



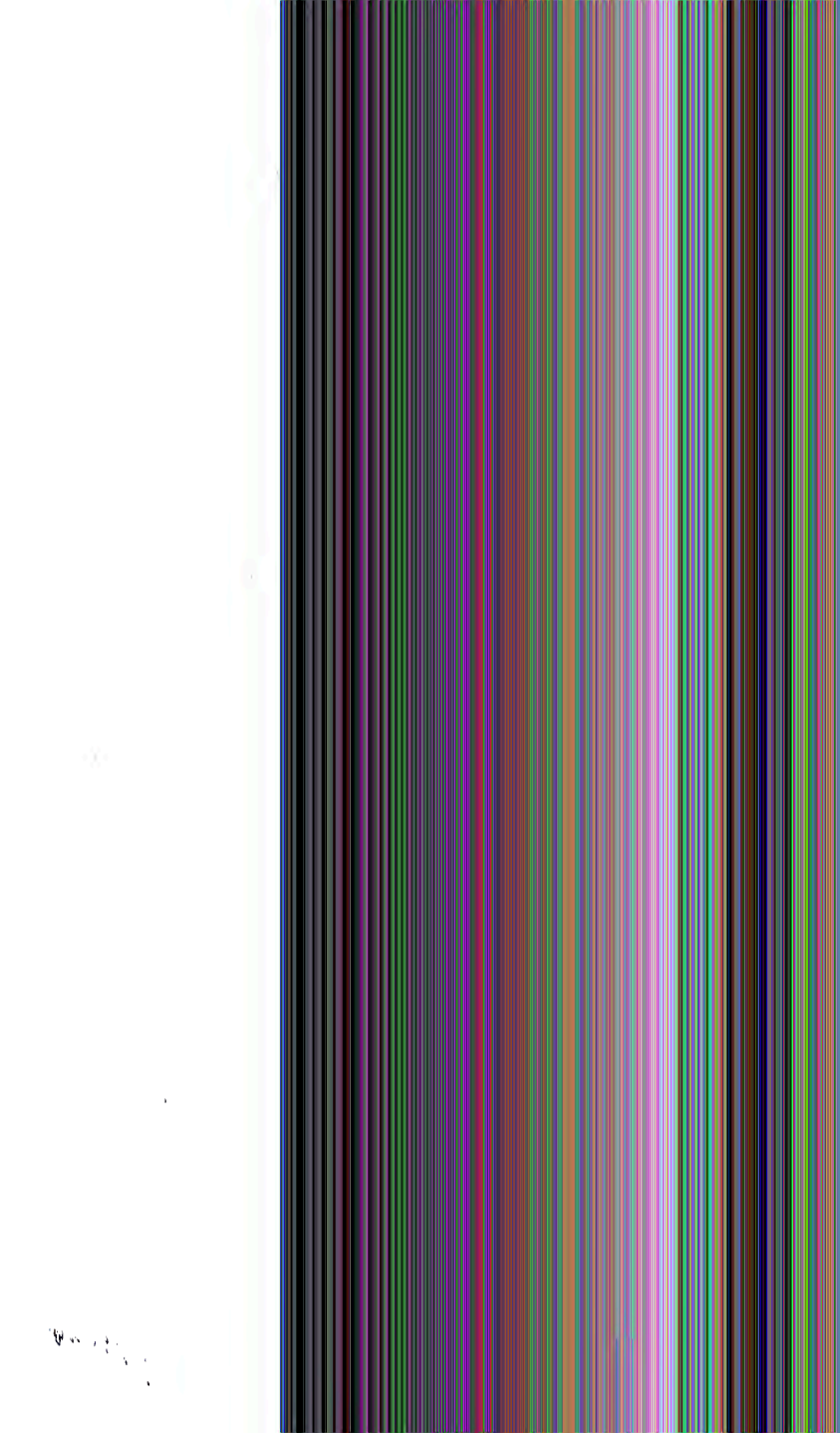
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X



NIGHT AND MORNING

OF THE

AUTHOR OF "RIENZA," "EUGENE ARAM,"

&c. &c.

*Lytton, friend 1841 - see
Lytton, Baker system*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1841.

Received from Messrs. Saunders & Otley, Conduit Street, London, the book of the author of "Night and Morning," Vol. I. 1841. Received by the Librarian of the University of Cambridge, 23 January 1844.

1/1/1844

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NIGHT AND MORNING.

BOOK I.

"Noch in meines Lebens Tage
"War ich und ich wandert" aus,
Und der Jugend frohe Tage
"Lief ich in des Alters Tage."

SCHILLER: Der Pilgrim.

VOL. I.

B

RESERVE

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"Now rests our vicar. They who knew him best,
Praise him his life to have been entirely rest;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he entered in."—*CAVANAUGH*.

In one of the Welsh counties is a small village called A——. It is somewhat removed from the high road, and is, therefore, but little known to those luxurious amateurs of the Picturesque who view Nature through the windows of a carriage and four. Nor, indeed, is there any thing, whether of scenery or association, in the place itself, sufficient to allure the more sturdily enthusiast from the beaten tracks which tourists and guide-books prescribe to those who search the Sublime and

Beautiful amidst the mountain homes of the ancient Britons. Still, on the whole, the village is not without its attractions. It is placed in a small valley, through which winds and leaps, down many a rocky fall—a clear, babbling, noisy rivulet, that affords excellent sport to the brethren of the angle. Thither, accordingly, in the summer season occasionally resort the Waltons of the neighbourhood— young farmers, retired traders, with now and then a stray artist, or a roving student from one of the Universities. Hence the solitary hostelry of A—, being somewhat more frequented, is also more clean and comfortable than could be reasonably anticipated from the insignificance and remoteness of the village.

At the time in which my narrative opens, the village boasted a sociable, agreeable, careless, half-starved parson, who never failed to introduce himself to any of the anglers who, during the summer months, passed a day or two in the little valley. The Reverend Mr. Caleb Price had been educated at the University of

Cambridge, where he had contrived, in three years, to run through a little fortune of 3,500*l.*, without gaining in return any more valuable mental acquisitions than those of making the most admirable milk-punch, and becoming the most redoubted boxer in his college; or any more desirable reputation than that of being one of the best-natured, rattling, open-hearted companions whom you could desire by your side in a tandem to Newmarket, or in a row with the bargemen. He had not failed, by the help of these gifts and accomplishments, to find favour, while his money lasted, with the young aristocracy of the "Gentle Mother." And, though the very reverse of an ambitious or calculating man, he had certainly nourished the belief that some one of the hats or fustel gowns—i.e. young lords or fellow-commoners, with whom he was on such excellent terms, and who supped with him so often—would do something for him in the way of a living. But it so happened that when Mr. Caleb Price had, with a little difficulty, scrambled

through his degree, and found himself a Bachelor of Arts and at the end of his finances, his grand acquaintances parted from him to their various posts in the State-Militant of Life. And, with the exception of one, joyous and reckless as himself, Mr. Caleb Price found that when Money makes itself wings it flies away with our friends. As poor Price had earned no academical distinction, so he could expect no advancement from his college; no fellowship; no tutorship leading hereafter to livings, stalls, and deaneries. Poverty began already to stare him in the face, when the only friend who, having shared his prosperity, remained true to his adverse fate—a friend, fortunately for him, of high connexions and brilliant prospects—succeeded in obtaining for him the humble living of A—. To this primitive spot the once jovial royster cheerfully retired—contrived to live contented upon an income somewhat less than he had formerly given to his groom—preached very short sermons to a very scanty and ignorant congregation, some

of whom only understood Welsh—did good to the poor and sick in his own careless, slovenly way—and, uncheered, or unvexed by wife and children, he rose in summer with the lark, and in winter went to bed at nine precisely, to save coals and candles. For the rest, he was the most skilful angler in the whole county; and so willing to communicate the results of his experience as to the most taking colour of the flies, and the most favoured haunts of the trout—that he had given especial orders at the inn, that whenever any strange gentleman came to fish, Mr. Caleb Price should be immediately sent for. In this, to be sure, our worthy pastor had his usual recompense. First, if the stranger were tolerably liberal, Mr. Price was asked to dinner at the inn; and, secondly, if this failed, from the poverty or the churlishness of the obliged party, Mr. Price still had an opportunity to hear the last news—to talk about the Great World—in a word, to exchange ideas, and

perhaps to get an old newspaper, or an odd number of a magazine.

Now, it so happened that one afternoon in October, when the periodical excursions of the anglers, becoming rarer and more rare, had altogether ceased, Mr. Caleb Price was summoned from his parlour, in which he had been employed in the fabrication of a net for his cabbages, by a little white-headed boy, who came to say there was a gentleman at the inn who wished immediately to see him—a strange gentleman, who had never been there before.

Mr. Price threw down his net, seized his hat, and, in less than five minutes, he was in the best room of the little inn.

The person there awaiting him was a man who, though plainly clad in a velvetreen shooting-jacket, had an air and mien greatly above those common to the pedestrian visitors of A—. He was tall, and of one of those athletic forms in which vigour in youth is

too often purchased by corpulence in age. At this period, however, in the full prime of manhood—the ample chest and sinewy limbs, seen to full advantage in their simple and manly dress—could not fail to excite that popular admiration which is always given to strength in the one sex as to delicacy in the other. The stranger was walking impatiently to and fro the small apartment when Mr. Price entered; and then, turning to the clergyman a countenance handsome and striking, but yet more prepossessing from its expression of frankness than from the regularity of its features,—he stopped short, held out his hand, and said, with a gay laugh, as he glanced over the parson's threadbare and slovenly costume,—“My poor Caleb!—what a metamorphosis!—I should not have known you again!”

“What! you! Is it possible, my dear fellow!—how glad I am to see you! What on earth can bring you to such a place? No! not a soul would believe me if I said I had seen you in this miserable hole.”

"That is precisely the reason why I am here. Sit down, Caleb, and we'll talk over matters as soon as our landlord has brought up the materials for——"

"The milk-punch," interrupted Mr. Price, rubbing his hands. "Ah, that will bring us back to old times, indeed!"

In a few minutes the punch was prepared, and after two or three preparatory glasses, the stranger thus commenced:—

"My dear Caleb, I am in want of your assistance, and, above all, of your secrecy."

"I promise you both beforehand. It will make me happy the rest of my life to think I have served my patron—my benefactor—the only friend I possess."

"Tush, man! don't talk of that: we shall do better for you one of these days. But now to the point: I have come here to be married—married, old boy!—married!"

And the stranger threw himself back in his chair, and chuckled with the glee of a school-boy.

"Humph!" said the parson, gravely. "It is a serious thing to do, and a very odd place to come to."

"I admit both propositions: this punch is superb. To proceed. You know that my uncle's immense fortune is at his own disposal; if I disoblige him he would be capable of leaving all to my brother. I should disoblige him irrevocably if he knew that I had married a tradesman's daughter. I am going to marry a tradesman's daughter—a girl in a million! the ceremony must be as secret as possible. And in this church, with you for the priest, I do not see a chance of discovery."

"Do you marry by license?"

"No; my intended is not of age: and we keep the secret even from her father. In this village you will mumble over the Bans without one of your congregation ever taking heed of the name. I shall stay here a month for the purpose. She is in London, on a visit to a relation in the city. The Bans on her side will be published with equal privacy in a little

church near the Tower, where my name will be no less unknown than here. Oh, I've contrived it famously!"

"But my dear fellow, consider what you risk."

"I have considered all, and I find every chance in my favour. The bride will arrive here on the day of our wedding: my servant will be one witness; some stupid old Welshman, as antediluvian as possible—I leave it to you to select him—shall be the other. My servant I shall dispose of, and the rest I can depend on."

"But —"

"I detest buts; if I had to make a language, I would not admit such a word in it. And now, before I run on upon Catherine, a subject quite inexhaustible, tell me, my dear friend, something about yourself."

* * * * *

Somewhat more than a month had elapsed since the arrival of the stranger at the village

inn. He had changed his quarters for the Parsonage—went out but little, and then chiefly on foot-excursions among the sequestered hills in the neighbourhood: he was therefore but partially known by sight even in the village; and the visit of some old college friend to the minister, though indeed it had never chanced before, was not, in itself, so remarkable an event as to excite any particular observation. The Buns had been duly, and half inaudibly, hurried over, after the service was concluded, and while the scanty congregation were dispersing down the little aisle of the church,—when one morning a chaise and pair arrived at the Parsonage. A servant out of livery leaped from the box. The stranger opened the door of the chaise, and, uttering a joyous exclamation, gave his arm to a lady, who, trembling and agitated, could scarcely, even with that stalwart support, descend the steps. “Ah!” she said, in a voice choked with tears, when they found themselves alone in the little parlour, “ah! if you knew how I have suffered!”

How is it that certain words, and those the homeliest,—which the hand writes and the eye reads, as trite and commonplace expressions—when spoken, convey so much,—so many meanings complicated and refined? “Ah! if you knew how I have suffered!”

When the lover heard these words, his gay countenance fell; he drew back—his conscience smote him: in that complaint was the whole history of a clandestine love, not for both the parties, but for the woman—the painful secrecy—the remorseful deceit—the shame—the fear—the sacrifice. She who uttered those words was scarcely sixteen. It is an early age to leave Childhood behind for ever!

“My own love! you have suffered, indeed; but it is over now.”

“Over! And what will they say of me—what will they think of me *at home*? Over! Ah!”

“It is but for a short time; in the course of Nature, my uncle cannot live long; all then

will be explained. Our marriage once made public, all connected with you will be proud to own you. You will have wealth, station—a name among the first in the gentry of England. But, above all, you will have the happiness to think that your forbearance for a time has saved me, and, it may be, our children, sweet one!—from poverty and ——”

“It is enough,” interrupted the girl; and the expression of her countenance became serene and elevated. “It is for you—for your sake. I know what you hazard: how much I must owe you!—Forgive me, this is the last murmur you shall ever hear from these lips.”

An hour after those words were spoken, the marriage ceremony was concluded.

“Caleb,” said the bridegroom, drawing the clergyman aside as they were about to re-enter the house, “you will keep your promise, I know; and you think I may depend implicitly upon the good faith of the witness you have selected?”

"Upon his good faith?—no," said Caleb, smiling; "but upon his deafness, his ignorance, and his age. My poor old clerk! he will have forgotten all about it before this day three months. Now I have seen your lady, I no longer wonder that you incur so great a risk. I never beheld so lovely a countenance. You will be happy!" And the village priest sighed, and thought of the coming winter and his own lonely hearth.

"My dear friend, you have only seen her beauty—it is her least charm. Heaven knows how often I have made love; and this is the only woman I have ever really loved. Caleb, there is an excellent living that adjoins my uncle's house. The rector is old; when the house is mine, you will not be long without the living. We shall be neighbours, Caleb, and then you shall try and find a bride for yourself. Smith,"—and the bridegroom turned to the servant who had accompanied his wife, and served as a second witness to the marriage,—

"tell the post-boy to put to the horses immediately."

"Yes, sir. May I speak a word with you?"

"Well, what?"

"Your uncle, sir, sent for me to come to him, the day before we left town."

"Aha!—indeed!"

"And I could just pick up among his servants that he had some suspicion—at least, that he had been making inquiries—and seemed very cross, sir."

"You went to him?"

"No, sir, I was afraid. He has such a way with him;—whenever his eye is fixed on mine, I always feel as if it was impossible to tell a lie; and—and—in short, I thought it was best not to go."

"You did right. Confound this fellow!" muttered the bridegroom, turning away; "he is honest, and loves me: yet, if my uncle sees him, he is clumsy enough to betray all. Well,

I always meant to get him out of the way—the sooner the better. Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You have often said that you should like, if you had some capital, to settle in Australia; your father is an excellent farmer; you are above the situation you hold with me; you are well educated, and have some knowledge of agriculture; you can scarcely fail to make a fortune as a settler, and if you are of the same mind still, why look you, I have just 1000*l.* at my bankers: you shall have half, if you like to sail by the first packet."

"Oh, sir, you are too generous."

"Nonsense—no thanks—I am more prudent than generous; for I agree with you that it is all up with me if my uncle gets hold of you. I dread my prying brother, too; in fact, the obligation is on my side: only stay abroad till I am a rich man, and my marriage made public, and then you may ask of me what you will. It's agreed, then; order the

horses, we'll go round by Liverpool, and learn about the vessels. By the way, my good fellow, I hope you see nothing now of that good-for-nothing brother of yours?"

"No, indeed, sir. It's a thousand pities he has turned out so ill, for he was the cleverest of the family, and could always twist me round his little finger."

"That's the very reason I mentioned him. If he learned our secret, he would take it to an excellent market. Where is he?"

"Hiding, I suspect, sir."

"Well, we shall put the sea between you: so now all's safe."

Caleb stood by the porch of his house as the bride and bridegroom entered their humble vehicle. Though then November, the day was exquisitely mild and calm, the sky without a cloud, and even the leafless trees seemed to smile beneath the cheerful sun. And the young bride wept no more; she was with him she loved—she was his for ever. She forgot

the rest. The hope—the heart of sixteen—spoke brightly out through the blushes that mantled over her fair cheeks. The bridegroom's frank and manly countenance was radiant with joy. As he waved his hand to Caleb from the window, the postboy cracked his whip, the servant settled himself on the dickey, the horses started off in a brisk trot,—the clergyman was left alone!

To be married is certainly an event in life; to marry other people is, for a priest, a very ordinary occurrence; and yet, from that day, a great change began to operate in the spirits and the habits of Caleb Price. Have you ever, my gentle reader, buried yourself for some time quietly in the lazy ease of a dull country life! have you ever become gradually accustomed to its monotony, and inured to its solitude; and, just at the time when you have half forgotten the great world—that *mare magnum* that frets and roars in the distance—have you ever received in your calm retreat

some visitor, full of the busy and excited life which you imagined yourself contented to relinquish? If so, have you not perceived;—that in proportion as his presence and communication either revived old memories, or brought before you new pictures of “the bright tumult” of that existence of which your guest made a part,—you began to compare him curiously with yourself; you began to feel that what before was to rest, is now to rot; that your years are gliding from you unenjoyed and wasted; that the contrast between the animal life of passionate civilisation and the vegetable torpor of motionless seclusion is one that, if you are still young, it tasks your philosophy to bear,—feeling all the while that the torpor may be yours to your grave! And when your guest has left you, when you are again alone, is the solitude the same as it was before?

Our poor Caleb had for years rooted his thoughts to his village. His guest had been,

like the Bird in the Fairy Tale, settling upon the quiet branches, and singing so loudly and so gladly of the enchanted skies afar, that, when it flew away, the tree pined, nipped and withering in the sober sun in which before it had basked contented. The guest was, indeed, one of those men whose animal spirits exercise upon such as come within their circle the influence and power usually ascribed only to intellectual qualities. During the month he had sojourned with Caleb, he had brought back to the poor parson all the gaiety of the brisk and noisy novitiate that preceded the solemn vow and the dull retreat—the social parties, the merry suppers, the open-handed, open-hearted fellowship of riotous, delightful, extravagant, thoughtless youth. And Caleb was not a bookman—not a scholar; he had no resources in himself, no occupation but his indolent and ill-paid duties. The emotions, therefore, of the Active Man were easily aroused within him. But if this

comparison between his past and present life rendered him restless and disturbed, how much more deeply and lastingly was he affected by a contrast between his own future and that of his friend! not in those points where he could never hope equality,—wealth, and station—the conventional distinctions to which, after all, a man of ordinary sense must sooner or later reconcile himself—but in that one respect wherein all, high and low, pretend to the same rights,—rights which a man of moderate warmth of feeling can never willingly renounce, viz. a partner in a lot, however obscure; a kind fire by a hearth, no matter how mean it be! And his happier friend, like all men full of life, was full of himself—full of his love, of his future, of the blessings of home, and wife, and children. Then, too, the young bride seemed so fair, so confiding, and so tender; so formed to grace the noblest, or to cheer the humblest home! And both were so happy, so all in all each to each other, as they left that barren threshold!

