features of the dead Thomas Wharton. Seek not to extenuate the evil I have done; be *silent* with regard to me. Well, Sharp, you will soon hold the office that I have until now filled, and will do so with more zeal and virtue than I have shown. Ambition now seems to me a mockery. A boy's game! A pursuit of butterflies!"

"You say right, my lord," returned the rich man. "I shall retire from public life. I feel old now."

"Ah! you fed upon the passion of revenge, and now that it has quitted your breast you feel life is objectless," returned the Peer. "But if I might live as long as you may, I would—but it is no matter. I could do nothing to serve my country. The world is well rid of me."

"Something yet remains for you to do," said the voice of Harriet. "Make your peace with heaven. Let me send for that good man who visited you a short time ago, and whose persuasions I trust——"

"Touched me!" interrupted the Peer. "You may send for him if you will. But it was that letter—which must have been *your* letter I felt so deeply. Alas! Harriet, it is not possible for me to reach that happy sphere where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' Poor thing! How you have suffered! Shame and madness, disgrace, disease, through my dark crime!"

"Speak not of it, I beseech you," exclaimed Harriet. "For my own

sin I was visited, and for Christ's sake I was pardoned. And have not you suffered for your unhappy errors? Has not your mind been your punisher? And shall not Heaven forgive you?"

The Statesman shook his head despondently. "God bless you, injured woman!" he ejaculated, "for all your noble conduct to me. You have smoothed my dying pillow, and I die comparatively happy, though tremendous shadows yet remain. What can repentance do? Can it wipe out the past? All repent—they cannot help it, if they would."

"And all will be forgiven," said the enthusiast. "If an infinite sacrifice has been made for man, there will be infinite mercy to sinners. Christ died for all,—for you and for me."

As Harriet finished, a servant entered and whispered something to the lawyer. The quick ear of Lord Wharton detected a few words that were spoken, and he asked,

"What is it, Sharp? What has happened?"

"Oh, nothing of importance, my lord," returned Sharp.

"Nay, but I *will* know it," said the Peer, with an assumption of his old command. "Speak out."

"It not only concerns you—" hesitated the lawyer.

Stephen caught the glance of Sharp's eye, and cried—"Nothing about Nell? O God—no calamity has fallen on her dear head? Speak—what is it?"

"Nell is safe and well, I doubt not: but something has occurred which will give you trouble. You recollect that yesterday we heard of that rebellion, and you feared that your cousin John was concerned in it. I am sorry our conjectures were too true: he was the leader of it all, and fell beneath a bullet. *This* I knew already, though I waited to inform you presently; but it concerns me to add that this morning Colonel Wharton, who returned to town last night, was found strangled. As yet it is uncertain in what way he met his death—whether he put an end to his own life, or was murdered. Lord Wharton should not have been told, in his present state; but as he overheard—"

"There is one rascal less in the world," interrupted the Peer. "He was the only man I thought worse than myself. I do not affect grief."

A letter was brought in here, which came from Sir Algernon Sharp to the lawyer. It was as follows:—

"You have by this time heard the news of poor Travers Wharton's death. I drove him to town last night, and we went to our club, and played till late. He lost, as usual, and when we parted, he said, 'Good bye, my dear fellow, I must be off to Paris, to-morrow.' You have read the account of the insurrection which took place two or three days since. A poor girl was killed at our house unluckily by Travers in mistake—or rather by accident. I can't help thinking he was murdered out of revenge by some one of the ragamuffins; but we can't decide whether it

was suicide or murder. He is a great loss, with all his faults, and will be missed more than his brother.—How is *he*?—I write this note at your house in great haste."

* * * * * *

A coroner's inquest, of course, was held on the body of the Honorable Travers Wharton; but there was no satisfactory evidence to show he had met his death by the hands of an assassin, while his losses at play, and the desperate state of his fortunes, seemed to justify the supposition that it was a case of *felo de se*. The jury could come to no determination, and were obliged to return the axiomatic verdict of "Found Dead." Some time afterwards a skeleton key was found in the Coxcomb's house, but nothing more.