And the priest felt all this as, melancholy and envious, he turned from the door in that November day, to find himself thoroughly alone. He now began seriously to muse upon those fancied blessings which men wearied with celibacy see springing, heavenward, behind the altar. A few weeks afterwards a notable change was visible in the good man's exterior. He became more careful of his dress, he shaved every morning, he purchased a crop-eared Welsh cob; and it was soon known in the neighbourhood, that the only journey the cob was ever condemned to take was to the house of a certain squire, who, amidst a family of all ages, boasted two very pretty marriageable daughters. That was the second holyday-time of poor Caleb—the love-romance of his life: it soon closed. On learning the amount of the pastor's stipend, the squire refused to receive his addresses; and, shortly after, the girl to whom he had attached himself made what the world calls a happy match. And perhaps it was one, for I never heard that she regretted the for-

saken lover. Perhaps Caleb was not one of those whose place in a woman's heart is never to be supplied. The lady married, the world went round as before, the brook danced as merrily through the village, the poor worked the week-days, and the urchins gambolled round the grave-stones on the Sabbath, and the curate's heart was broken. He languished gradually and silently away. The villagers observed that he had lost his old good-humoured smile, that he did not stop every Saturday evening at the carrier's gate to ask if there were any news stirring in the town which the carrier weekly visited; that he did not come to borrow the stray newspapers that now and then found their way into the village; that, as he sauntered along the brook-side, his clothes hung loose on his limbs, and that he no longer "whistled as he went;" alas, he was no longer "in want of thought!" By degrees, the walks themselves were suspended; the parson was no longer visible: a stranger performed his duties.

One day, it might be some three years after the fatal visit I have commemorated—one very wild, rough day in early March, the postman, who made the round of the district, rung at the parson's bell. The single female servant, her red hair loose on her neck, replied to the call.

"And how is the master?"

"Very bad;" and the girl wiped her eyes.

"He should leave you something handsome," remarked the postman, kindly, as he pocketed the money for the letter.

The Pastor was in bed—the boisterous wind rattled down the chimney and shook the ill-fitting easement in its rotting frame. The clothes he had last worn were thrown carelessly about, unsmoothed, unbrushed; the scanty articles of furniture were out of their proper places: slovenly discomfort marked the death-chamber. And by the bedside stood a neighbouring clergyman, a stout, rustic, homely, thoroughly Welsh priest, who might have sat for the portrait of Parson Adams.

"Here's a letter for you," said the visitor.

"For me!" echoed Caleb feebly. "Ah—well—is it not very dark, or are my eyes failing?" The clergyman and the servant drew aside the curtains and propped the sick man up: he read as follows, slowly, and with difficulty:—

"DEAR CALEB,—At last I can do something for you. A friend of mine has a living in his gift just vacant, worth, I understand, from three to four hundred a-year: pleasant neighbourhood—small parish. And my friend keeps the hounds!—just the thing for you. He is, however, a very particular sort of person—wants a companion, and has a horror of any thing evangelical; wishes, therefore, to see you before he decides. If you can meet me in London, some day next month, I'll present you to him, and I have no doubt it will be settled. You must think it strange I never wrote to you since we parted, but

you know I never was a very good correspondent; and as I had nothing to communicate advantageous to you, I thought it a sort of insult to enlarge on my own happiness, and so forth. All I shall say on that score is, that I've sown my wild oats; and that you may take my word for it, there's nothing that can make a man know how large the heart is, and how little the world, till he comes home (perhaps after a hard day's hunting) and sees his own fire-side, and hears one dear welcome; and—oh, by the way, Caleb, if you could but see my boy, the sturdiest little rogue! But enough of this. All that vexes me is, that I've never yet been able to declare my marriage: my uncle, however, suspects nothing: my wife bears up against all, like an angel as she is; still, in case of any accident, it occurs to me, now I'm writing to you, especially if you leave the place, that it may be as well to send me an examined copy of the Register. In those remote places

registers are often lost or mislaid; and it may be useful hereafter, when I proclaim the marriage, to clear up all doubt as to the fact.

“Good by, old fellow.

“Yours most truly,
 &c. &c.”

“It comes too late,” sighed Caleb, heavily, and the letter fell from his hands. There was a long pause. “Close the shutters,” said the sick man, at last; “I think I could sleep: and—and—pick up that letter.”

With a trembling, but eager gripe, he seized the paper, as a miser would seize the deeds of an estate on which he has a mortgage. He smoothed the folds, looked complacently at the well-known hand, smiled—a ghastly smile!—and then placed the letter under his pillow and sank down: they left him alone. He did not wake for some hours, and that good clergyman, poor as himself, was again at his post. The only friendships

that are really with us in the hour of need, are those which are cemented by equality of circumstance. In the depth of home, in the hour of tribulation, by the bed of death, the rich and the poor are seldom found side by side. Caleb was evidently much feebler, but his sense seemed clearer than it had been, and the instincts of his native kindness were the last that left him. "There is something he wants me to do for him," he muttered. "Ah! I remember: Jones, will you send for the parish register?—It is somewhere in the vestry-room, I think—but nothing's kept properly. Better go yourself—it's important."

Mr. Jones nodded, and sallied forth. The register was not in the vestry; the churchwardens knew nothing about it; the clerk—a new clerk, who was also the sexton, and rather a wild fellow, had gone ten miles off to a wedding: every place was searched; till, at last, the book was found, amidst a heap of old magazines and dusty

papers, in the parlour of Caleb himself. By the time it was brought to him, the sufferer was fast declining; with some difficulty his dim eye discovered the place where, amidst the clumsy pot-hooks of the parishioners, the large clear hand of his old friend, and the trembling characters of the bride, looked forth, distinguished.

"Extract this for me, will you?" said Caleb.

Mr. Jones obeyed.

"Now, just write above the extract:—

"Sir,—By Mr. Price's desire I send you the enclosed. He is too ill to write himself. But he bids me say that he has never been quite the same man since you left him; and that, if he should not get well again, still your kind letter has made him easier in his mind."

Caleb stopped.

"Go on."

"That is all I have to say: sign your name, and put the address—here it is. Ah,

the letter (he muttered) must not lie about!—
If anything happen to me, it may get him
into trouble.”

And as Mr. Jones sealed his communication, Caleb feebly stretched his wan hand, and held the letter which had “come too late” over the flame of the candle. As the paper dropped on the carpetless floor, Mr. Jones prudently set thereon the broad sole of his top-boot, and the maid servant brushed it into the grate.

“Ah, trample it out;—hurry it amongst the ashes. The last as the rest,” said Caleb, hoarsely. “Friendship, fortune, hope, love, life,—a little flame, and then—and then——”

“Don’t be uneasy—it’s quite out!” said Mr. Jones.

Caleb turned his face to the wall. He lingered till the next day, when he passed insensibly from sleep to death. As soon as the breath was out of his body, Mr. Jones felt that his duty was discharged, that other duties called him home. He promised to return to

read the burial service over the deceased, gave some hasty orders about the plain funeral, and was turning from the room, when he saw the letter he had written by Caleb's wish, still on the table. "I pass the post-office—I'll put it in," said he to the weeping servant; "and just give me that scrap of paper." So he wrote on the scrap, "P.S. He died this morning at half-past twelve, without pain.—R. J.;"—and, without the trouble of breaking the seal, thrust the final bulletin into the folds of the letter, which he then carefully placed in his vast pocket and safely transferred to the post. And that was all that the jovial and happy man, to whom the letter was addressed, ever heard of the last days of his college friend.

The living, vacant by the death of Caleb Price, was not so valuable as to plague the patron with many applications. It continued vacant nearly the whole of the six months prescribed by law. And the desolate parsonage was committed to the charge of one of the villagers who had occasionally assisted Caleb

in the care of his little garden. The villager, his wife, and half-a-dozen noisy, ragged children, took possession of the quiet bachelor's abode. The furniture had been sold to pay the expenses of the funeral and a few trifling bills; and, save the kitchen and the two attics, the empty house, uninhabited, was surrendered to the sportive mischief of the idle urchins, who prowled about the silent chambers in fear of the silence, and in ecstasy at the space. The bedroom in which Caleb had died was, indeed, long held sacred by infantine superstition. But one day the eldest boy having ventured across the threshold, two cupboards, the doors standing ajar, attracted the child's curiosity. He opened one, and his exclamation soon brought the rest of the children round him. Have you ever, reader, when a boy, suddenly stumbled on that El Dorado, called by the grown-up folks a lumber room? Lumber, indeed! what *Virtù* double-locks in cabinets is the real lumber to the boy! Lumber, reader! to thee it was a treasury! Now this

cupboard had been the lumber-room in Caleb's household. In an instant the whole troop had thrown themselves on the motley contents. Stray joints of clumsy fishing-rods; artificial baits; a pair of worn-out top-boots, in which one of the urchins, whooping and shouting, buried himself up to the middle; moth-eaten, stained, and ragged, the collegian's gown—relic of the dead man's palmy time; a bag of carpenter's tools, chiefly broken; a cricket-bat; an odd boxing-glove; a fencing-foil, snapped in the middle; and, more than all, some half-finished attempts at rude toys: a boat, a cart, a doll's house, in which the good-natured Caleb had busied himself for the younger ones of that family in which he had found the fatal ideal of his trite life. One by one were these logged forth from their dusty slumber—profane hands struggling for the first right of appropriation. And now, revealed against the wall, glared upon the startled violators of the sanctuary, with glassy eyes and horrent visage, a grim monster. They huddled back one

upon the other, pale and breathless, till the eldest seeing that the creature moved not, took heart, approached on tip-toe—twice receded and twice again advanced, and finally drew out, daubed, painted, and tricked forth in the semblance of a griffin, a gigantic Kite!

The children, alas! were not old and wise enough to know all the dormant value of that imprisoned aeronaut, which had cost poor Caleb many a dull evening's labour—the intended gift to the false one's favourite brother. But they guessed that it was a thing or spirit appertaining of right to them; and they resolved, after mature consultation, to impart the secret of their discovery to an old wooden-legged villager who had served in the army, who was the idol of all the children of the place, and who they firmly believed knew every thing under the sun, except the mystical arts of reading and writing. Accordingly, having seen that the coast was clear—for they considered their parents (as the children of the hard-working often do), the natural

foes to amusement—they carried the monster into an old out-house, and ran to the veteran to beg him to come up silly and inspect its properties.

Three months after this memorable event, arrived the new pastor. A slim, prim, orderly, and starch young man, framed by nature and trained by practice to bear a great deal of solitude and starving. Two loving couples had waited to be married till his Reverence should arrive. The ceremony performed, where was the registry-book? The vestry was searched—the churchwardens interrogated; the gay clerk who, on the demise of his deaf predecessor, had come into office a little before Caleb's last illness, had a dim recollection of having taken the registry up to Mr. Price at the time the vestry-room was whitewashed. The house was searched—the cupboard, the mysterious cupboard, was explored. "Here it is, sir!" cried the clerk; and he pounced upon a pale parchment volume. The thin clergyman

opened it, and recoiled in dismay—more than three-fourths of the leaves had been torn out.

“It is the moths, sir,” said the gardener’s wife, who had not yet removed from the house.

The clergyman looked round; one of the children was trembling. “What have you done to this book, little one?”

“That book?—the—hi!—hi!—”

“Speak the truth, and you sha’n’t be punished.”

“I did not know it was any harm—hi!—hi!—”

“Well, and——”

“And old Ben helped us.”

“Well?”

“And—and—and—hi!—hi!—The tail of the kite, sir!—”

“Where is the kite?”

Alas! the kite and its tail were long ago gone to that undiscovered limbo, where all things lost, broken, vanished, and destroyed; things that lose themselves—for servants are

too honest to steal; things that break themselves—for servants are too careful to break; find an everlasting and impenetrable refuge.

“It does not signify a pin’s head,” said the clerk; “the parish must find a new ’un !

“It is no fault of mine,” said the pastor.

“Are my chops ready !”

CHAPTER II.

*"And soothed with idle dreams the
Frowning fate."—CHAUCER.*

"Why does not my father come back? what a time he has been away!"

"My dear Philip, business detains him: but he will be here in a few days—perhaps, to-day!"

"I should like him to see how much I am improved."

"Improved in what, Philip?" said the mother with a smile. "Not Latin, I am sure; for I have not seen you open a book since you insisted on poor Todd's dismissal."

"Todd! Oh, he was such a scrub, and spoke through his nose: what could he know of Latin?"

"More than you ever will, I fear, unless——" and here there was a certain hesitation in the

mother's voice, "unless your father consents to your going to school."

"Well, I should like to go to Eton!—That's the only school for a gentleman. I've heard my father say so."

"Philip, you are too proud."

"Proud!—you often call me proud; but, then, you kiss me when you do so. Kiss me now, mother!"

The lady drew her son to her breast, put aside the clustering hair from his forehead, and kissed him; but the kiss was sad, and a moment after she pushed him away gently, and muttered, unconscious that she was overheard,

"If, after all, my devotion to the father should wrong the children!"

The boy started, and a cloud passed over his brow; but he said nothing. A light step entered the room through the French casements that opened on the lawn, and the mother turned to her youngest-born, and her eye brightened.

"Mamma! mamma! here is a letter for you.

I snatched it from John: it is papa's handwriting."

The lady uttered a joyous exclamation, and seized the letter. The younger child nestled himself on a stool at her feet, looking up while she read it; the elder stood apart, leaning on his gun, and with something of thought, even of gloom, upon his countenance.

There was a strong contrast in the two children. The elder, who was about fifteen, seemed older than he was, not only from his height, but from the darkness of his complexion, and a certain proud, nay imperious, expression upon features that, without having the soft and fluent graces of childhood, were yet regular and striking. His dark green shooting-dress, with the belt and pouch, the cap with its gold tassel set upon his luxuriant curls, which had the purple gloss of the raven's plume, blended perhaps something prematurely manly in his own tastes, with the love of the fantastic and the picturesque which bespeaks the presiding genius of the proud mother. The younger son had

severely told his ninth year; and the soft, auburn ringlets, descending half-way down the shoulders; the rich and delicate bloom that exhibits at once the hardy health and the gentle fostering; the large, deep, blue eyes; the flexible and almost effeminate contour of the harmonious features; altogether made such an ideal of childlike beauty as Lawrence had loved to paint or Chantry model.

And the daintiest cares of a mother, who as yet, has her darling all to herself—her toy, her plaything—were visible in the large falling collar of finest cambrie, and the blue velvet dress with its filigree buttons and embroidered sash. Both the boys had about them the air of those whom Fate ushers blandly into life—the air of wealth, and birth, and luxury, spoiled and pampered as if earth had no thorn for their feet, and Heaven not a wind to visit their young cheeks too roughly. The mother had been extremely handsome, and though the first bloom of youth was now gone, she had still the beauty that might captivate

new love—an easier task than to retain the old. Both her sons, though differing from each other, resembled her: she had the *features* of the younger, and probably any one who had seen her in her own earlier youth would have recognised in that child's gay, yet gentle countenance, the mirror of the mother when a girl. Now, however, especially when silent or thoughtful, the *expression* of her face was rather that of the elder boy;—the cheek, once so rosy, was now pale, though clear, with something which time had given, of pride and thought, in the curved lip and the high forehead. They who could have looked on her in her more lonely hours, might have seen that the pride had known shame, and the thought was the shadow of the passions of fear and sorrow.

But now as she read those hasty, brief, but well-remembered characters—read as one whose heart was in her eyes—joy and triumph alone were visible in that eloquent countenance. Her eyes flashed, her breast heaved; and at length, clasping the letter to her lips, she kissed

it again and again with passionate transport. Then, as her eyes met the dark, inquiring, earnest gaze of her eldest born, she flung her arms round him, and wept vehemently.

"What is the matter, mamma, dear mamma?" said the youngest, pushing himself between Philip and his mother.

"Your father is coming back, this day—this very hour;—and you—your child—you Philip——" Here sobs broke in upon her words, and left her speechless.

The letter that had produced this effect ran as follows:

To Mrs. Morton, Fernside Cottage.

DEAREST KATE,—My last letter prepared you for the news I have now to relate—my poor uncle is no more. Though I had seen so little of him, especially of late years, his death sensibly affected me: but I have at least the consolation of thinking, that there is nothing now to prevent my doing justice to you. I am the sole heir to his fortune—I have it in my power,

dearest Kate, to offer you a tardy recompense for all you have put up with for my sake;—a sacred testimony to your long forbearance, your unreprouched love, your wrongs, and your devotion. Our children, too—my noble Philip!—kiss them, Kate—kiss them for me a thousand times.

“I write in great haste—the burial is just over, and my letter will only serve to announce my return. My darling Catherine, I shall be with you almost as soon as these lines meet your eyes—those dear eyes, that, for all the tears they have shed for my faults and follies, have never looked the less kind.

“Yours, ever as ever,

PHILIP BEAUFORT.”

This letter has told its tale, and little remains to explain. Philip Beaufort was one of those men of whom there are many in his peculiar class of society—easy, thoughtless, good-humoured, generous, with feelings infinitely better than his principles.

Inheriting himself but a moderate fortune, which was three parts in the hands of the Jews before he was twenty-five, he had the most brilliant expectations from his uncle; an old bachelor, who, from a courtier, had turned a misanthrope—cold—shrewd—penetrating—worldly—sarcastic—and imperious; and from this relation he received, meanwhile, a handsome, and, indeed, munificent allowance. About sixteen years before the date at which this narrative opens, Philip Beaufort had “run off,” as the saying is, with Catherine Morton, then little more than a child—a motherless child—educated at a boarding-school to notions and desires far beyond her station; for she was the daughter of a provincial tradesman. And Philip Beaufort, in the prime of life, was possessed of most of the qualities that dazzle the eyes, and many of the arts that betray the affections. It was suspected by some that they were privately married: if so, the secret had been closely kept, and baffled all the inquiries of the stern old uncle. Still

there was much, not only in the manner, at once modest and dignified, but in the character of Catherine, which was proud and high-spirited, to give colour to the suspicion. Beaufort, a man naturally careless of forms, paid her a marked and punctilious respect; and his attachment was evidently one, not only of passion, but of confidence and esteem. Time developed in her, mental qualities far superior to those of Beaufort; and for these she had ample leisure of cultivation. To the influence derived from her mind and person she added that of a frank, affectionate, and winning disposition; their children cemented the bond between them. Mr. Beaufort was passionately attached to field-sports. He lived the greater part of the year with Catherine at the beautiful cottage, to which he had built hunting stables that were the admiration of the county; and, though the cottage was near to London, the pleasures of the metropolis seldom allured him for more than a few days—generally but a few hours—at a time;

and he always hurried back with renewed relish to what he considered his home.

Whatever the connexion between Catherine and himself, (and of the true nature of that connexion, the Introductory Chapter has made the reader more enlightened than the world,) her influence had, at least, warded from all excesses, and many follies, a man who, before he knew her, had seemed likely, from the extreme joviality and carelessness of his nature, and a very imperfect education, to contract whatever vices were most in fashion as preservatives against *excess*. And if their union had been openly hallowed by the church, Philip Beaufort had been universally esteemed the model of a tender husband and a fond father. Ever, as he became more and more acquainted with Catherine's natural good qualities, and more and more attached to his home, had Mr. Beaufort, with the generosity of true affection, desired to remove from her the pain of an equivocal condition by a public marriage. But Mr. Beaufort, though generous, was not

free from the worldliness which had met him every where, amidst the society in which his youth had been spent. His uncle, the head of one of those families which yearly vanish from the commonalty into the peerage, but which once formed a distinguished peculiarity in the aristocracy of England — families of ancient birth, immense possessions, at once noble and untitled — held his estates by no other tenure than his own caprice. Though he professed to like Philip, yet he saw but little of him. When the news of the illicit connexion his nephew was reported to have formed reached him, he at first resolved to break it off; but observing that Philip no longer gambled, nor run in debt, and had retired from the turf to the safer and more economical pastimes of the field, he contented himself with inquiries which satisfied him that Philip was not married; and, perhaps, he thought it, on the whole, more prudent to wink at an error that was not attended by the evils which had heretofore characterised the human infirmities of his

reckless nephew. He took care, however, incidentally, and in reference to some scandal of the day, to pronounce his opinion, not upon the fault, but upon the only mode of repairing it.