The sorrow of Stephen and his wife at the death of John was sincere and deep. But they were aware he had outlived every joy of existence, and when they heard of the circumstances attending the attack on Sir Algernon Sharp's house, together with the fate of Fanny, they found much matter for consolation. He could hardly have escaped an ignominious death, and if he had done so, he would most probably have continued in his career of crime. Sharp, at their solicitation, made inquiries after Jenkins and his wife, and something transpired which convinced him that the Blacksmith was the murderer of Travers Wharton; but this conviction he scrupulously kept to himself. Not long afterwards he discovered that Jenkins (or more properly, Kerridge) and his partner embarked in disguise in a small vessel bound for a foreign port, which was lost in a storm. But, long before that time, Stephen had received a free pardon, partly from the solicitation of his father, and partly through the exertions of Sharp.

It now only remains to relate the manner of the great Statesman's death. He survived longer than was expected, and to the last retained the faculties of his powerful mind unimpaired. He suffered a good deal occasionally; but he uttered no complaint. It was only in the night, when he thought none could hear, that he groaned audibly. But it was not physical pain that wrung those sounds from him—which were heard by *One*. A few hours before his death, in the depth of night, when he uttered words of despair, his curtain was drawn aside, and Harriet exclaimed—

"I had hoped the darkness was departing from you, my beloved friend. Do you believe in the great and unspeakable mercy of our Maker? I cannot bear to hear you talk thus! Wherefore despair!"

"My kind Harriet—you should not set up with me thus. I thought only the nurse was here, and that she had fallen asleep. I wish for some persons to be sent for, early to-morrow morning. I should like to hear poor Anna, Reginald, Travers, and Julia Seymour forgive me, ere I depart."

"Will their forgiveness give you peace, then?"

"*Peace!* Harriet, I can know peace no more! How can I forget? Where shall I find forgetfulness?"

"There seems to me an angel present," returned Harriet, "who breathes celestial light upon you. Open the eyes of your soul, and see the glory of the scheme of Redemption. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow—though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Is not *that* better than oblivion? The Angel has come down with the tidings of mercy—and you will be happy, I am assured. God never condemns the penitent. Dearest Wharton, pray with me."—And the pious creature poured forth her spirit in long and earnest and eloquent supplication.

* * * * * * *

The final hour had come, and the Minister was stretched, feeble and wasted, on the bed of death. Around him were all he desired to see—almost all of the principal characters of our history. The figure of the aged preacher was standing near him, but nearer still was Harriet; and by her side were Stephen and Helen. At the foot of the bed stood Sharp, Julia Seymour, and Reginald and his father. On the other side were Anna and the physician.

"Come hither, Anna," said the Peer, beckoning to his former mistress, who stood at a little distance, weeping as she heard Lord Wharton gasp for breath. "Say, once more, you pardon me. God bless you."

"Oh, may He extend as perfect a forgiveness to you," said Anna, fervently, bedewing the weak hand which Wharton extended to her with tears.

"Travers," said the dying man to his brother-in-law, "I want to speak to you also. You are the most virtuous being, I now believe, alive. Continue in the even tenor of your way, loving man, and adoring God. If I had lived like you, my death would be sweet indeed. And I have some solace, which I did not think to have. I always looked forward to this period as one of unmitigated horror. Reginald, you have also pardoned me for the injury I committed. I have but little breath left. Take her you love, and be as happy as you deserve. Let me join your hands together—and farewell."

Already had Reginald exculpated himself in the eyes of Julia, and she did not withhold her trembling hand from his. After a few minutes Lord Wharton desired to be raised in his bed. It was evident that the powers of life were nearly exhausted. He drew Harriet and Stephen close—very close to him, and embraced them.

"Had I lived," he said to the former, "I would have asked you to become my wife.—Heaven bless you both. I die—the shadows come thick and fast—I cannot see you now; but press my hand. O, my son—may you be happier than your guilty father! Angels protect you!

My passions have been my demons and my God! Farewell—farewell! *That* was the last pang!"

The former infidel philosopher breathed a prayer.