"If ever," said he, and he looked grimly at Philip while he spoke, "a gentleman were to disgrace his ancestry by introducing into his family one whom his own sister could not receive at her house, why, he ought to sink to her level, and wealth would but make his disgrace the more notorious. If I had an only son, and that son were booby enough to do any thing so discreditable as to marry beneath him, I would rather have my footman for my successor. You understand, Phil?"

Philip did understand, and looked round at the noble house and the stately park, and his generosity was not equal to the trial. Catherine—so great was her power over him—might, perhaps, have easily triumphed over his more selfish calculations; but her love was too delicate ever to breathe, of itself, the

hope that lay deepest at her heart. And her children!—ah! for them she pined, but for them she also hoped. Before them was a long future; and she had all confidence in Philip. Of late, there had been considerable doubts how far the elder Beaufort would realize the expectations in which his nephew had been reared. Philip's younger brother had been much with the old gentleman, and appeared to be in high favour: this brother was a man in every respect the opposite to Philip; sober, supple, decorous, ambitious, with a face of smiles and a heart of ice.

But the old gentleman was taken dangerously ill, and Philip was summoned to his bed of death. Robert, the younger brother, was there also, with his wife (for he had married prudently) and his children—(he had two, a son and a daughter). Not a word did the uncle say as to the disposition of his property till an hour before he died. And then, turning in his bed, he looked first at one nephew, then at the other, and faltered out—

" Philip, you are a scapegrace, but a gentleman: Robert, you are a careful, sober, plausible man; and it is a great pity you were not in business: you would have made a fortune!—you won't inherit one, though you think it: I have marked you, sir. Philip, beware of your brother. Now, let me see the parson."

The old man died; the will was read; and Philip succeeded to a rental of 20,000*l.* a-year: Robert, to a diamond ring, a gold repeater, 5000*l.*, and a curious collection of bottled snakes.

CHAPTER III.

"*Say, delightful Dream;*

Let him within his pleasant garden walk;

Give him her arm—of blessings let them talk."

CAZART.

"THERE, Robert, there! now you can see the new stables. By Jove, they are the completest thing in the three kingdoms!"

"Quite a pile! But is that the house? You lodge your horses more magnificently than yourself."

"But is it not a beautiful cottage?—to be sure, it owes every thing to Catherine's taste. Dear Catherine!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort, for this colloquy took place between the brothers, as their britska rapidly descended the hill, at the foot of which lay Fernside Cottage and its miniature demesnes—Mr. Robert Beaufort pulled his

travelling-cap over his brows, and his countenance fell, whether at the name of Catherine, or the tone in which the name was uttered; and there was a pause, broken by a third occupant of the briska, a youth of about seventeen, who sat opposite the brothers.

“And who are those boys on the lawn, uncle?”

“Who are those boys?” It was a simple question, but it grated on the ear of Mr. Robert Beaufort—it struck discord at his heart. “Who were those boys?” as they ran across the sward, eager to welcome their father home; the westerling sun shining full on their joyous faces—their young forms so lithe and so graceful—their merry laughter ringing in the still air. “Those boys,” thought Mr. Robert Beaufort, “the sons of shame, rob mine of his inheritance.” The elder brother turned round at his nephew’s question, and saw the expression on Robert’s face. He bit his lip, and answered, gravely—

"Arthur, they are my children."

"I did not know you were married," replied Arthur, bending forward to take a better view of his cousins.

Mr. Robert Beaufort smiled bitterly, and Philip's brow grew crimson.

The carriage stopped at the little lodge. Philip opened the door, and jumped to the ground; the brother and his son followed. A moment more, and Philip was locked in Catherine's arms, her tears falling fast upon his breast; his children plucking at his coat; and the younger one crying, in his shrill impatient treble, "Papa! papa! you don't see Sidney, papa!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort placed his hand on his son's shoulder, and arrested his steps, as they contemplated the group before them.

"Arthur," said he, in a hollow whisper, "those children are our disgrace and your supplanters; they are bastards! bastards! and they are to be his heirs!"

Arthur made no answer, but the smile

with which he had hitherto gazed on his new relations vanished.

"Kate," said Mr. Beamfort, as he turned from Mrs. Morton, and lifted his youngest-born in his arms, "this is my brother and his son: they are welcome, are they not?"

Mr. Robert bowed low, and extended his hand, with stiff affability, to Mrs. Morton, muttering something equally complimentary and inaudible.

The party proceeded towards the house. Philip and Arthur brought up the rear.

"Do you shoot?" asked Arthur, observing the gun in his cousin's hand.

"Yes. I hope this season to bag as many head as my father: he is a famous shot. But this is only a single barrel, and an old-fashioned sort of detonator. My father must get me one of the new guns. I can't afford it myself."

"I should think not," said Arthur, smiling.

"Oh, as to that," resumed Philip, quickly, and with a heightened colour, "I could have

managed it very well, if I had not given thirty guineas for a brace of pointers the other day: they are the best dogs you ever saw."

"Thirty guineas!" echoed Arthur, looking with *noire* surprise at the speaker; "why, how old are you?"

"Just fifteen last birth-day. Holla, John! John Green!" cried the young gentleman, in an imperious voice, to one of the gardeners, who was crossing the lawn, "see that the nets are taken down to the lake to-morrow, and that my tent is pitched properly, by the lime-trees, by nine o'clock. I hope you will understand me this time: Heaven knows you take a deal of telling before you understand any thing!"

"Yes, Mr. Philip," said the man, bowing obsequiously; and then muttered, as he went off, "Drat the nat'ral! he speaks to a poor man as if he warn't flesh and blood."

"Does your father keep hunters?" asked Philip.

"No."

"Why?"

"Perhaps one reason may be, that he is not rich enough."

"Oh! that's a pity. Never mind, we'll mount you, whenever you like to pay us a visit."

Young Arthur drew himself up, and his air, naturally frank and gentle, became haughty and reserved. Philip gazed on him, and felt offended; he scarce knew why, but from that moment he conceived a dislike to his cousin.

CHAPTER IV.

"For a man is helpless and vain, of a condition so exposed to calamity that a robin is able to kill him; any trooper out of the Egyptian army—a fly can do it, when it goes on God's errand."—JEREMY TAYLOR: *On the Dissoluteness of the Heart.*

THE two brothers sat at their wine after dinner. Robert sipped claret, the sturdy Philip quaffed his more generous port. Catherine and the boys might be seen at a little distance, and by the light of a soft August moon, among the shrubs and *bosquets* of the lawn.

Philip Beaufort was about five and forty, tall, robust, nay, of great strength of frame and limb; with a countenance extremely winning, not only from the comeliness of its features, but its frankness, manliness, and good-nature. His was the bronzed,

rich complexion, the inclination toward *embonpoint*, the athletic girth of chest, which denote redundant health, and mirthful temper, and sanguine blood. Robert, who had lived the life of cities, was a year younger than his brother; nearly as tall, but pale, meagre, stooping, and with a care-worn, anxious, hungry look, which made the smile that hung upon his lips seem hollow and artificial. His dress, though plain, was neat and studied; his manner, bland and plausible; his voice, sweet and low: there was that about him which, if it did not win liking, tended to excite respect—a certain decorum, a nameless propriety of appearance and bearing, that approached a little to formality: his every movement, slow and measured, was that of one who paced in the circle that fences round the habits and usages of the world.

“Yes,” said Philip, “I had always decided to take this step, whenever my poor uncle’s death should allow me to do so. You have

seen Catherine, but you do not know half her good qualities: she would grace any station: and, besides, she nursed me so carefully last year, when I broke my collar-bone in that cursed steeple-chase. Egad, I am getting too heavy, and growing too old, for such schoolboy pranks."

"I have no doubt of Mrs. Morton's excellence, and I honour your motives; still, when you talk of her gracing any station, you must not forget, my dear brother, that she will be no more received as Mrs. Beaufort than she is now as Mrs. Morton."

"But I tell you, Robert, that I am really married to her already; that she would never leave her home but on that condition; that we were married the very day we met after her flight."

Robert's thin lips broke into a slight sneer of incredulity.

"My dear brother, you do right to say this—any man in your situation would. But I know that my uncle took every pains to

ascertain if the report of a private marriage were true."

"And you helped him in the search. Eh, Bob?"

Bob slightly blushed. Philip went on,

"Ha, ha, to be sure you did; you knew that such a discovery would have done for me in the old gentleman's good opinion. But I blinded you both, ha, ha! The fact is, that we were married with the greatest privacy; that even now, I own, it would be difficult for Catherine herself to establish the fact, unless I wished it. I am ashamed to think that I have never even told her where I keep the main proof of the marriage. I induced one witness to leave the country, the other must be long since dead: my poor friend too, who officiated, is no more. Even the register, Bob, the register itself has been destroyed: and yet, notwithstanding, I will prove the ceremony and clear up poor Catherine's fame; for I have the attested copy of the register

safe and sound. Catherine not married! why, look at her, man!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort glanced at the window for a moment, but his countenance was still that of one unconvinced.

"Well, brother," said he, dipping his fingers in the water glass, "it is not for me to contradict you. It is a very curious tale—parson dead—witnesses missing. But still, as I said before, if you are resolved on a public marriage, you are wise to insist that there has been a previous private one. Yet, believe me, Philip," continued Robert, with solemn earnestness, "the world —"

"D—the world! What do I care for the world! We don't want to go to routs and balls, and give dinners to fine people. I shall live much the same as I have always done; only, I shall now keep the hounds—they are very indifferently kept at present—and have a yacht; and engage the best masters for the boys. Phil wants to go to Eton,

but I know what Eton is: poor fellow! his feelings might be hurt there, if others are as sceptical as yourself. I suppose my old friends will not be less civil, now I have 20,000*l.* a-year. And as for the society of women, between you and me, I don't care a rush for any woman but Catherine: poor Kitty!"

"Well, you are the best judge of your own affairs: you don't misinterpret my motives?"

"My dear Bob, no. I am quite sensible how kind it is in you—a man of your staid habits and strict views, coming here to pay a mark of respect to Kate—(Mr. Robert turned uneasily in his chair),—even before you knew of the private marriage, and I am sure I don't blame you, for never having done it before. You did quite right to try your chance with my uncle."

Mr. Robert turned in his chair again, still more uneasily, and cleared his voice as if to speak. But Philip tossed off his wine, and proceeded, without heeding his brother,—

"And though the poor old man does not

seem to have liked you the better for consulting his scruples, yet we must make up for the partiality of his will. Let me see—what, with your wife's fortune, you muster 2000*l.* a-year?"

"Only 1500*l.*, Philip, and Arthur's education is growing expensive. Next year he goes to college. He is certainly very clever, and I have great hopes——"

"That he will do honour to us all—so have I. He is a noble young fellow; and I think my Philip may find a great deal to learn from him,—Phil is a sad, idle dog, but with a devil of a spirit, and sharp as a needle. I wish you could see him ride. Well, to return to Arthur. Don't trouble yourself about his education—that shall be my care. He shall go to Christ Church—a gentleman-commoner, of course—and when he's of age we'll get him into parliament. Now for yourself, Bob, I shall sell the town-house in Berkeley Square, and whatever it brings you shall have. Besides that, I'll add 1500*l.* a-year to your 1500*l.*—so that's said and done. Pshaw! brothers should be

brothers. Let's come out and play with the boys!"

The two Beauforts stepped through the open casement into the lawn.

"You look pale, Bob—all you London fellows do. As for me, I feel as strong as a horse; much better than when I was one of your gay dogs straying loose about the town! 'Gad I have never had a moment's ill health, except a fall now and then: I feel as if I should live for ever, and that's the reason why I could never make a will."

"Have you never, then, made your will?"

"Never as yet. Faith, till now, I had little enough to leave. But now that all this great Beaufort property is at my own disposal, I must think of Kate's jointure. By Jove! now I speak of it, I will ride to ***** to-morrow, and consult the lawyer there both about the will and the marriage. You will stay for the wedding?"

"Why, I must go into —shire to-morrow evening to place Arthur with his tutor. But

I'll return for the wedding, if you particularly wish it: only Mrs. Beaufort is a woman of very strict——”

“I do particularly wish it,” interrupted Philip, gravely; “for I desire, for Catherine's sake, that you, my sole surviving relation, may not seem to withhold your countenance from an act of justice to her. And as for your wife, I fancy 1500*l.* a-year would reconcile her to my marrying out of the Penitentiary.”

Mr. Robert bowed his head, coughed huskily, and said, “I appreciate your generous affection, Philip.”

The next morning, while the elder parties were still over the breakfast-table, the young people were in the grounds: it was a lovely day, one of the last of the luxuriant August—and Arthur, as he looked round, thought he had never seen a more beautiful place. It was, indeed, just the spot to captivate a youthful and susceptible fancy. The village of Fernside, though in one of the counties adjoining Middlesex, and as near to London as the

owner's passionate pursuits of the field would permit, was yet as rural and sequestered as if an hundred miles distant from the smoke of the huge City. Though the dwelling was called a cottage, Philip had enlarged the original modest building into a villa of some pretensions. On either side a graceful and well-proportioned portico stretched verandahs, covered with roses and elematis; to the right extended a range of costly conservatories, terminating in vistas of trellis-work which formed those elegant allies called roseries, and served to screen the more useful gardens from view. The lawn, smooth and even, was studded with American plants and shrubs in flower, and bounded on one side by a small lake, on the opposite bank of which limes and cedars threw their shadows over the clear waves. On the other side a light fence separated the grounds from a large paddock, in which three or four hunters grazed in indolent enjoyment. It was one of those cottages which bespeak the ease and luxury not often found in more

ostentatious mansions — an abode which the visitor of sixteen contemplates with vague notions of poetry and love — which at forty he might think dull and d—d expensive — which at sixty he would pronounce to be damp in winter, and full of earwigs in the summer. Master Philip was leaning on his favourite gun; Master Sidney was chasing a peacock butterfly; Arthur was silently gazing on the shining lake and the still foliage that drooped over its surface. In the countenance of this young man there was something that excited a certain interest. He was less handsome than Philip, but the expression of his face was more prepossessing. There was something of pride in the forehead; but of good-nature, not unminged with irresolution and weakness, in the curves of the mouth. He was more delicate of frame than Philip; and the colour of his complexion was not that of a robust constitution. His movements were graceful and self-possessed, and he had his father's sweetness of voice.

"This is really beautiful!—I envy you, cousin Philip."

"Has not your father got a country-house?"

"No: we live either in London or at some hot, crowded, watering-place."

"Yes; this is very nice during the shooting and hunting season. But my old nurse says we shall have a much finer place now. I liked this very well till I saw Lord Belville's place. But it is very unpleasant not to have the finest house in the county: *aut Caesar aut nihil*—that's my motto. Ah! do you see that swallow? I'll bet you a guinea I hit it."

"No, poor thing! don't hurt it." But, ere the remonstrance was uttered, the bird lay quivering on the ground.

"It is just September, and one must keep one's hand in," said Philip, as he reloaded his gun.

To Arthur this action seemed a wanton cruelty; it was rather the wanton recklessness which belongs to a wild boy accustomed to gratify the impulse of the moment—the reck-

lessness which is *not* cruelty in the boy, but which prosperity may pamper into cruelty in the man. And scarce had he reloaded his gun before the neigh of a young colt came from the neighbouring paddock, and Philip bounded to the fence. "He calls me, poor fellow; you shall see him feed from my hand. Run in for a piece of bread—a large piece, Sidney." The boy and the animal seemed to understand each other. "I see you don't like horses," he said to Arthur. "As for me, I love dogs, horses—every dumb creature."

"Except swallows!" said Arthur, with a half smile, and a little surprised at the inconsistency of the boast.

"Oh! that is *sport*—all fair: it is not to hurt the swallow—it is to obtain skill," said Philip, colouring; and then, as if not quite easy with his own definition, he turned away abruptly.

"This is dull work—suppose we fish. By Jove! (he had caught his father's expletive,) that blockhead has put the tent on the wrong

side of the lake, after all. Holla, you, sir!" and the unhappy gardener looked up from his flower-beds; "what ails you? I have a great mind to tell my father of you—you grow stupider every day. I told you to put the tent under the lime-trees."

"We could not manage it, sir; the boughs were in the way."

"And why did not you cut the boughs, blockhead?"

"I did not dare do so, sir, without master's orders," said the man, doggedly.

"My orders are sufficient, I should think: so none of your impertinence," cried Philip, with a raised colour; and lifting his hand, in which he held his ramrod, he shook it menacingly over the gardener's head,—“I've a great mind to —”

"What's the matter, Philip!" cried the good-humoured voice of his father,—“Fie!”

"This fellow does not mind what I say, sir."

"I did not like to cut the boughs of the

lime-trees without your orders, sir," said the gardener.

"No, it would be a pity to cut them. You should consult me there, Master Philip;" and the father shook him by the collar with a good-natured, and affectionate, but rough sort of caress.

"Be quiet, father!" said the boy, petulantly and proudly; "or," he added, in a lower voice, but one which shewed emotion, "my cousin may think you mean less kindly than you always do, sir."

The father was touched:—"Go and cut the lime-boughs, John; and always do as Mr. Philip tells you."

The mother was behind, and she sighed audibly,—*"Ah! dearest, I fear you will spoil him."*

"Is he not your son—and do we not owe him the more respect for having hitherto allowed others to——"

He stopped and the mother could say no more. And thus it was, that this boy of

powerful character and strong passions, had, from motives the most amiable, been pampered from the darling into the despot.

"And now, Kate, I will, as I told you last night, ride over to — and fix the earliest day for our marriage. I will ask the lawyer to dine here, to talk about the proper steps for proving the private one."

"Will that be difficult?" asked Catherine, with natural anxiety.

"No,—for if you remember I had the precaution to get an examined copy of the register; otherwise, I own to you, I should have been alarmed. I don't know what has become of Smith. I heard some time since from his father that he had left the colony; and (I never told you before—it would have made you uneasy) once, a few years ago, when my uncle again got it into his head that we might be married, I was afraid poor Caleb's successor might, by chance, betray us. So I went over to A— myself, being near it when I was staying with Lord C—, in order to see how

far it might be necessary to secure the parson; and, only think! I found an accident had happened to the register—so, as the clergyman could know nothing, I kept my own council. How lucky I have the copy! No doubt the lawyer will set all to rights; and, while I am making settlements, I may as well make my will. I have plenty for both boys, but the dark one must be the heir. Does he not look born to be an eldest son?"

"Ah, Philip!"

"Pshaw! one don't die the sooner for making a will. Have I the air of a man in a consumption?"—and the sturdy sportsman glanced complacently at the strength and symmetry of his manly limbs. "Come, Phil, let's go to the stables. Now, Robert, I will shew you what is better worth seeing than those miserable flower-beds." So saying, Mr. Beaufort led the way to the court-yard at the back of the cottage. Catherine, and Sidney remained on the lawn, the rest followed the host. The grooms, of whom Beau-

fort was the idol, hastened to shew how well the horses had thriven in his absence.

"Do see how Brown Bess has come on, sir: but, to be sure, Master Philip keeps her in exercise. Ah, sir, he will be as good a rider as your honour, one of these days."

"He ought to be, Tom; for I think he'll never have my weight to carry. Well, saddle Brown Bess for Mr. Philip. What horse shall I take?—Ah! here's my old friend Puppet!"

"I don't know what's come to Puppet, sir; he's off his feed and turned sulky. I tried him over the bar yesterday, but he was quite restive like."

"The devil he was! So, so, old boy, you shall go over the six-barred gate to-day, or we'll know why." And Mr. Beaufort patted the sleek neck of his favourite hunter. "Put the saddle on him, Tom."

"Yes, your honour. I sometimes think he is hurt in the loins somehow—he don't take

to his leaps kindly, and he always tries to bite when we bridles him. Be quiet, sir!"

"Only his airs," said Philip. "I did not know this, or I would have taken him over the gate. Why did not you tell me, Tom?"

"Lord love you, sir! because you have such a spurret; and if any thing had come to you —"

"Quite right; you are not weight enough for Puppet, my boy; and he never did like any one to back him but myself. What say you, brother, will you ride with us?"

"No, I must go to — to-day with Arthur. I have engaged the post-horses at two o'clock; but I shall be with you to-morrow or the day after. You see his tutor expects him; and as he is backward in his mathematics, he has no time to lose."

"Well, then, good-by, nephew!" and Beaufort slipped a pocket-book into the boy's hand. "Tush! whenever you want money, don't trouble your father—write to me—we shall be always glad to see you; and you must

teach Philip to like his book a little better—eh, Phil!"

"No, father, I shall be rich enough to do without books," said Philip, rather coarsely; but then observing the heightened colour of his cousin, he went up to him, and with a generous impulse said, "Arthur, you admired this gun; pray accept it. Nay, don't be shy—I can have as many as I like for the asking: you're not so well off, you know."

The intention was kind, but the manner was so patronising, that Arthur felt offended. He put back the gun, and said drily, "I shall have no occasion for a gun, thank you."

If Arthur was offended by the offer, Philip was much more offended by the refusal. "As you like; I hate pride," said he; and he gave the gun to the groom as he vaulted into his saddle, with the lightness of a young Mercury. "Come, father!"

Mr. Beaufort had now mounted his favourite hunter—a large, powerful horse, well known for its prowess in the field. The rider trotted

him once or twice through the spacious yard.

"Nonsense, Tom: no more hurt in the loins than I am. Open that gate; we will go across the paddock, and take the gate yonder—the old six-bar—eh, Phil?"

"Capital!—to be sure! —"

The gate was opened—the grooms stood watchful to see the leap, and a kindred curiosity arrested Robert Beaufort and his son.

How well they looked, those two horsemen; the ease, lightness, spirit of the one, with the fine-limbed and fiery steed that literally "bounced beneath him as a barb"—seemingly as gay, as ardent, and as haughty as the boy-rider. And the manly, and almost herculean, form of the elder Beaufort, which, from the buoyancy of its movements, and the supple grace that belongs to the perfect mastery of any athletic art, possessed an elegance and dignity, especially on horseback, which rarely accompanies proportions equally sturdy

and robust. There was indeed something knightly and chivalrous in the bearing of the elder Beaufort—in his handsome aquiline features, the erectness of his mien, the very wave of his hand, as he spurred from the yard.

“What a fine-looking fellow my uncle is!” said Arthur, with involuntary admiration.

“Ay, an excellent life—amazingly strong!” returned the pale father, with a slight sigh.

“Philly,” said Mr. Beaufort, as they cantered across the paddock, “I think the gate is too much for you. I will just take Puppet over, and then we will open it for you.”

“Pooh, my dear father! you don’t know how I’m improved!” And slackening the rein, and touching the side of his horse, the young rider darted forward and cleared the gate, which was of no common height, with an ease that extorted a loud bravo from the proud father.

“Now, Puppet,” said Mr. Beaufort, spur-

ring his own horse. The animal cantered towards the gate, and then suddenly turned round with an impatient and angry snort. "For shame, Puppet!—for shame, old boy!" said the sportsman, wheeling him again to the barrier. The horse shook his head, as if in remonstrance; but the spur vigorously applied, shewed him that his master would not listen to his mute reasonings. He bounded forward—made at the gate—struck his hoofs against the top-bar—fell forward, and threw his rider head foremost on the road beyond. The horse rose instantly—not so the master. The son dismounted, alarmed and terrified. His father was speechless! and blood gushed from the mouth and nostrils, as the head drooped heavily on the boy's breast. The bystanders had witnessed the fall—they crowded to the spot—they took the fallen man from the weak arms of the son—the head groom examined him with the eye of one who had picked up science from his experience in such casualties.

"Speak, brother!—where are you hurt?"

exclaimed Robert Beaufort.

"He will never speak more!" said the groom, bursting into tears. "His neck is broken!"

"Send for the nearest surgeon," cried Mr. Robert. "Good God! boy! don't mount that devilish horse!"

But Arthur had already leaped on the unhappy steed, which had been the cause of this appalling affliction. "Which way?"

"Straight on to ***** only two miles—every one knows Mr. Powis's house. God bless you!" said the groom.

Arthur vanished.

"Lift him carefully, and take him to the house," said Mr. Robert. "My poor brother! my dear brother!"

He was interrupted by a cry, a single, shrill, heart-breaking cry; and Philip fell senseless to the ground.

No one heeded him at that hour—no one

beeded the fatherless BASTARD. "Gently, gently," said Mr. Robert, as he followed the servants and their load. And he then muttered to himself, and his sallow cheek grew bright, and his breath came short: "He has made no will!—he never made a will!"

CHAPTER V.

"*Coraxa*, O boy, then where art thou?

. . . What becomes of me?"—*King John*.

It was three days after the death of Philip Beaufort—for the surgeon arrived only to confirm the judgment of the groom:—In the drawing-room of the cottage, the windows closed, lay the body, in its coffin, the lid not yet nailed down. There, prostrate on the floor, tearless, speechless, was the miserable Catherine; poor Sidney, too young to comprehend all his loss, sobbing at her side; while Philip apart, seated beside the coffin, gazed abstractedly on that cold, rigid face, which had never known one frown for his boyish follies.

In another room, that had been appropriated to the late owner, called his study,

sat Robert Beaufort. Every thing in this room spoke of the deceased. Partially separated from the rest of the house, it communicated by a winding staircase, with a chamber above, to which Philip had been wont to betake himself whenever he returned late, and over-exhilarated, from some rural feast crowning a hard day's hunt. Above a quaint old-fashioned bureau of Dutch workmanship (which Philip had picked up at a sale in the earlier years of his marriage) was a portrait of Catherine taken in the bloom of her youth. On a peg on the door that led to the staircase still hung his rough driving-coat. The window commanded the view of the paddock, in which the worn-out hunter or the unbroken colt grazed at will. Around the walls of the "study"—(a strange misnomer!)—hung prints of celebrated fox-hunts and renowned steeple-chases: Guns, fishing-rods, and foxes' brushes, ranged with a sportsman's neatness, supplied the place of books. On the mantel-piece lay a cigar-

case, a well-worn volume on the *Veterinary Art*, and the last No. of *The Sporting Magazine*. And in that room—thus witnessing of the hardy, masculine, rural life, that had passed away—sallow, stooping, town-worn, sat, I say, Robert Beaufort, the heir-at-law,—alone: For the very day of his death he had remanded his son home with the letter that announced to his wife the change in their fortunes, and directed her to send his lawyer post-haste to the house of death. The bureau, and the drawers, and the boxes which contained the papers of the deceased, were open; their contents had been ransacked; no certificate of the private marriage, no hint of such an event; not a paper found to signify the last wishes of the rich dead man. He had died, and made no sign. Mr. Robert Beaufort's countenance was still and composed.

A knock at the door was heard; the lawyer entered.

"Sir, the undertakers are here, and Mr.

Greaves has ordered the bells to be rung: at three o'clock he will read the service."

"I am obliged to you, Blackwell, for taking these melancholy offices on yourself. My poor brother!—it is so sudden! But the funeral, you say, ought to take place to-day?"

"The weather is so warm!" said the lawyer, wiping his forehead. As he spoke, the Death-Bell was heard.

There was a pause.

"It would have been a terrible shock to Mrs. Norton if she had been his wife," observed Mr. Blackwell. "But I suppose persons of that kind have very little feeling. I must say, that it was fortunate for the family, that the event happened before Mr. Beaufort was wheedled into so improper a marriage."

"It was fortunate, Blackwell. Have you ordered the post-horses? I shall start immediately after the funeral."

"What is to be done with the cottage, sir?"

"You may advertise it for sale."

"And Mrs. Morton and the boys?"

"Hum—we will consider. She was a tradesman's daughter. I think I ought to provide for her suitably, eh?"

"It is more than the world could expect from you, sir: it is very different from a wife."

"Oh, very! very much so, indeed! Just ring for a lighted candle, we will seal up these boxes. And—I think I could take a sandwich. Poor Philip!"

The funeral was over; the dead shovelled away. What a strange thing it does seem, that that very form which we prized so charily, for which we prayed the winds to be gentle, which we lapped from the cold in our arms, from whose footstep we would have removed a stone, should be suddenly thrust out of sight—an abomination that the earth must not look upon—a despicable leath-

someness, to be concealed and to be forgotten! And this same composition of bone and muscle that was yesterday so strong—which men respected, and women loved, and children clung to—to-day so lamentably powerless, unable to defend or protect those who lay nearest to its heart; its riches wrested from it, its wishes spat upon, its influence expiring with its last sigh! A breath from its lips making all that mighty difference between what it was and what it is!

The post-horses were at the door as the funeral procession returned to the house.

Mr. Robert Beaufort bowed slightly to Mrs. Morton, and said, with his pocket-handkerchief still before his eyes,—

“ I will write to you in a few days, ma'am; you will find that I shall not forget you. The cottage will be sold; but we sha'n't hurry you. Good by, ma'am; good by, my boys;” and he patted his nephews on the head.

Philip winced aside, and scowled haughtily at his uncle, who muttered to himself, “ That

boy will come to no good!" Little Sidney put his hand into the rich man's, and looked up, pleadingly, into his face: "Can't you say something pleasant to poor mamma, Uncle Robert?"

Mr. Beaufort hemmed huskily and entered the britska—it had been his brother's: the lawyer followed, and they drove away.

A week after the funeral, Philip stole from the house into the conservatory, to gather some fruit for his mother; she had scarcely touched food since Beaufort's death. She was worn to a shadow; her hair had turned grey. Now she had at last found tears, and she wept noiselessly but unceasingly.

The boy had plucked some grapes, and placed them carefully in his basket: he was about to select a nectarine that seemed riper than the rest, when his hand was roughly seized; and the gruff voice of John Green, the gardener, exclaimed,—

"What are you about, Master Philip? you must not touch them 'ere fruit!"

"How dare you, fellow!" cried the young gentleman, in a tone of equal astonishment and wrath.

"None of your airs, Master Philip! What I means is, that some great folks are coming to look at the place to-morrow; and I won't have my show of fruit spoiled by being pawed about by the like of you: so, that's plain, Master Philip!"

The boy grew very pale, but remained silent. The gardener, delighted to retaliate the insolence he had received, continued—

"You need not go for to look so spiteful, master; you are not the great man you thought you were; you are nobody now, and so you will find ere long. So, march out, if you please: I wants to lock up the glass."

As he spoke, he took the lad roughly by the arm; but Philip, the most irascible of mortals, was strong for his years, and fearless as a young lion. He caught up a watering-pot, which the gardener had deposited while

he expostulated with his late tyrant, and struck the man across the face with it so violently and so suddenly, that he fell back over the beds, and the glass crackled and shivered under him. Philip did not wait for the foe to recover his equilibrium; but, taking up his grapes, and possessing himself quietly of the disputed nectarine, quitted the spot; and the gardener did not think it prudent to pursue him. To boys, under ordinary circumstances — boys who have buffeted their way through a scolding nursery, a wrangling family, or a public school — there would have been nothing in this squabble to dwell on the memory or vibrate on the nerves, after the first burst of passion; but to Philip Deaforth it was an era in life; it was the first insult he had ever received; it was his initiation into that changed, rough, and terrible career, to which the spoiled darling of vanity and love was henceforth condemned. His pride and his self-esteem had incurred a fearful shock. He entered the house, and a sickness came

over him; his limbs trembled; he sat down in the hall, and, placing the fruit beside him, covered his face with his hands, and wept. Those were not the tears of a boy, drawn from a shallow source; they were the burning, agonising, reluctant tears, that men shed, wrung from the heart as if it were its blood. He had never been sent to school, lest he should meet with mortification. He had had various tutors, trained to shew, rather than to exact, respect; one succeeding another at his own whim and caprice. His natural quickness, and a very strong, hard, inquisitive turn of mind, had enabled him, however, to pick up more knowledge, though of a desultory and miscellaneous nature, than boys of his age generally possess; and his roving, independent, out-of-door existence, had served to ripen his understanding. He had certainly, in spite of every precaution, arrived at some, though not very distinct, notion, of his peculiar position; but none of its inconveniences had visited him till that day. He began now to turn his eyes

to the future; and vague and dark forebodings—a consciousness of the shelter, the protector, the station he had lost in his father's death—crept coldly over him. While thus musing, a ring was heard at the bell; he lifted his head; it was the postman with a letter. Philip hastily rose, and, averting his face, on which the tears were not yet dried, took the letter; and then, snatching up his little basket of fruit, repaired to his mother's room.

The shutters were half closed on the bright day—oh, what a mockery is there in the smile of the happy sun when it shines on the wretched! Mrs. Merton sat, or rather crouched, in a distant corner; her streaming eyes fixed on vacancy; listless, drooping; a very image of desolate woe: and Sidney was weaving flower-chains at her feet.

“Mamma!—mother!” whispered Philip, as he threw his arms round her neck; “look up! look up!—my heart breaks to see you. Do taste this fruit: you will die too, if you go

on thus; and what will become of us — of Sidney?"

Mrs. Morton did look up vaguely into his face, and strove to smile.

"See, too, I have brought you a letter; perhaps good news: shall I break the seal?"

Mrs. Morton shook her head gently, and took the letter — alas! how different from that one which Sidney had placed in her hands not two short weeks since — it was Mr. Robert Beaufort's hand-writing. She shouldered, and laid it down. And then there suddenly, and, for the first time, flashed across her the sense of her strange position — the dread of the future. What were her sons to be henceforth? What herself? Whatever the sanctity of her marriage, the law might fail her. At the disposition of Mr. Robert Beaufort the fate of three lives might depend. She gasped for breath; again took up the letter; and hurried over the contents: they ran thus:—

"DEAR MADAM,— Knowing that you must

naturally be anxious as to the future prospects of your children and yourself, left, by my poor brother, destitute of all provision, I take the earliest opportunity which it seems to me that propriety and decorum allow, to apprise you of my intentions. I need not say that, properly speaking, you can have no kind of claim upon the relations of my late brother; nor will I hurt your feelings by those moral reflections which at this season of sorrow cannot, I hope, fail involuntarily to force themselves upon you. Without more than this mere allusion to your peculiar connexion with my brother, I may, however, be permitted to add, that that connexion tended very materially to separate him from the legitimate branches of his family; and in consulting with them as to a provision for you and your children, I find that, besides scruples that are to be respected, some natural degree of soreness exists upon their minds. Out of regard, however, to my poor brother (though I saw very little of him of late years), I am willing to

waive those feelings which, as a father and a husband, you may conceive that I share with the rest of my family. You will probably now decide on living with some of your own relations; and that you may not be entirely a burden to them, I beg to say that I shall allow you a hundred a-year; paid, if you prefer it, quarterly. You may also select certain articles of linen and plate, of which I inclose a list. With regard to your sons, I have no objection to place them at a grammar-school, and, at a proper age, to apprentice them to any trade suitable to their future station, in the choice of which your own family can give you the best advice. If they conduct themselves properly, they may always depend on my protection. I do not wish to hurry your movements; but it will probably be painful to you to remain longer than you can help in a place crowded with unpleasant recollections; and as the cottage is to be sold—indeed my brother-in-law, Lord Lilbourne, thinks it would suit him—you

will be liable to the interruption of strangers to see it; and indeed your prolonged residence at Fernside, you must be sensible, is rather an obstacle to the sale. I beg to inclose you a draft for 100*l.* to pay any present expenses; and to request, when you are settled, to know where the first quarter shall be paid.

"I shall write to Mr. Jackson (who, I think, is the bailiff), to detail my instructions as to selling the crops, &c., and discharging the servants; so that you may have no further trouble.

"I am, Madam,

"Your obedient Servant,

"ROBERT BEAUFORT."

*"Berkeley Square, September 13*th*, 18—."*

The letter fell from Catherine's hands. Her grief was changed to indignation and scorn.

"The insolent!" she exclaimed, with flashing eyes. "This to me!—to me!—the wife, the lawful wife of his brother! the wedded mother of his brother's children!"

"Say that again, mother! again—again!"

cried Philip, in a loud voice. "His wife!—wedded!"

"I swear it," said Catherine, solemnly. "I kept the secret for your father's sake. Now, for yours, the truth must be proclaimed."

"Thank God! thank God!" murmured Philip, in a quivering voice, throwing his arms round his brother. "We have no brand on our names, Sidbey."

At those accents, so full of supposed joy and pride, the mother felt at once all that her son had suspected and concealed. She felt that beneath his haughty and wayward character there had lurked delicate and generous forbearance for her; that from his equivocal position his very faults might have arisen; and a pang of remorse for her long sacrifice of the children to the father shot through her heart. It was followed by a fear, an appalling fear, more painful than the remorse. The proofs that were to clear herself and them! The words of her husband, that last

awful morning, rang in her ear. The minister dead; the witness absent; the register lost! But the copy of that register!—the copy! might not that suffice? She groaned, and closed her eyes as if to shut out the future: then starting up, she hurried from the room, and went straight to Beaufort's study. As she laid her hand on the latch of the door, she trembled and drew back. But care for the living was stronger at that moment than even anguish for the dead: she entered the apartment; she passed with a firm step to the bureau. It was locked; Robert Beaufort's seal upon the lock:—on every cupboard, every box, every drawer, the same seal that spoke of rights more valued than her own. But Catherine was not daunted: she turned and saw Philip by her side; she pointed to the bureau in silence; the boy understood the appeal. He left the room, and returned in a few moments with a cisel. The lock was broken: tremblingly and eagerly Catherine ransacked the contents; opened paper after

paper, letter after letter, in vain: no certificate, no will, no memorial. Could the brother have abstracted the fatal proof? A word sufficed to explain to Philip what she sought for; and his search was more minute than hers. Every possible receptacle for papers in that room, in the whole house, was explored, and still the search was fruitless.

Three hours afterwards they were in the same room in which Philip had brought Robert Beaufort's letter to his mother. Catherine was seated, tearless, but deadly pale with heart-sickness and dismay.

"Mother," said Philip, may I now read the letter?"

"Yes, boy; and decide for us all." She paused, and examined his face as he read. He felt her eye was upon him, and restrained his emotions as he proceeded. When he had done, he lifted his dark gaze upon Catherine's watchful countenance.

"Mother, whether or not we obtain our rights, you will still refuse this man's charity.

I am young—a boy; but I am strong and active. I will work for you day and night. I have it in me—I feel it; any thing rather than eating *his* bread.”

“Philip! Philip! you are indeed my son; your father’s son! And have you no reproach for your mother, who so weakly, so criminally, concealed your birthright, till, alas! discovery may be too late? Oh! reproach me, reproach me! it will be kindness. No! do not kiss me! I cannot bear it. Boy! boy! if, as my heart tells me, we fail in proof, do you understand what, in the world’s eye, I am; what you are?”

“I do!” said Philip firmly; and he fell on his knees at her feet. “Whatever others call you, you are a mother, and I your son. You are, in the judgment of Heaven, my father’s Wife, and I his Heir.”

Catherine bowed her head, and, with a gush of tears, fell into his arms. Sidney crept up to her, and forced his lips to her cold

check. "Mamma! what vexes you? Mamma, mamma!"