"I thank you," said Lord Wharton to him, "I thank you all. It comes! I see the dim and vast procession—the land of the Dead arises! Hush! What does the Voice say? 'Come!' Yes—I obey! The haughty Wharton *obeys!*"

He raised himself by a mighty effort, and the death-rattle was in his throat. He uttered one groan, and fell back. The mighty spirit of the Minister had fled for ever.

"He was a great man!" murmured Sharp, in a low voice, with emotion, surveying the white features of the dead. . . . And where was his REVENGE?

CONCLUSION.

A FEW more words, and then I dismiss the audience. After the tragedy come smiles and laughter, and though my moral is a grave and sad one, I do not wish to close the melancholy scene without some sweet gleams of sunshine to relieve the painful gloom. That is a weak and false philosophy which would carry the spirit of Hegesias into the drama of life. It is serious, it is solemn oftentimes; but to the true heart and the lofty mind much may be found that is cheering and consolatory. We wither and we die; but in the midst of desolation there is an eternal poetry flowing through the human breast, like some stream of Eden through the wilderness. Love, and life, and happiness may pass from our sight, but memory and aspiration are immortal.

Reginald and Julia were married. If it be true—as it surely must—that beyond the highest felicity there is a blessedness—they were blessed. For them life had no terrors, and death no gloom; they towered above the temptations of ambition and pleasure, and children smiled on them to complete their joy. Even now they live in the healthy autumn of existence, he beloved and admired for his virtue and his intellect, she for her grace and goodness.

The lawyer gave his ward to Reginald, in spite of the angry remonstrances of his son; but he did not long survive their union. His health broke up after the death of Lord Wharton, and he left all the business of his house to Quick. He lived principally with Harriet, who nursed him in sickness, and was the solace of his age. Nothing could induce him to take part in politics; but his son got into parliament, and by dint of intrigue and plodding, obtained a high office in the law.

It may be as well to narrate a circumstance which occurred some years afterwards—namely, a duel between Sir Samuel (for he was knighted) and Sir Algernon Sharp. They quarrelled about some woman of bad

character, and went out. Sir Algernon was wounded in the leg, and his dancing was spoilt for ever. So he devoted himself entirely to play, and was ruined. He may be seen even now, hobbling along St. James's Street, or Pall Mall. But he is cut by all decent people, and blackballed at all the Clubs. He is called Sir Algernon *Sharper*—for he lives by imposing on greenhorns. His wife and he were separated by mutual consent soon after their marriage, and the lady died of the cholera a dozen years ago.

But Stephen and Nell—what became of them? They lived with Harriet, and the former obtained some lucrative employment connected with the Press. And they, too, had children to supply the loss of the one taken from them; their happiness was no less than that of Reginald and Julia.

The lawyer died; and his will being opened, it was found he had left half of his fortune to the only woman he ever loved; after which, a large sum of money remained. This he divided into three equal portions—one to his son, one to Julia, and one to Stephen. His business he left to Quick. The little man is alive even while I write, and seems as if he could never die—for he is not much less than ninety. He is one of the most opulent men in London, but he lives in his old way, and gives nearly all his income to those in distress, though no one knows it.

Harriet was now become one of the wealthiest women in England; but prosperity could no more harden her heart, than adversity could destroy her faith and patience. She was much affected by the melancholy death of Fanny, and having heard something of her last wishes, caused her to be buried in a lovely spot, and erected a monument to her memory. The remains of John Jenkins were deposited near her: but it was Nell who thought he would have wished it to be so, and Mr. Sharp's influence procured the fulfilment of her affectionate desires.

Travers often visited Harriet, and enjoyed the society of her and her children. The philosopher never deviated from the course which he had marked out for himself. He lived in peace with all men, INDEED the Worshipper of Truth. There is a passage in one of his fine and noble works, with which I shall presently conclude. Reginald and he pursued their studies together, and in one of their conversations, the former spoke these words, which his father thought worthy to insert as the sentiment of a poet:—"O believe me that through the shadowy path of Sorrow is the passage to Paradise! A solitary Nightingale sings in that dark path, and her music, like the stars', is sweet for ever. IN HEAVEN THE SONG IS LOVE—THE MELODY ON EARTH IS FAITH!"

FINIS.

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