"Oh, Sidoe! Sidoe! How like his father! Look at him, Philip! Shall we do right to refuse even this pittance? Must he be a beggar too?"

"Never a beggar!" said Philip, with a pride that shewed what hard lessons he had yet to learn. "The lawful sons of a Beaufort were not born to beg their bread!"

CHAPTER VI.

"The storm above, and frozen world below.

.

The olive bough

Faded and cast upon the common wind,

And earth's doveless ark!" — LEXAN BLESSMAN.

MR. ROBERT BEACFORT was generally considered by the world a very worthy man. He had never committed any excess—never gambled or incurred debt—or fallen into the warm errors most common with his sex. He was a good husband—a careful father—an agreeable neighbour—rather charitable, than otherwise, to the poor. He was honest and methodical in his dealings, and had been known to behave handsomely in different relations of life. Mr. Robert Beaufort, indeed, always meant to do what was right—in the

eyes of the world! He had no other rule of action but that which the world supplied: his religion was decorum—his sense of honour was regard to opinion. His heart was a dial to which the world was the sun: when the great eye of the public fell on it, it answered every purpose that a heart could answer; but when that eye was invisible, the dial was mute—a piece of brass and nothing more.

It is just to Robert Beaufort to assure the reader that he wholly disbelieved his brother's story of a private marriage. He considered that tale, when heard for the first time, as the mere invention (and a shallow one) of a man wishing to make the imprudent step he was about to take as respectable as he could. The careless tone of his brother when speaking upon the subject—his confession that of such a marriage there were no distinct proofs, except a copy of a register (which copy Robert had not found)—made his incredulity natural. He therefore deemed himself under no obligation of delicacy, or respect, to a

woman through whose means he had very nearly lost a noble succession—a woman who had not even borne his brother's name—a woman whom nobody knew. Had Mrs. Morton been Mrs. Beaufort, and the natural sons legitimate children, Robert Beaufort, supposing their situation of relative power and dependence to have been the same, would have behaved with careful and scrupulous generosity. The world would have said, "Nothing could be handsomer than Mr. Robert Beaufort's conduct!" Nay, if Mrs. Morton had been some divorced wife of birth and connexions, he would have made very different dispositions in her favour: he would not have allowed the connexions to have called him *shabby*. But here he felt that, all circumstances considered, the world, if it spoke at all (which it would scarcely think it worth while to do), would be on his side. An artful woman—low-born, and, of course, low-bred—who wanted to inveigle the rich and careless paramour into marriage; what could be ex-

pected from the man she had sought to injure—the rightful heir? Was it not very good in him to do any thing for her, and, if he provided for the children suitably to the original station of the mother, did he not go to the very utmost of reasonable expectation? He certainly thought in his conscience, such as it was, that he had acted well—not extravagantly, not foolishly; but well. He was sure the world would say so if it knew all: he was not bound to do any thing. He was not, therefore, prepared for Catherine's short, haughty, but temperate reply to his letter: a reply which conveyed a decided refusal of his offers—asserted positively her own marriage, and the claims of her children—intimated legal proceedings—and was signed in the name of Catherine *Beaufort*! Mr. Beaufort put the letter in his bureau, labelled "Impertinent answer from Mrs. Morton, Sept. 14," and was quite contented to forget the existence of the writer, until his lawyer, Mr. Blackwell, informed him that a suit had been

instituted by Catherine. Mr. Robert turned pale, but Blackwell composed him.

“Pooh, sir! you have nothing to fear. It is but an attempt to extort money; the attorney is a low practitioner, accustomed to get up bad cases: they can make nothing of it.”

This was true: whatever the rights of the case, poor Catherine had no proofs—no evidence—which could justify a respectable lawyer to advise her proceeding to a suit. She named two witnesses of her marriage—one dead, the other could not be heard of. She selected for the alleged place in which the ceremony was performed a very remote village, in which it appeared that the register had been destroyed. No attested copy thereof was to be found, and Catherine was stunned on hearing that, even if found, it was doubtful whether it could be received as evidence, unless to corroborate actual personal testimony. It so happened that when Philip, many years ago, had received the copy, he had not shewn it to Catherine, nor mentioned Mr. Jones's name as the copyist.

In fact, then only three years married to Catherine, his worldly caution had not yet been conquered by confident experience of her generosity. As for the mere moral evidence dependent on the publication of her bans in London, that amounted to no proof whatever; nor, on inquiry at A—, did the Welsh villagers remember any thing further than that, some fifteen years ago, a handsome gentleman had visited Mr. Price, and one or two rather thought that Mr. Price had married him to a lady from London; evidence quite inadmissible against the deadly, damning fact, that, for fifteen years, Catherine had openly borne another name, and lived with Mr. Beaufort ostensibly as his mistress. Her generosity in this destroyed her case. Nevertheless she found a law practitioner, who took her money and neglected her cause; so her suit was heard and dismissed with contempt. Henceforth, then, indeed, in the eyes of the law and the public, Catherine was an impudent adventurer, and her sons were nameless outcasts.

And now, relieved from all fear, Mr. Robert Beaufort entered upon the full enjoyment of his splendid fortune. The house in Berkeley Square was furnished anew. Great dinners and gay routs were given in the ensuing spring. Mr. and Mrs. Beaufort became persons of considerable importance. The rich man had, even when poor, been ambitious; his ambition now centered in his only son. Arthur had always been considered a boy of talents and promise—to what might he not now aspire? The term of his probation with the tutor was abridged, and Arthur Beaufort was sent at once to Oxford.

Before he went to the university, during a short preparatory visit to his father, Arthur spoke to him of the Mertons.

“What has become of them, sir? and what have you done for them?”

“Done for them!” said Mr. Beaufort, opening his eyes. “What should I do for persons who have just been harassing me with the most unprincipled litigation? My conduct to

them has been too generous; that is, all things considered. But when you are my age you will find there is very little gratitude in the world, Arthur."

"Still, sir," said Arthur, with the good-nature that belonged to him; "still, my uncle was greatly attached to them; and the boys, at least, are guiltless."

"Well, well!" replied Mr. Beaufort, a little impatiently. "I believe they want for nothing: I fancy they are with the mother's relations. Whenever they address me in a proper manner, they shall not find me revengeful or hard-hearted; but, since we are on this topic," continued the father, smoothing his shirt-frill with a care that shewed his decorum even in trifles, "I hope you see the results of that kind of connexion, and that you will take warning by your poor uncle's example. And now let us change the subject; it is not a very pleasant one, and, at your age, the less your thoughts turn on such matters the better."

Arthur Beaufort, with the careless generosity of youth, that gauges other men's conduct by its own sentiments, believed that his father, who had never been niggardly to himself, had really acted as his words implied; and, engrossed by the pursuits of the new and brilliant career opened, whether to his pleasures or his studies, suffered the objects of his inquiries to pass from his thoughts.

Meanwhile Mrs. Morton, for by that name we must still call her, and her children, were settled in a small lodging in a humble suburb; situated on the high road between Fernside and the metropolis. She saved from her hopeless law-suit, after the sale of her jewels and ornaments, a sufficient sum to enable her, with economy, to live respectably for a year or two at least, during which time she might arrange her plans for the future. She reckoned, as a sure resource, upon the assistance of her relations; but it was one to which she applied with natural shame and reluctance. She had kept up a correspondence with her father during his life. To him,

she never revealed the secret of her marriage, though she did not write like a person conscious of error. Perhaps, as she always said to her son, she had made to her husband a solemn promise never to divulge or even hint that secret until he himself should authorise its disclosure. For neither he nor Catherine ever contemplated separation or death. Alas! how all of us, when happy, sleep secure in the dark shadows which ought to warn us of the sorrows that are to come! Still Catherine's father, a man of coarse mind and not rigid principles, did not take much to heart that connexion which he assumed to be illicit. She was provided for, that was some comfort: doubtless Mr. Beaufort would act like a gentleman, perhaps at last make her an honest woman and a lady. Meanwhile, she had a fine house, and a fine carriage, and fine servants; and so far from applying to him for money, was constantly sending him little presents. But Catherine only saw, in his permission of her correspondence, kind, forgiving, and trustful affection, and she loved

him tenderly: when he died, the link that bound her to her family was broken. Her brother succeeded to the trade; a man of probity and honour, but somewhat hard and unamiable. In the only letter she had received from him—the one announcing her father's death—he told her plainly, and very properly, that he could not countenance the life she led: that he had children growing up—that all intercourse between them was at an end, unless she left Mr. Beaufort; when, if she sincerely repented, he would still prove her affectionate brother.

Though Catherine had at the time resented this letter as unfeeling—now, humbled and sorrow-stricken, she recognised the propriety of principle from which it emanated. Her brother was well off for his station—she would explain to him her real situation—he would believe her story. She would write to him, and beg him, at least, to give aid to her poor children.

But this step she did not take till a consider-

able portion of her pittance was consumed—till nearly three parts of a year since Beaufort's death had expired—and till sundry warnings, not to be lightly heeded, had made her forebode the probability of an early death for herself. From the age of sixteen, when she had been placed by Mr. Beaufort at the head of his household, she had been cradled, not in extravagance, but in an easy luxury, which had not brought with it habits of economy and thrift. She could grudge any thing to herself, but to her children—his children, whose every whim had been anticipated, she had not the heart to be saving. She could have starved in a garret had she been alone; but she could not see them wanting a comfort while she possessed a guinea. Philip, to do him justice, evinced a consideration not to have been expected from his early and arrogant recklessness. But Sidney, who could expect consideration from such a child? What could he know of the change of circumstances—of the value of money? Did he seem dejected,

Catherine would steal out and spend a week's income on the lapful of toys which she brought home. Did he seem a shade more pale—did he complain of the slightest ailment, a doctor must be sent for. Alas! her own ailments, neglected and unheeded, were growing beyond the reach of medicine. Anxious—fearful—gnawed by regret for the past—the thought of famine in the future—she daily fretted and wore herself away. She had cultivated her mind during her secluded residence with Mr. Beaufort, but she had learned none of the arts by which decayed gentlewomen keep the wolf from the door; no little holyday accomplishments, which, in the day of need, turn to useful trade; no water-colour drawings, no paintings on velvet, no fabrication of pretty gewgaws, no embroidery and fine needlework. She was helpless—utterly helpless—not strong enough even for a servant; and, even in that capacity, could she have got a character? A great change, at this time, was apparent in Philip. Had he fallen, then, into kind

hands, and under guiding eyes, his passions and energies might have ripened into rare qualities and great virtues. But perhaps, as Goethe has somewhere said, 'Experience, after all, is the best Teacher.' He kept a constant guard on his vehement temper—his wayward will; he would not have vexed his mother for the world. But, strange to say (it was a great mystery in the woman's heart), in proportion as he became more amiable, it seemed that his mother loved him less. Perhaps she did not, in that change, recognise so closely the darling of the old time; perhaps the very weaknesses and importunities of Sidney, the hourly sacrifices the child entailed upon her, endeared him more to her from that natural sense of dependence and protection which forms the great bond between mother and child; perhaps, too, as Philip had been one to inspire as much pride as affection, so the pride faded away with the expectations that had fed it, and carried off in its decay some of the affection that was intertwined with it.

However this be, Philip had formerly appeared the more spoiled and favoured of the two; and now Sidney seemed all in all. Thus, beneath the younger son's caressing gentleness, there grew up a certain regard for self; it was latent, it took amiable colours; it had even a certain charm and grace in so sweet a child, but selfishness it was not the less: in this he differed from his brother. Philip was self-willed: Sidney, self-loving. A certain timidity of character, endearing perhaps to the anxious heart of a mother, made this fault in the younger boy more likely to take root. For, in bold natures, there is a lavish and uncalculating recklessness which scorns self-unconsciously: and what is fear, but, when physical, the regard for one's own person; when moral, the anxiety for one's own interests?

It was in a small room in a lodging-house in the suburb of H—— that Mrs. Morton was seated by the window, anxiously awaiting the knock of the postman, who was expected to bring her brother's reply to her letter. It

was, therefore, between ten and eleven o'clock — a morning in the merry month of June. It was hot and sultry, which is rare in an English June. A flytrap, red, white, and yellow, suspended from the ceiling, swarmed with flies; flies were on the ceiling, flies buzzed at the windows; the sofa and chairs of horse-hair seemed stuffed with flies. There was an air of heated discomfort in the thick, solid muslin curtains, in the gaudy paper, in the bright-staring carpet, in the very looking-glass over the chimney-piece, where a strip of mirror lay imprisoned in an embrace of frame covered with yellow muslin. We may talk of the dreariness of winter; and winter, no doubt, is desolate. But what in the world is more dreary to eyes inured to the verdure and bloom of Nature—"the pomp of groves and garniture of fields"—than a close room in a suburban lodging-house; the sun piercing every corner; nothing fresh, nothing cool, nothing fragrant to be seen, felt, or inhaled; all dust, glare, noise, with a chandler's shop, perhaps, next

door? Sidney, armed with a pair of scissors, was cutting the pictures out of a story-book, which his mother had bought him the day before. Philip, who, of late, had taken much to rambling about the streets—it may be, in hopes of meeting one of those benevolent, eccentric, elderly gentlemen, he had read of in old novels, who suddenly come to the relief of distressed virtue; or, more probably, from the restlessness that belonged to his adventurous temperament;—Philip had left the house since breakfast.

“Oh! how hot this nasty room is!” exclaimed Sidney, abruptly, looking up from his employment. “Shan’t we ever go into the country again, mamma?”

“Not at present, my love.”

“I wish I could have my pony: why can’t I have my pony, mamma?”

“Because—because—the pony is sold, Sidney.”

“Who sold it?”

“Your uncle.”

"He is a very naughty man, my uncle: is not he? But can't I have another pony? It would be so nice, this fine weather!"

"Ah! my dear, I wish I could afford it: but you shall have a ride this week! Yes," continued the mother, as if reasoning with herself, in excuse of the extravagance, "he does not look well: poor child! he must have exercise."

"A ride!—oh! that is my own kind mamma!" exclaimed Sidney, clapping his hands. "Not on a donkey, you know!—a pony. The man down the street, there, lets ponies. I must have the white pony with the long tail. But, I say, mamma, don't tell Philip, pray don't; he would be jealous."

"No, not jealous, my dear; why do you think so?"

"Because he is always angry when I ask you for any thing. It is very unkind in him, for I don't care if he has a pony, too,—only not the white one."

Here the postman's knock, loud and sudden, startled Mrs. Norton from her seat. She

pressed her hands tightly to her heart, as if to still its beating, and went nervously to the door; thence to the stairs, to anticipate the lumbering step of the slipshod maid-servant.

"Give it me, Jane; give it me!"

"One shilling and eightpence—charged double—if you please, ma'am! Thank you."

"Mamma, may I tell Jane to engage the pony?"

"Not now, my love; sit down; be quiet: I—I am not well."

Sibney, who was affectionate and obedient, crept back peaceably to the window, and, after a short, impatient sigh, resumed the scissors and the story-book. I do not apologise to the reader for the various letters I am obliged to lay before him; for character often betrays itself more in letters than in speech. Mr. Roger Morton's reply was couched in these terms:—

"DEAR CATHERINE,—I have received your letter of the 14th inst, and write per return.

I am very much grieved to hear of your afflictions; but, whatever you say, I cannot think the late Mr. Beaufort acted like a conscientious man, in forgetting to make his will, and leaving his little ones destitute. It is all very well to talk of his intentions; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And it is hard upon me, who have a large family of my own, and get my livelihood by honest industry, to have a rich gentleman's children to maintain. As for your story about the private marriage, it may or not be. Perhaps you were taken in by that worthless man, for a *real* marriage it could not be. And, as you say, the law has decided that point; therefore, the less you say on the matter the better. It all comes to the same thing. People are not bound to believe what can't be proved. And even if what you say is true, you are more to be blamed than pitied for holding your tongue so many years, and discrediting an honest family as ours has always been considered. I am sure my wife would not have thought of

such a thing for the finest gentleman that ever wore shoe leather. However, I don't want to hurt your feelings; and I am sure I am ready to do whatever is right and proper. You cannot expect that I should ask you to my house. My wife, you know, is a very religious woman—what is called evangelical; but that's neither here nor there: I deal with all people, churchmen and dissenters—even Jews,—and don't trouble my head much about differences in opinion. I dare say there are many ways to heaven; as I said, the other day, to Mr. Tawites, our member. But it is right to say my wife will not bear of your coming here; and, indeed, it might do harm to my business, for there are several elderly single gentlewomen, who buy flannel for the poor at my shop, and they are very particular; as they ought to be, indeed: for morals are very strict in this county, and particularly in this town, where we certainly do pay very high church-rates. Not that I grumble; for, though I am as liberal as any man, I am for an established

church; as I ought to be, since the dean is my best customer. With regard to yourself, I will inclose you 10*l.*, and you will let me know when it is gone, and I will see what more I can do. You say you are very poorly, which I am sorry to hear; but you must pluck up your spirits, and take in plain work; and I really think you ought to apply to Mr. Robert Beaufort. He bears a high character; and, notwithstanding your lawsuit, which I cannot approve of, I dare say he might allow you 40*l.* or 50*l.* a-year, if you apply properly, which would be the right thing in him. So much for you. As for the boys—poor, fatherless creatures!—it is very hard that they should be so punished for no fault of their own; and my wife, who, though strict, is a good-hearted woman, is ready and willing to do what I wish about them. You say the eldest is near sixteen, and well come on in his studies. I can get him a very good thing in a light, genteel way. My wife's brother, Mr. Christopher Plaskwith, is a bookseller and stationer, with pretty prac-

tice, in R—. He is a clever man, and has a newspaper, which he kindly sends me every week; and, though it is not my county, it has some very sensible views, and is often noticed in the London papers, as ‘our provincial contemporary.’ Mr. Plaskwith owes me some money, which I advanced him when he set up the paper; and he has several times most honestly offered to pay me, in shares in the said paper. But, as the thing might break, and I don’t like concerns I don’t understand, I have not taken advantage of his very handsome proposals. Now Plaskwith wrote me word, two days ago, that he wanted a genteel, smart lad, as assistant and ‘prentice, and offered to take my eldest boy; but we can’t spare him. I write to Christopher by this post; and if your youth will run down on the top of the coach, and inquire for Mr. Plaskwith—the fare is trifling—I have no doubt he will be engaged at once. But you’ll say, ‘There’s the premium to consider! No such thing; Kit will set off the premium

against his debt to me; so you will have nothing to pay. 'Tis a very pretty business; and the lad's education will get him on; so that's off your mind. As to the little chap, I'll take him at once. You say he is a pretty boy; and a pretty boy is always a help in a linen-draper's shop. He shall share and share with my own young folks; and Mrs. Morton will take care of his washing and morals. I conclude—(this is Mrs. M.'s suggestion)—that he has had the measles, cowpock, and whooping-cough, which please let me know. If he behave well, which, at his age, we can easily break him into, he is settled for life. So now you have got rid of two mouths to feed, and have nobody to think of but yourself, which must be a great comfort. Don't forget to write to Mr. Beaufort; and if he don't do something for you, he's not the gentleman I take him for: but you are my own flesh and blood, and sha'n't starve; for, though I don't think it right in a man in business to encourage what's wrong, yet, when a person's down

in the world, I think an ounce of help is better than a pound of preaching. My wife thinks otherwise, and wants to send you some tracts; but every body can't be as correct as some folks. However, as I said before, that's neither here nor there. Let me know when your boy comes down, and also about the measles, cowpock, and hooping-cough; also if all's right with Mr. Plaskwith. So now I hope you will feel more comfortable; and remain,

"Dear Catherine,

"Your forgiving and affectionate
brother,

"ROGER MONTON."

"High Street, N.—, June 15."

"P. S.—Mrs. M. says that she will be a mother to your little boy, and that you had better mend up all his linen before you send him."

As Catherine finished this epistle, she

lifted up her eyes and beheld Philip. He had entered noiselessly, and he remained silent, leaning against the wall, and watching the face of his mother, which crimsoned with painful humiliation while she read. Philip was not now the trim and dainty stripling first introduced to the reader. He had outgrown his faded suit of funereal mourning; his long neglected hair hung elf-like and matted down his cheeks; there was a gloomy look in his bright dark eyes. Poverty never betrays itself more than in the features and form of *Pride*. It was evident that his spirit endured, rather than accommodated itself to, his fallen state; and, notwithstanding his soiled and threadbare garments, and a haggardness that ill becomes the years of palmy youth, there was about his whole mien and person a wild and savage grandeur more impressive than his former ruffling arrogance of manner.

"Well, mother," said he, with a strange

mixture of sternness in his countenance, and pity in his voice; "well, mother, and what says your brother?"

"You decided for us once before, decide again. But I need not ask you; you would never——"

"I don't know," interrupted Philip, vaguely; "let me see what we are to decide on."

Mrs. Morton was naturally a woman of high courage and spirit, but sickness and grief had worn down both; and, though Philip was but sixteen, there is something in the very nature of woman—especially in trouble—which makes her seek to lean on some other will than her own. She gave Philip the letter, and went quietly to sit down by Sidney.

"Your brother means well," said Philip, when he had concluded the epistle.

"Yes, but nothing is to be done; I cannot, cannot send poor Sidney to—to——" and Mrs. Morton sobbed.

"No, my dear, dear mother, no; it would be terrible, indeed, to part you and him. But

this bookseller—Plaskwith—perhaps I shall be able to support you both.”

“Why you do not think, Philip, of being an apprentice!—you who have been so brought up—you who are so proud!”

“Mother, I would sweep the crossings for your sake! Mother, for your sake, I would go to my uncle Beaufort with my hat in my hand, for halfpence. Mother, I am not proud—I would be honest, if I can—but when I see you pining away, and so changed, the devil comes into me, and I often shudder lest I should commit some crime—what, I don’t know!”

“Come here, Philip—my own Philip—my son, my hope, my first-born!”—and the mother’s heart gushed forth in all the fondness of early days. “Don’t speak so terribly, you frighten me!”

She threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him soothingly. He laid his burning temples on her bosom, and nestled himself to her, as he had been wont to do, after some

stormy paroxysm of his passionate and wayward infancy. So there they remained—their lips silent, their hearts speaking to each other—each from each taking strange succour and holy strength—till Philip rose, calm, and with a quiet smile,—“Good-by, mother; I will go at once to Mr. Plaskwith.”

“But you have no money for the coach-fare; here, Philip,” and she placed her purse in his hand, from which he reluctantly selected a few shillings. “And mind, if the man is rude, and you dislike him—mind, you must not subject yourself to insolence and mortification.”

“Oh, all will go well, don’t fear,” said Philip, cheerfully, and he left the house.

Towards evening he had reached his destination. The shop was of goodly exterior, with a private entrance; over the shop was written, “Christopher Plaskwith, Bookseller and Stationer;” on the private door a brass plate, inscribed with “R— and * — Mercury Office, Mr. Plaskwith.” Philip ap-

plied at the private entrance, and was shewn by a "neat-handed Phillis" into a small office-room. In a few minutes the door opened, and the bookseller entered.

Mr. Christopher Plaskwith was a short, stout man, in drab-coloured breeches, and gaiters to match; a black coat and waistcoat; a large watch-chain, with a prodigious bunch of seals, alternated by small keys and old-fashioned mourning-rings. His complexion was pale and sallow, and his hair short, dark, and sleek. The bookseller valued himself on a likeness to Buonaparte; and affected a short, brusque, peremptory manner, which he meant to be the indication of the vigorous and decisive character of his prototype.

"So you are the young gentleman Mr. Roger Norton recommends?" Here Mr. Plaskwith took out a huge pocket-book, slowly unclasped it, staring hard at Philip, with what he designed for a piercing and penetrative survey.

"This is the letter—no! this is Sir Thomas

Champerdown's order for fifty copies of the last *Mercury*, containing his speech at the county meeting. Your age, young man?—only sixteen!—look older;—that's not it— that's not it— and this is it!—sit down. Yes, Mr. Roger Morton recommends you— a relation—unfortunate circumstances—well-educated—hum! Well, young man, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Sir!"

"Can you cast accounts?—know book-keeping?"

"I know something of algebra, sir."

"Algebra!—oh, what else?"

"French and Latin."

"Hum!—may be useful. Why do you wear your hair so long?—look at mine. What's your name?"

"Philip Morton."

"Mr. Philip Morton, you have an intelligent countenance—I go a great deal by countenances. You know the terms?—most favourable to you. No premium—I settle

that with Roger. I give board and bed—find your own washing. Habits regular—'prenticeship only five years; when over, must not set up in the same town. I will see to the indentures. When can you come?"

"When you please, sir."

"Day after to-morrow, by six o'clock coach."

"But, sir," said Philip, "will there be no salary?—something, ever so small, that I could send to my mother?"

"Salary, at sixteen!—board and bed—no premium! Salary! what for? 'Prentices have no salary!—you will have every comfort."

"Give me less comfort, that I may give my mother more;—a little money, ever so little, and take it out of my board: I can do with one meal a-day, sir."

The bookseller was moved; he took a huge pinchful of snuff out of his waistcoat pocket, and mused a moment. He then said, as he re-examined Philip,—

"Well, young man, I'll tell you what we

will do. You shall come here first upon trial;—see if we like each other before we sign the indentures;—allow you, meanwhile, six a-week.

If you shew talent, will see if I and Roger can settle about some little allowance. That do, eh?"

"I thank you, sir, yes," said Philip, gratefully.

"Agreed, then. Follow me—present you to Mrs. P."

Thus saying, Mr. Plaskwith returned the letter to the pocket-book, and the pocket-book to the pocket; and, putting his arms behind his coat tails, threw up his chin, and strode through the passage into a small parlour, that looked upon a small garden. Here, seated round the table, were a thin lady, with a squint, Mrs. Plaskwith, two little girls, the Misses Plaskwith, also with squints, and pinafores; a young man of three or four-and-twenty, in nankeen trousers, a little the worse for washing, and a black velvet jacket and waistcoat. This young gentleman was very much freckled; wore his hair, which was dark

and wiry, up at one side, down at the other; had a short, thick nose; full lips; and, when close to him, smelt of cigars. Such was Mr. Plimmins, Mr. Plaskwith's *factotum*, foreman in the shop, assistant-editor to the *Mercury*. Mr. Plaskwith formally went the round of the introduction; Mrs. P. nodded her head; the Misses P. nudged each other, and grinned; Mr. Plimmins passed his hand through his hair, glanced at the glass, and bowed very politely.

"Now, Mrs. P., my second cup, and give Mr. Morton his dish of tea. Must be tired, sir—hot day. Jemima, ring—no, go to the stairs, and call out, 'More buttered toast.' That's the shorter way—promptitude is my rule in life, Mr. Morton. Pray—hum, hum,—have you ever, by chance, studied the biography of the great Napoleon Buonaparte?"

Mr. Plimmins gulped down his tea, and kicked Philip under the table. Philip looked fiercely at the foreman, and replied, sullenly, "No, sir."

"That's a pity. Napoleon Buonaparte was a very great man,—very! You have seen his cast!—there it is, on the dumb waiter! Look at it! see a likeness, eh?"

"Likeness, sir! I never saw Napoleon Buonaparte."

"Never saw *him*! No! just look round the room. Who does that bust put you in mind of? who does it resemble?"

Here Mr. Plaskwith rose, and placed himself in an attitude; his hand in his waistcoat, and his face pensively inclined towards the tea-table. "Now fancy me at St. Helena; this table is the ocean. Now then, who is that cast like, Mr. Philip Morton?"

"I suppose, sir, it is like you!"

"Ah, that it is! strikes every one! Does it not, Mrs. P., does it not? And when you have known me longer, you will find a moral similitude—a moral, sir! Straightforward—short—to the point—bold—determined!"

"Bless me, Mr. P.!" said Mrs. Plaskwith, very querulously, "do make haste with your

tea; the young gentleman, I suppose, wants to go home, and the coach passes in a quarter of an hour."

"Have you seen Kean in Richard the Third, Mr. Morton?" asked Mr. Plimmins.

"I have never seen a play."

"Never seen a play! How very odd!"

"Not at all odd, Mr. Plimmins," said the stationer. "Mr. Morton has known troubles, — so hand him the hot toast."

Silent and morose, but rather disdainful than sad, Philip listened to the bobble round him, and observed the ungenial characters with which he was to associate. He cared not to please (*that, alas! had never been especially his study*); it was enough for him if he could see, stretching to his mind's eye beyond the walls of that dull room, the long vistas into fairer fortune. At sixteen, what sorrow can freeze the Hope, or what prophetic fear whisper "Fool" to the Ambition? He would bear back into ease and prosperity, if not into affluence

and station, the dear ones left at home. From the eminence of five shillings a-week, he looked over the Promised Land.

At length, Mr. Plaskwith, pulling out his watch, said, "Just in time to catch the coach; make your bow and be off—Smart's the word!" Philip rose, took up his hat, made a stiff bow that included the whole group, and vanished with his host.

Mrs. Plaskwith breathed more easily when he was gone.

"I never seed a more odd, fierce, ill-bred-looking young man! I declare I am quite afraid of him. What an eye he has!"

"Uncommonly dark; what, I may say, gipsy-like," said Mr. Plimmins.

"He! he! You always do say such good things, Plimmins. Gipsy-like! he! he! So he is. I wonder if he can tell fortunes?"

"He'll be long before he has a fortune of his own to tell. Ha! ha!" said Plimmins.

"He! he! how *very* good! you are so pleasant, Plimmins."

While these strictures on his appearance were still going on, Philip had already ascended the roof of the coach; and, waving his hand, with the condescension of old times, to his future master, was carried away by the "Express" in a whirlwind of dust.

"A very warm evening, sir," said a passenger seated at his right; puffing, while he spoke, from a short German pipe, a volume of smoke into Philip's face.

"Very warm. Be so good as to smoke into the face of the gentleman on the other side of you," returned Philip, petulantly.

"Ho, ho!" replied the passenger, with a loud, powerful laugh—the laugh of a strong man. "You don't take to the pipe yet; you will by and by, when you have known the cares and anxieties that I have gone through. A pipe!—it is a great soother! a pleasant comforter! Blue devils fly before its honest breath! It ripens the brain—it opens the heart; and the man who smokes, thinks like a sage and acts like a Samaritan!"

Roused from his reverie by this quaint and unexpected declamation, Philip turned his quick glance at his neighbour. He saw a man, of great bulk, and immense physical power—broad-shouldered—deep-chested—not corpulent, but taking the same girth from bone and muscle that a corpulent man does from flesh. He wore a blue coat—frogged, braided, and buttoned to the throat. A broad-brimmed straw-hat, set on one side, gave a jaunty appearance to a countenance which, notwithstanding its jovial complexion and smiling mouth, had, in repose, a bold and decided character. It was a face well suited to the frame, inasmuch as it betokened a mind capable of wielding and mastering the brute physical force of body. Light eyes of piercing intelligence; rough, but resolute and striking features, and a jaw of iron. There was thought, there was power, there was passion, in the shaggy brow, the deep-plunged lines, the dilated nostril, and the restless play of the lips. Philip looked hard

and gravely, and the man returned his look.

"What do you think of me, young gentleman?" asked the passenger, as he replaced the pipe in his mouth. "I am a fine-looking man, am I not?"

"You seem a strange one."

"Strange!—Ay, I puzzle you, as I have done, and shall do, many. You cannot read me as easily as I can read you. Come, shall I guess at your character and circumstances? You are a gentleman, or something like it, by birth;—that the tone of your voice tells me. You are poor, devilish poor;—that the hole in your coat assures me. You are proud, fiery, discontented, and unhappy;—all that I see in your face. It was because I saw those signs that I spoke to you. I volunteer no acquaintance with the happy."

"I dare say not; for if you know all the unhappy you must have a sufficiently large acquaintance," returned Philip.

"Your wit is beyond your years! What is

your calling, if the question does not offend you?"

"I have none as yet," said Philip, with a slight sigh and a deep blush.

"More's the pity!" granted the smoker, with a long, emphatic, nasal intonation. "I should have judged that you were a raw recruit in the camp of the enemy."

"Enemy! I don't understand you."

"In other words, a plant growing out of a lawyer's desk. I will explain. There is one class of spiders, industrious, hardworking octopedes, who, out of the sweat of their brains (I take it, by the by, that a spider must have a fine craniological developement), make their own webs and catch their own flies. There is another class of spiders who have no stuff in them wherewith to make webs; they, therefore, wander about, looking out for food provided by the toil of their neighbours. Whenever they come to the web of a smaller spider, whose larder seems well supplied, they rush upon his domain—pursue him to his hole—eat

him up if they can—reject him if he is too tough for their maws, and quietly possess themselves of all the legs and wings they find dangling in his meshes: these spiders I call enemies—the world calls them lawyers!”

Philip laughed: “And who are the first class of spiders?”

“Honest creatures who openly confess that they live upon flies. Lawyers fall foul upon them, under pretence of delivering flies from their clutches. They are wonderful blood-suckers these lawyers, in spite of all their hypocrisy. Ha! ha! Ho! ho!”

And with a loud, rough chuckle, more expressive of malignity than mirth, the man turned himself round, applied vigorously to his pipe, and sank into a silence which, as mile after mile glided past the wheels, he did not seem disposed to break. Neither was Philip inclined to be communicative. Considerations for his own state and prospects swallowed up the curiosity he might otherwise have felt as to his singular neighbour. He

had not touched food since the early morning. Anxiety had made him insensible to hunger, till he arrived at Mr. Plaskwith's; and then, feverish, sore, and sick at heart, the sight of the luxuries gracing the tea-table only revolted him. He did not now feel hunger, but he was fatigued and faint. For several nights, the sleep which youth can so ill dispense with had been broken and disturbed; and now, the rapid motion of the coach, and the free current of a fresher and more exhausting air than he had been accustomed to for many months, began to operate on his nerves like the intoxication of a narcotic. His eyes grew heavy; indistinct mists, through which there seemed to glare the various squints of the female Plaskwiths, succeeded the gliding road and the dancing trees. His head fell on his bosom; and thence, instinctively seeking the strongest support at hand, inclined towards the stout smoker, and finally nestled itself composedly on that gentleman's shoulder. The passenger, feeling this unwelcome and unsolicited weight,

took the pipe, which he had already thrice refilled, from his lips, and emitted an angry and impatient snort; finding that this produced no effect, and that the load grew heavier as the boy's sleep grew deeper, he cried, in a loud voice, "Holla! I did not pay my fare to be your bolster, young man!" and shook himself lustily. Philip started, and would have fallen sidelong from the coach if his neighbour had not griped him hard with a hand that could have kept a young oak from falling.

"Rouse yourself!—you might have had an ugly tumble."

Philip muttered something inaudible, between sleeping and waking, and turned his dark eyes towards the man; in that glance there was so much unconscious, but sad and deep reproach, that the passenger felt touched and ashamed. Before, however, he could say any thing in apology or conciliation, Philip had again fallen asleep. But this time, as if he had felt and resented the rebuff he had

received, he inclined his head away from his neighbour, against the edge of a box on the roof—a dangerous pillow, from which any sudden jolt might transfer him to the road below.

“Poor lad!—he looks pale!” muttered the man, and he knocked the weed from his pipe, and placed it gently in his pocket. “Perhaps the smoke was too much for him—he seems ill and thin?” and he took the boy’s long lean fingers in his own. “His cheek is hollow!—what do I know but it may be with fasting? Pooh! I was a brute. Hush, coachee, hush! don’t talk so loud, and he d—d to you—he will certainly be off;” and the man softly and creepingly encircled the boy’s waist with his huge arm. “Now, then, to shift his head; so—so,—that’s right.” Philip’s sallow cheek and long hair were now tenderly lapped on the soliloquist’s bosom. “Poor wretch! he smiles; perhaps he is thinking of home, and the butterflies he ran after when he was an urchin—they never come back, those days;—never—never—

never! I think the wind veers to the east, he may catch cold;"—and with that, the man, gliding the head for a moment, and with the tenderness of a woman, from his breast to his shoulder, unbuttoned his coat (as he replaced the weight, no longer unwelcome, in its former part), and drew the lappets closely round the slender frame of the sleeper, exposing his own sturdy breast—for he wore no waistcoat—to the sharpening air. Thus cradled on that stranger's bosom, wrapped from the present, and dreaming, perhaps—while a heart scorched by fierce and terrible struggles with life and sin made his pillow—of a fair and unsullied future, slept the fatherless and friendless boy.

CHAPTER VII.

*"Conscience. My life, my joy, my food, my all the world,
My widow-comfort." — King Job.*

AMIDST the glare of the lamps—the rattle of carriages—the lumbering of carts and waggons—the throng, the clamour, the reeking life and dissonant roar of London, Philip woke from his happy sleep. He woke, uncertain and confused, and saw strange eyes bent on him kindly and watchfully.

"You have slept well, my lad!" said the passenger, in the deep ringing voice which made itself heard above all the noises round.

"And you have suffered me to incommode you thus?" said Philip, with more gratitude in his voice and look than, perhaps, he had shewn to any one out of his own family since his birth.

"You have had but little kindness shewn

you, my poor boy, if you think so much of this?"

"No—all people were very kind to me once. I did not value it then." Here the coach rolled heavily down the dark arch of the inn-yard.

"Take care of yourself, my boy! You look ill;" and in the dark the man slipped a sovereign into Philip's hand.

"I don't want money. Though I thank you heartily all the same; it would be a shame at my age to be a beggar. But, can you think of an employment where I can make something?—what they offer me is so trifling. I have a mother and a brother—a mere child, sir—at home."

"Employment!" repeated the man; and as the coach now stopped at the tavern door, the light from the lamp fell full on his marked face. "Ay, I know of employment; but you should apply to some one else to obtain it for you! As for me, it is not likely that we shall meet again!"

"I am sorry for that!—What and who are you?" asked Philip, with rude and blunt curiosity.

"Me!" returned the passenger, with his deep laugh; "Oh! I know some people who call me an honest fellow. Take the employment offered you, no matter how trifling—keep out of harm's way. Good night to you!"

So saying, he quickly descended from the roof; and, as he was directing the coachman where to look for his carpet bag, Philip saw three or four well-dressed-looking men make up to him, shake him heartily by the hand, and welcome him with great seeming cordiality.

Philip sighed. "He has friends," he muttered to himself; and, paying his fare, he turned from the bustling yard, and took his solitary way home.

A week after his visit to R—, Philip was settled on his probation at Mr. Plaskwith's, and Mrs. Morton's health was so decidedly worse, that she resolved to know her fate, and consult

a physician. The oracle was at first ambiguous in its response. But when Mrs. Morton said firmly, "I have duties to perform; upon your candid answer rest my plans with respect to my children—left, if I die suddenly, destitute in the world,"—the doctor looked hard in her face, saw its calm resolution, and replied frankly,—

"Lose no time, then, in arranging your plans: life is uncertain with all—with you, especially; you may live some time yet, but your constitution is much shaken—I fear there is water on the chest. No, ma'am—no fee. I will see you again."

The physician turned to Sidney, who played with his watch-chain, and smiled up in his face.

"And that child, sir?" said the mother, wistfully, forgetting the dread fiat pronounced against herself,— "he is so delicate!"

"Not at all, ma'am,—a very fine little fellow," and the doctor patted the boy's head, and abruptly vanished.

"Ah! mamma, I wish you would ride—
I wish you would take the white pony!"

"Poor boy! poor boy!" muttered the mother: "I must not be selfish." She covered her face with her hands, and began to think!

Could she, thus doomed, resolve on declining her brother's offer? Did it not, at least, secure bread and shelter to her child? When she was dead, might not a tie, between the uncle and nephew, be snapped asunder? Would he be as kind to the boy as now when she could commend him with her own lips to his care—when she could place that precious charge into his hands? With these thoughts, she formed one of those resolutions which have all the strength of self-sacrificing love. She would put the boy from her, her last solace and comfort; she would die alone, —alone!

CHAPTER VIII.

*"Converse. When I shall meet him in the court of heaven,
I shall not know him." — King John.*

ONE evening the shop closed and the business done, Mr. Roger Norton and his family sat in that snug and comfortable retreat which generally backs the ware-rooms of an English tradesman. Happy often, and indeed happy, is that little sanctuary, near to, and yet remote from, the toil and care of the busy mart from which its homely ease and peaceful security are drawn. Glance down those rows of silenced shops in a town at night, and picture the glad and quiet groups gathered within, over that nightly and social meal which custom has banished from the more indolent tribes, who neither toil nor spin. Placed between the two extremes of life, the

tradesman, who ventures not beyond his means, and sees clear books and sure gains, with enough of occupation to give healthful excitement, enough of fortune to greet each newborn child without a sigh, might be envied alike by those above and those below his state—if the restless heart of man ever envied Content!

“And so the little boy is not to come?” said Mrs. Morton, as she crossed her knife and fork, and pushed away her plate, in token that she had done supper.

“I don’t know.—Children, go to bed; there—there—that will do. Good night!—Catherine does not say either yes or no. She wants time to consider.”

“It was a very handsome offer on our part; some folks never know when they are well off.”

“That is very true, my dear, and you are a very sensible person. Kate herself might have been an honest woman, and, what is more, a very rich woman, by this time. She

might have married Spencer, the young brewer—an excellent man, and well to do!”

“Spencer! I don’t remember him.”

“No: after she went off, he retired from business, and left the place. I don’t know what’s become of him. He was nightly taken with her, to be sure. She was uncommonly handsome, my sister Catherine.”

“Handsome is as handsome does, Mr. Morton,” said the wife, who was very much marked with the small-pox. “We all have our temptations and trials; this is a vale of tears, and without grace we are whited sepulchres.”

Mr. Morton mixed his brandy and water, and moved his chair into its customary corner.

“You saw your brother’s letter,” said he, after a pause; “he gives young Philip a very good character.”

“The human heart is very deceitful,” replied Mrs. Morton, who, by the way, spoke through her nose. “Pray Heaven he may be

what he seems; but what's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh."

"We must hope the best," said Mr. Morton, mildly; "and—put another lump into the grog, my dear."

"It is a mercy, I'm thinking, that we didn't have the other little boy. I dare say he has never even been taught his catechism: them people don't know what it is to be a mother. And, besides, it would have been very awkward, Mr. M., we could never have said who he was: and I've no doubt Miss Prynnall would have been very curious."

"Miss Prynnall be —!" Mr. Morton checked himself, took a large draught of the brandy and water, and added, "Miss Prynnall wants to have a finger in every body's pie."

"But she buys a deal of flannel, and does great good to the town; it was she who found out that Mrs. Giles was no better than she should be."

"Poor Mrs. Giles!—she came to the workhouse."

"Poor Mrs. Giles, indeed! I wonder, Mr. Morton, that you, a married man with a family, should say, *poor Mrs. Giles!*"

"My dear, when people who have been well off come to the workhouse, they may be called *poor*:—but that's neither here nor there; only, if the boy does come to us, we must look sharp upon Miss Prynall."

"I hope he won't come,—it will be very unpleasant. And when a man has a wife and family, the less he meddles with other folks and their little ones, the better. For as the Scripture says, 'A man shall cleave to his wife, and ——'"

Here a sharp, shrill ring at the bell was heard, and Mrs. Morton broke off into—

"Well! I declare! at this hour; who can that be? And all gone to bed! Do go and see, Mr. Morton."

Somewhat reluctantly and slowly, Mr.

Morton rose; and, proceeding to the passage, unbarred the door. A brief and muttered conversation followed, to the great irritability of Mrs. Morton, who stood in the passage—the candle in her hand.

“What is the matter, Mr. M.?”

Mr. Morton turned back, looking agitated.

“Where’s my hat? oh, here. My sister is come, at the inn.”

“Gracious me! She does not go for to say she is your sister?”

“No, no: here’s her note—calls herself a lady that’s ill. I shall be back soon.”

“She can’t come here—she shan’t come here, Mr. M. I’m an honest woman—she can’t come here. You understand —”

Mr. Morton had naturally a stern countenance, stern to every one but his wife. The shrill tone to which he was so long accustomed jarred then on his heart as well as ear. He frowned,—

“Pshaw! woman, you have no feeling!”

said he, and walked out of the house, pulling his hat over his brows.

That was the only rude speech Mr. Norton had ever made to his better half. She treasured it up in her heart and memory; it was associated with the sister and the child; and she was not a woman who ever forgave.

Mr. Norton walked rapidly through the still, moon-lit streets, till he reached the inn. A clou was held that night in one of the rooms below; and as he crossed the threshold, the sound of "hip—hip—hurrah!" mingled with the stamping of feet and the jingling of glasses, saluted his entrance. He was a stiff, sober, respectable man,—a man who, except at elections—he was a great politician—mixed in none of the revels of his more boisterous town's-men. The sounds, the spot, were ungenial to him. He paused, and the colour of shame rose to his brow. He was ashamed to be there—ashamed to meet the desolate and, as he believed, erring sister.

A pretty maid-servant, heated and flushed with orders and compliments, crossed his path, with a tray full of glasses.

"There's a lady come by the Telegraph!"

"Yes, sir, upstairs, No. 2, Mr. Morton."

Mr. Morton! He shrank at the sound of his own name. "My wife's right," he muttered. "After all, this is more unpleasant than I thought for."

The slight stairs shook under his hasty tread. He opened the door of No. 2, and that Catherine, whom he had last seen at her age of gay sixteen radiant with bloom, and, but for her air of pride, the model for a Hebe,—that Catherine, old ere youth was gone, pale, faded, the dark hair silvered over, the cheeks hollow, and the eye dim,—that Catherine fell upon his breast!

"God bless you, brother! How kind to come! How long since we have met!"

"Sit down, Catherine, my dear sister. You are faint—you are very much changed—very. I should not have known you."

“Brother, I have brought my boy: it is painful to part from him—very—very painful: but it is right, and God’s will be done.” She turned, as she spoke, towards a little, deformed, rickety dwarf of a sofa, that seemed to hide itself in the darkest corner of the low, gloomy room; and Morton followed her. With one hand she removed the shawl that she had thrown over the child, and placing the fore-finger of the other upon her lips—lips that smiled *then*—she whispered,—“We will not wake him, he is so tired. But I would not put him to bed till you had seen him.”

And there slept poor Sidney, his fair cheek pillowed on his arm; the soft, silky ringlets thrown from the delicate and unclouded brow; the natural bloom increased by warmth and travel; the lovely face so innocent and hushed; the breathing so gentle and regular, as if never broken by a sigh.

Mr. Morton drew his hand across his eyes.

There was something very touching in the

contrast between that wakeful, anxious, forlorn woman, and the slumber of the unconscious boy. And in that moment, what breast upon which the light of Christian pity—of natural affection, had ever dawned, would, even supposing the world's judgment were true, have recalled Catherine's reputed error? There is so divine a holiness in the love of a mother, that, no matter how the tie that binds her to the child was formed, she becomes, as it were, consecrated and sacred; and the past is forgotten, and the world and its harsh verdicts swept away, when *that* love alone is visible; and the God, who watches over the little one, sheds his smile over the human deputy, in whose tenderness there breathes His own!

"You will be kind to him—will you not?" said Mrs. Morton, and the appeal was made with that trustful, almost cheerful tone which implies, 'Who would not be kind to a thing so fair and helpless!' "He is very sensitive and very docile; you will never have occasion to

say a hard word to him—never! you have children of your own, brother!”

“He is a beautiful boy—beautiful. I will be a father to him!”

As he spoke, the recollection of his wife—sour, querulous, austere—came over him, but he said to himself: “She must take to such a child,—women always take to beauty.”

He bent down, and gently pressed his lips to Sidney's forehead: Mrs. Morton replaced the shawl, and drew her brother to the other end of the room.

“And now,” she said, colouring as she spoke, “I must see your wife, brother: there is so much to say about a child that only a woman will recollect. Is she very good-tempered and kind, your wife? You know I never saw her; you married after—after I left.”

“She is a very worthy woman,” said Mr. Morton, clearing his throat, “and brought me some money; she has a will of her own as most women have; but that's neither here nor there—she is a good wife as wives go; and

prudent and painstaking—I don't know what I should do without her."

"Brother, I have one favour to request—a great favour."

"Anything I can do in the way of money?"

"It has nothing to do with money. I can't live long—don't shake your head—I can't live long. I have no fear for Phillip, he has so much spirit—such strength of character—but *that child!* I cannot bear to leave him altogether: let me stay in this town—I can lodge any where; but to see him sometimes—to know I shall be in reach if he is ill—let me stay here—let me die here!"

"You must not talk so sadly—you are young yet—younger than I am—I don't think of dying."

"Heaven forbid! but —"

"Well—well," interrupted Mr. Morton, who began to fear his feelings would bury him into some promise which his wife would not suffer him to keep; "you shall talk to Margaret,—that is, Mrs. Morton—I will get her to see you—yes, I

think I can contrive that; and if you can arrange with her to stay,—but, you see, as she brought the money, and is a very particular woman —”

“I will see her; thank you—thank you; she cannot refuse me.”

“And, brother,” resumed Mrs. Morton, after a short pause, and speaking in a firm voice—
“and is it possible that you disbelieve my story—that you, like all the rest, consider my children the sons of shame?”

There was an honest earnestness in Catherine’s voice, as she spoke, that might have convinced many. But Mr. Morton was a man of facts, a practical man—a man who believed that law was always right, and that the improbable was never true.

He looked down as he answered, “I think you have been a very ill-used woman, Catherine, and that is all I can say on the matter; let us drop the subject.”

“No! I was not ill used; my husband—yes, my husband—was noble and generous from

first to last. It was for the sake of his children's prospects—for the expectations they, through him, might derive from his proud uncle, that he concealed our marriage. Do not blame Philip—do not condemn the dead."

"I don't want to blame any one," said Mr. Morton, rather angrily; "I am a plain man—a tradesman, and can only go by what in my class seems fair and honest, which I can't think Mr. Beaufort's conduct was, put it how you will; if he marries you as you think, he gets rid of a witness, he destroys a certificate, and he dies without a will. However, all that's neither here nor there. You do quite right not to take the name of Beaufort, since it is an uncommon name, and would always make the story public. Least said, soonest mended. You must always consider that your children will be called natural children, and have their own way to make. No harm in that!—Warm day for your journey." Catherine sighed, and wiped her eyes; she no longer reproached the world, since the son of her own mother disbelieved her.

The relations talked together for some minutes on the past—the present; but there was embarrassment and constraint on both sides—it was so difficult to avoid one subject; and after sixteen years of absence, there is little left in common, even between those who once played together round their parents' knees. Mr. Morton was glad at last to find an excuse in Catherine's fatigue to leave her. "Cheer up, and take a glass of something warm before you go to bed. Good night!" these were his parting words.

Long was the conference, and sleepless the couch, of Mr. and Mrs. Morton. At first, that estimable lady positively declared she would not and could not visit Catherine: as to receiving her, that was out of the question. But she secretly resolved to give up that point in order to insist with greater strength upon another. viz. the impossibility of Catherine remaining in the town. Such concession for the purpose of resistance being a very common and sagacious policy with married ladies. Accordingly, when

suddenly, and with a good grace, Mrs. Morton appeared affected by her husband's eloquence, and said, "Well, poor thing! if she is so ill, and you wish it so much, I will call to-morrow;" Mr. Morton felt his heart softened towards the many excellent reasons which his wife urged against allowing Catherine to reside in the town. He was a political character—he had many enemies; the story of his seduced sister, now forgotten, would certainly be raked up, it would affect his comfort, perhaps his trade, certainly his eldest daughter, who was now thirteen; it would be impossible then to adopt the plan hitherto resolved upon—of passing off Sidney as the legitimate orphan of a distant relation; it would be made a great handle for gossip by Miss Prynall. Added to all these reasons, one not less strong occurred to Mr. Morton himself,—the uncommon and merciless rigidity of his wife would render all the other women in the town very glad of any topic that would humble her own sense of immaculate propriety. Moreover, he

saw that if Catherine did remain, it would be a perpetual source of irritation in his own home; he was a man, who liked an easy life, and avoided, as far as possible, all food for domestic worry. And thus, when at length the wedded pair turned back to back, and composed themselves to sleep, the conditions of peace were settled, and the weaker party, as usual in diplomacy, sacrificed to the interests of the united powers.

After breakfast the next morning, Mrs. Morton sallied out on her husband's arm. Mr. Morton was rather a handsome man, with an air and look grave, composed, severe, that had tended much to raise his character in the town. Mrs. Morton was short, wiry, and bony. She had won her husband by making desperate love to him, to say nothing of a dower that enabled him to extend his business, new paint, as well as new-stock, his shop, and rise into the very first rank of tradesmen in his native town. He still believed that she was excessively fond of him—a common delusion of

husbands, especially when henpecked. Mrs. Morton was, perhaps, fond of him in her own way; for though her heart was not warm, there may be a great deal of fondness with very little feeling. The worthy lady was now clothed in her best. She had a proper pride in shewing the rewards that belong to female virtue. Flowers adorned her Leghorn bonnet, and her green silk gown boasted four flounces, —such, then, was, I am told, the fashion. She wore, also, a very handsome black shawl, extremely heavy, though the day was oppressively hot, and with a deep border; a smart *serigné* brooch of yellow topazes glittered in her breast; a huge gilt serpent glared from her waistband; her hair, or more properly speaking her *front*, was tortured into very tight curls, and her feet into very tight half-laced boots, from which the fragrance of new leather had not yet departed. It was this last infliction, for *il faut souffrir pour être belle*, which somewhat yet more accelerated the ordinary acid of Mrs. Morton's temper. The sweetest disposition is

ruffled when the shoe pinches; and it so happened that Mrs. Roger Morton was one of those ladies who always have chilblains in the winter and corns in the summer.

"So you say your sister is a beauty?"

"Was a beauty, Mrs. M.,—was a beauty. People alter."

"A bad conscience, Mr. Morton, is——"

"My dear, can't you walk faster?"

"If you had my corns, Mr. Morton, you would not talk in that way!"

The happy pair sank into silence, only broken by sundry "How d'ye do's!" and "Good morning's!" interchanged with their friends, till they arrived at the inn.

"Let us go up quickly," said Mrs. Morton.

And quiet—quiet to gloom, did the inn, so noisy overnight, seem by morning. The shutters partially closed to keep out the sun—the taproom deserted—the passage smelling of stale smoke—an elderly dog, lazily snapping at the flies, at the foot of the staircase—not a soul to be seen at the bar. The husband and

wife, glad to be unobserved, crept on tiptoe up the stairs, and entered Catherine's apartment.

Catherine was seated on the sofa, and Sidney—dressed, like Mrs. Roger Morton, to look his prettiest, nor yet aware of the change that awaited his destiny, but pleased at the excitement of seeing new friends, as handsome children sure of praise and petting usually are—stood by her side.

"My wife,—Catherine," said Mr. Morton. Catherine rose eagerly, and gazed searchingly on her sister-in-law's hard face. She swallowed the convulsive rising at her heart as she gazed, and stretched out both her hands, not so much to welcome as to plead. Mrs. Roger Morton drew herself up, and then dropped a courtesy—it was an involuntary piece of good breeding—it was extorted by the noble countenance, the matronly mien of Catherine, different from what she had anticipated—she dropped the courtesy, and Catherine took her hand and pressed it.

"This is my son;" she turned away her head.

Sidney advanced towards his protectress who was to be, and Mrs. Roger muttered,—

“Come here, my dear! A fine little boy!”

“As fine a child as ever I saw!” said Mr. Morton, heartily, as he took Sidney on his lap, and stroked down his golden hair.

This displeased Mrs. Roger Morton, but she sat herself down, and said it was “very warm.”

“Now go to that lady, my dear,” said Mr. Morton. “Is she not a very nice lady?—don’t you think you shall like her very much?”

Sidney, the best-mannered child in the world, went boldly up to Mrs. Morton, as he was bid. Mrs. Morton was embarrassed. Some folks are so with other folk’s children: a child either removes all constraint from a party, or it increases the constraint tenfold. Mrs. Morton, however, forced a smile, and said,—“I have a little boy at home about your age.”

“Have you?” exclaimed Catherine, eagerly; and as if that confession made them friends at once, she drew a chair close to her sister-in-law’s,—“My brother has told you all?”

"Yes, ma'am."

"And I shall stay here—in the town somewhere—and see him sometimes!"

Mrs. Roger Morton glanced at her husband—her husband glanced at the door—and Catherine's quick eye turned from one to the other.

"Mr. Morton will explain, ma'am," said the wife.

"E-hem!—Catherine, my dear, I am afraid *that* is out of the question,"—began Mr. Morton, who, when fairly put to it, could be business-like enough. "You see by-gones are by-gones, and it is no use raking them up. But many people in the town will recollect you."

"No one will see me—no one, but you and Sidney."

"It will be sure to creep out; won't it, Mrs. Morton?"

"Quite sure. Indeed, ma'am, it is impossible. Mr. Morton is so very respectable, and his neighbours pay so much attention to all he does; and then, if we have an election in the

autumn, you see, ma'am, he has a great stake in the place, and is a public character."

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Morton. "But I say, Catherine, can your little boy go into the other room for a moment? Margaret, suppose you take him and make fricads."

Delighted to throw on her husband the burden of explanation, which she had originally meant to have all the importance of giving herself in her most proper and patronising manner, Mrs. Morton twisted her fingers into the boy's hand, and opening the door that communicated with the bedroom, left the brother and sister alone. And then Mr. Morton, with more tact and delicacy than might have been expected from him, began to soften to Catherine the hardship of the separation he urged. He dwelt principally on what was best for the child. Boys were so brutal in their intercourse with each other. He had even thought it better to represent Philip to Mr. Plaskwith as a more distant relation than he was; and he begged,

by the by, that Catherine would tell Philip to take the hint. But as for Sidney, sooner or later, *he* would go to a day-school—have companions of his own age—if his birth were known, he would be exposed to many mortifications—so much better, and so very easy, to bring him up as the lawful, that is the *legal*, offspring of some distant relation.

“And,” cried poor Catherine, clasping her hands, “when I am dead, is he never to know that I was his mother?”

The anguish of that question thrilled the heart of the listener. He was affected below all the surface that worldly thoughts and habits had laid, stratum by stratum, over the humanities within. He threw his arms round Catherine, and strained her to his breast,—

“No, my sister—my poor sister—he shall know it when he is *old* enough to understand, and to keep his own secret. He shall know, too, how we all loved and prized you once; how young you were, how flattered and tempted; how you were deceived, for I know *that*—on my soul I do—I know it was not your fault.

He shall know, too, how fondly you loved your child, and how you sacrificed, for his sake, the very comfort of being near him. He shall know it all—all!"

"My brother—my brother, I resign him—I am content. God reward you. I will go—go quickly. I know you will take care of him now."

"And you see," resumed Mr. Morton, resettling himself, and wiping his eyes, "it is best, between you and me, that Mrs. Morton should have her own way in this. She is a very good woman—very; but it's prudent not to vex her.—You may come in now, Mrs. Morton."

Mrs. Morton and Sidney reappeared.

"We have settled it all," said the husband.

"When can we have him?"

"Not to-day," said Mrs. Roger Morton; "you see, ma'am, we must get his bed ready, and his sheets well-aired: I am very particular."

"Certainly, certainly. Will he sleep alone?—pardon me."

"He shall have a room to himself," said

Mr. Morton. "Eh, my dear? Next to Martha's. Martha is our parlour-maid—very good-natured girl, and fond of children."

Mrs. Morton looked grave, thought a moment, and said, "Yes, he can have that room."

"Who can have that room?" asked Sidney, innocently.

"You, my dear," replied Mr. Morton.

"And where will mamma sleep! I must sleep near mamma."

"Mamma is going away," said Catherine, in a firm voice, in which the despair would only have been felt by the acute ear of sympathy,— "going away for a little time; but this gentleman and lady will be very—very kind to you."

"We will do our best, ma'am," said Mrs. Morton.

And as she spoke, a sudden light broke on the boy's mind—he uttered a loud cry, broke from his seat, rushed to his mother's breast, and hid his face there, sobbing bitterly.

"I am afraid he has been very much spoiled,"

whispered Mrs. Roger Morton. "I don't think we need stay longer—it will look suspicious. Good morning, ma'am; we shall be ready to-morrow."

"Good-by, Catherine," said Mr. Morton: and he added as he kissed her, "Be of good heart, I will come up by myself and spend the evening with you."

It was the night after this interview. Sidney had gone to his new home; they had been all kind to him—Mr. Morton, the children, Martha the parlour-maid. Mrs. Roger herself had given him a large slice of bread and jam, but had looked gloomy all the rest of the evening; because, like a dog in a strange place, he refused to eat. His little heart was full, and his eyes, swimming with tears, were turned at every moment to the door. But he did not shew the violent grief that might have been expected. He was naturally timid, and his very desolation, amidst the unfamiliar faces, awed and chilled him. But when Martha took him to bed, and undressed him, and he knelt

down to say his prayers, and came to the words, "Pray God bless dear mamma, and make me a good child," his heart could contain its load no longer, and he sobbed with a passion that alarmed the good-natured servant. She had been used, however, to children, and she soothed and caressed him, and told him of all the nice things he would do, and the nice toys he would have; and at last, silenced, if not convinced, his eyes closed, and, the tears yet wet on their lashes,—fell asleep.

It had been arranged that Catherine should return home that night by a late coach, which left the town at twelve. It was already past eleven. Mrs. Morton had retired to bed; and her husband, who had, according to his wont, lingered behind to smoke a cigar over his last glass of brandy and water, had just thrown aside the stump, and was winding up his watch, when he heard a low tap at his window. He stood mute and alarmed, for the window opened on a back lane, dark and solitary at night, and, from the heat of the weather, the

ironed shutter was not yet closed; the sound was repeated, and he heard a faint voice. He glanced at the poker, and then cautiously moved to the window, and looked forth,—“Who’s there?”

“It is I—it is Catherine! I cannot go without seeing my boy. I must see him—I must once more!”

“My dear sister, the place is shut up—it is impossible. God bless me, if Mrs. Morton should hear you!”

“I have walked before this window for hours—I have waited till all is hushed in your house, till no one, not even a menial, need see the mother stealing to the bed of her child. Brother! by the memory of our own mother, I command you to let me look, for the last time, upon my boy’s face!”

As Catherine said this, standing in that lonely street—darkness and solitude below, God and the stars above—there was about her a majesty which awed the listener. Though she was so near, her features were not very

clearly visible; but her attitude—her hand raised aloft—the outline of her wasted, but still commanding, form, were more impressive from the shadowy dimness of the air.

“Come round, Catherine,” said Mr. Morton, after a pause; “I will admit you.”

He shut the window, stole to the door, unbarred it gently, and admitted his visitor. He bade her follow him; and, shading the light with his hand, crept up the stairs. Catherine’s step made no sound.

They passed, unmolested and unheard, the room in which the wife was drowsily reading, according to her custom, before she tied her nightcap and got into bed, a chapter in some pious book. They ascended to the chamber where Sidney lay; Morton opened the door cautiously, and stood at the threshold, so holding the candle, that its light might not wake the child, though it sufficed to guide Catherine to the bed. The room was small, perhaps close, but scrupulously clean; for cleanliness

was Mrs. Roger Morton's capital virtue. The mother, with a tremulous hand, drew aside the white curtains, and checked her sobs as she gazed on the young quiet face that was turned towards her. She gazed some moments in passionate silence;—who shall say, beneath that silence, what thoughts, what prayers, moved and stirred? Then bending down, with pale, convulsive lips she kissed the little hands thrown so listlessly on the coverlid of the pillow on which the head lay. After this, she turned her face to her brother, with a mute appeal in her glance, took a ring from her finger—a ring that had never till then left it—the ring which Philip Beaufort had placed there the day after that child was born. “Let him wear this round his neck,” said she, and stopped, lest she should sob aloud, and disturb the boy. In that gift she felt as if she invoked the father's spirit to watch over the friendless orphan; and then, pressing together her own hands firmly, as we do in some paroxysm

of great pain, she turned from the room, descended the stairs, gained the street, and muttered to her brother,—“I am happy now; peace be on these thresholds!” Before he could answer she was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

"Thus things are strangely wrought,
While joyful May doth last;
Take May in time—when May is gone
The pleasant time is past."

RICHARD LOWLANDS: from the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*.

It was that period of the year when, to those who look on the surface of society, London wears its most radiant smile; when shops are gayest, and trade most brisk; when down the thoroughfares roll and glitter the countless streams of indolent and voluptuous life; when the upper class spend, and the middle class make; when the ball-room is the Market of Beauty, and the club-house the School for Scandal; when the hells yawn for their prey, and opera-singers and fiddlers—creatures hatched from gold, as the dung-flies from the dung—

swarm, and buzz, and fatten, round the hide of the gentle Public. In the cant phrase, it was "the London season." And happy, take it altogether, happy above the rest of the year, even for the hapless, is that period of ferment and fever. It is not the season for duns, and the debtor glides about with a less anxious eye; and the weather is warm, and the vagrant sleeps, unfrozen, under the starlit portico; and the beggar thrives, and the thief rejoices,—for the rankness of the civilisation has superfluities clutched by all. And out of the general corruption things sordid and things miserable crawl forth to bask in the common sunshine—things that perish when the first autumn-winds whistle along the melancholy city. It is the gay time for the heir and the beauty, and the statesman and the lawyer, and the mother with her young daughters, and the artist with his fresh pictures, and the poet with his new book. It is the gay time, too, for the starved journeyman, and the ragged outcast that with long stride and patient eyes

follows, for pence, the equestrian, who bids him go and be d—d in vain. It is a gay time for the painted harlot in a crimson pelisse; and a gay time for the old hag that loiters about the thresholds of the gin-shop, to huy back, in a draught, the dreams of departed youth. It is gay, in fine, as the fulness of a vast city is ever gay—for Vice as for Innocence, for Poverty as for Wealth. And the wheels of every single destiny wheel on the merrier, no matter whether they are bound to Heaven or to Hell.

Arthur Beaufort, the young heir, was at his father's house. He was fresh from Oxford, where he had already discovered that learning is *not* better than house and land. Since the new prospects opened to him, Arthur Beaufort was greatly changed. Naturally studious and prudent, had his fortunes remained what they had been before his uncle's death, he would probably have become a laborious and distinguished man. But though his abilities were good, he had not those restless impulses which belong to Genius—often not only its glory but

its curse. The Golden Rod cast his energies asleep at once. Good-natured to a fault, and somewhat vacillating in character, he adopted the manner and the code of the rich young idlers who were his equals at College. He became, like them, careless, extravagant, and fond of pleasure. This change, if it deteriorated his mind, improved his exterior. It was a change that could not but please women; and of all women, his mother the most. Mrs. Beaufort was a lady of high birth; and in marrying her, Robert had hoped much from the interest of her connexions; but a change in the ministry had thrown her relations out of power; and, beyond her dowry, he obtained no worldly advantage with the lady of his mercenary choice. Mrs. Beaufort was a woman whom a word or two will describe. She was thoroughly commonplace—neither bad nor good, neither clever nor silly. She was what is called well-bred; that is, languid, silent, perfectly dressed, and insipid. Of her two children, Arthur was almost the exclusive

favourite, especially after he became the heir to such brilliant fortunes. For she was so much the mechanical creature of the world, that even her affection was warm or cold in proportion as the world shone on it. Without being absolutely in love with her husband, she liked him—they suited each other; and, (in spite of all the temptations that had beset her in their earlier years, for she had been esteemed a beauty—and lived, as worldly people must do, in circles where examples of unpunished gallantry are numerous and contagious,) her conduct had ever been scrupulously correct. She had little or no feeling for misfortunes with which she had never come into contact; for those with which she had—such as the distresses of younger sons, or the errors of fashionable women, or the disappointments of “a proper ambition”—she had more sympathy than might have been supposed, and touched on them with all the tact of well-bred charity and ladylike forbearance. Thus, though she was regarded as a strict person in point of

moral decorum, yet in society she was popular—as women, at once pretty and inoffensive, generally are.

To do Mrs. Beaufort justice, she had not been privy to the letter her husband wrote to Catherine, although not wholly innocent of it. The fact is, that Robert had never mentioned to her the peculiar circumstances that made Catherine an exception from ordinary rules—the generous propositions of his brother to him the night before his death; and, whatever his incredulity as to the alleged private marriage, the perfect loyalty and faith that Catherine had borne to the deceased,—he had merely observed, “I must do something, I suppose, for that woman: she very nearly entrapped my poor brother into marrying her; and he would then, for what I know, have cut Arthur out of the estates. Still, I must do something for her—eh?”

“Yes, I think so. What was she?—very low?”

“A tradesman’s daughter.”

“The children should be provided for according to the rank of the mother; that’s the general rule in such cases: and the mother should have about the same provision she might have looked for if she had married a tradesman and been left a widow. I dare say she was a very artful kind of person, and don’t deserve any thing; but it is always handsomer, in the eyes of the world, to go by the general rules people lay down as to money matters.”

So spoke Mrs. Beaufort. She concluded her husband had settled the matter, and never again recurred to it. Indeed, she had never liked the late Mr. Beaufort, whom she considered *manais ton*.

In the breakfast-room at Mr. Beaufort’s, the mother and son were seated; the former at work, the latter lounging by the window: they were not alone. In a large elbow-chair sat a middle-aged man, listening, or appearing to listen, to the prattle of a beautiful little girl—Arthur Beaufort’s sister. This man was not handsome, but there was a certain elegance in

his air, and a certain intelligence in his countenance, which made his appearance pleasing. He had that kind of eye which is often seen with red hair—an eye of a reddish hazel, with very long lashes; the eyebrows were dark and clearly defined; and the short hair shewed to advantage the contour of a small well-shaped head. His features were irregular; the complexion had been sanguine, but was now faded, and a yellow tinge mingled with the red. His face was more wrinkled, especially round the eyes—which, when he laughed, were scarcely visible—than is usual even in men ten years older. But his teeth were still of a dazzling whiteness; nor was there any trace of decayed health in his countenance. He seemed one who had lived hard, but who had much yet left in the lamp wherewith to feed the wick. At the first glance, he appeared slight, as he lolled listlessly in his chair—almost fragile. But, at a nearer examination, you perceived that in spite of the small extremities and delicate bones, his frame was constitu-

tionally strong. Without being broad in the shoulders, he was exceedingly deep in the chest—deeper than men who seemed giants by his side; and his gestures had the ease of one accustomed to an active life. He had, indeed, been celebrated in his youth for his skill in athletic exercises, but a wound, received in a duel many years ago, had rendered him lame for life—a misfortune which interfered with his former habits, and was said to have soured his temper. This personage, whose position and character will be described hereafter, was Lord Lilburne, the brother of Mrs. Beaufort.

“So, Camilla,” said Lord Lilburne to his niece, as carelessly, not fondly, he stroked down her glossy ringlets, “you don’t like Berkeley Square as much as you did Gloucester Place.”

“Oh, no! not half as much! You see I never walk out in the fields,* nor make daisy-

* Now the Regent’s Park.

chains at Primrose Hill. I don't know what mamma means," added the child, in a whisper, "in saying we are better off here."

Lord Lilburne smiled, but the smile was a half sneer.

"You will know quite soon enough, Camilla; the understandings of young ladies grow up very quickly on this side of Oxford Street. — Well, Arthur, and what are your plans to-day?"

"Why," said Arthur, suppressing a yawn, "I have promised to ride out with a friend of mine, to see a horse that is for sale, somewhere in the suburbs."

As he spoke, Arthur rose, stretched himself, looked in the glass, and then glanced impatiently at the window.

"He ought to be here by this time."

"He! who?" said Lord Lilburne, "the horse or the other animal—I mean the friend?"

"The friend," answered Arthur, smiling, but colouring while he smiled, for he half suspected the quiet sneer of his uncle.

"Who is your friend, Arthur?" asked Mrs. Beaufort, looking up from her work.

"Watson, an Oxford man. By the by, I must introduce him to you."

"Watson! what Watson? what family of Watson? Some Watsons are good and some are bad," said Mrs. Beaufort, musingly.

"Then they are very unlike the rest of mankind," observed Lord Lilburne, dryly.

"Oh! my Watson is a very gentlemanlike person, I assure you," said Arthur, half-laughing, "and you need not be ashamed of him." Then, rather desirous of turning the conversation, he continued, "So my father will be back from Beaufort Court to-day."

"Yes; he writes in excellent spirits. He says the rents will bear raising at least ten per cent, and that the house will not require much repair."

Here Arthur threw open the window.

"Ah, Watson! how are you? How d'ye do, Marsden! Danvers, too! that's capital! the more the merrier! I will be down in

an instant. But would you not rather come in?"

"An agreeable inundation," murmured Lord Lilburne. "Three at a time: he takes your house for Trinity College."

A loud clear voice, however, declined the invitation; the horses were heard pawing without. Arthur seized his hat and whip, and glanced to his mother and uncle, smilingly. "Good-by! I shall be out till dinner. Kiss me, my pretty 'Milly!" And as his sister, who had run to the window, sickening for the fresh air and exercise he was about to enjoy, now turned to him wistful and mournful eyes, the kind-hearted young man took her in his arms and whispered while he kissed her,—

"Get up early to-morrow, and we'll have such a nice walk together."

Arthur was gone; his mother's gaze had followed his young and graceful figure to the door.

"Ow! that he is handsome, Lilburne. May I not say more:—has he not the proper air?"

"My dear sister, your son will be rich. As for his air, he has plenty of airs, but wants graces."

"Then who could polish him like yourself?"

"Probably no one. But had I a son—which Heaven forbid!—he should not have me for his Mentor. Place a young man—(go and shut the door, Camilla)—between two vices—women and gambling, if you want to polish him into the fashionable smoothness. Between you and me, the varnish is a little expensive!"

Mrs. Beaufort sighed. Lord Lilburne smiled. He had a strange pleasure in hurting the feelings of others. Besides, he disliked youth: in his own youth he had enjoyed so much that he grew sour when he saw the young.

Meanwhile Arthur Beaufort and his friends, careless of the warmth of the day, were laughing merrily, and talking gaily, as they made for the suburb of H—.

"It is an out-of-the-way place for a horse, too," said Sir Harry Dauvers.

"But I assure you," insisted Mr. Watson, earnestly, "that my groom, who is a capital judge, says it is the cleverest hack he ever mounted. It has won several trotting matches. It belonged to a sporting tradesman, now done up. The advertisement caught me."

"Well," said Arthur, gaily, "at all events, the ride is delightful. What weather! You must all dine with me at Richmond to-morrow—we will row back."

"And a little chicken hazard, at the M—, afterwards," said Mr. Marsden, who was an elder not a better man than the rest—a handsome, saturnine man—who had just left Oxford, and was already known on the turf.

"Any thing you please," said Arthur, making his horse curvet.

Oh, Mr. Robert Beaufort! Mr. Robert Beaufort! could your prudent, scheming, worldly heart but feel what devil's tricks your wealth was playing with a son who if poor had been the pride of the Beauforts! On one side of our pieces of gold we see the saint

trampling down the dragon—false emblem!
Reverse it on the coin! In the real use of
the gold, it is the dragon who tramples down
the saint! But on—on! the day is bright
and your companions merry; make the best
of your green years, Arthur Beaufort!

The young men had just entered the suburb
of H—, and were spurring on four abreast
at a canter. At that time an old man, feeling
his way before him with a stick,—for, though
not quite blind, he saw imperfectly,—was cross-
ing the road. Arthur and his friends, in loud
converse, did not observe the poor passenger.
He stopped abruptly, for his ear caught the
sound of danger—it was too late: Mr. Mars-
den's horse, hard-mouthed and high-stepping,
came full against him. Mr. Marsden looked
down—

“Hang these old men! *always* in the way,”
said he plaintively, and in the tone of a much-
injured person, and, with that, Mr. Marsden
rode on. But the others who were younger—
who were not gamblers—who were not yet

grinded down into stone by the world's wheels—the others halted. Arthur Beaufort leaped from his horse and the old man was already in his arms; but he was severely hurt. The blood trickled from his forehead; he complained of pain in his side and limbs.

“Lean on me, my poor fellow! I will take you home. Do you live far off?”

“Not many yards. This would not have happened if I had had my dog. Never mind, sir, go your way. It is only an old man—what of that? I wish I had my dog.”

“I will join you,” said Arthur to his friends; “my groom has the direction. I will just take the poor old man home, and send for a surgeon. I shall not be long.”

“So like you, Beaufort: the best fellow in the world!” said Mr. Watson, with some emotion. “And there’s Marsden positively dismounted and looking at his horse’s knees as if they could be hurt! Here’s a sovereign for you, my man.”

“And here’s another,” said Sir Harry; “so

that's settled. Well, you will join us, Beaufort? You see the yard yonder. We'll wait twenty minutes for you. Come on, Watson."

The old man had not picked up the sovereigns thrown at his feet, neither had he thanked the donors. And on his countenance there was a sour, querulous, resentful expression.

"Must a man be a beggar because he is run over, or because he is half blind?" said he, turning his dim, wandering eyes painfully towards Arthur. "Well, I wish I had my dog!"

"I will supply his place," said Arthur, soothingly. "Come, lean on me—heavier; that's right. You are not so bad,—eh?"

"Um!—the sovereigns!—it is wicked to leave them in the kennel!"

Arthur smiled. "Here they are, sir."

The old man slid the coins into his pocket, and Arthur continued to talk, though he got but short answers, and those only in the way of direction, till at last the old man stopped at the door of a small house, near the churchyard.

After twice ringing the bell, the door was

opened by a middle-aged woman, whose appearance was above that of a common menial; dressed, somewhat gaily for her years, in a cap seated very far back on a black *touffée*, and decorated with red ribbons, an apron made out of an Indian silk handkerchief, a puce-coloured saracen gown, black silk-stockings, long gilt earrings, and a watch at her girdle.

"Bless us, and save us, sir! What *has* happened?" exclaimed this worthy personage, holding up her hands.

"Pish! I am faint: let me in. I don't want your aid any more, sir. Thank you. Good day!"

Not discouraged by this farewell, the churlish tone of which fell harmless on the invincibly sweet temper of Arthur, the young man continued to assist the sufferer along the narrow passage into a little old-fashioned parlour; and no sooner was the owner deposited on his worm-eaten leather chair than he fainted away. On reaching the house, Arthur had sent his servant (who had followed him

with the horses) for the nearest surgeon; and while the old lady was still employed, after taking off the sufferer's cravat, in burning feathers under his nose, there was heard a sharp rap and a shrill ring. Arthur opened the door, and admitted a smart little man in nankeen breeches and gaiters. He bustled into the room.

"What's this—bad accident—rode over? Sad thing, very sad. Open the window A glass of water—a towel. So—so: I see—I see—no fracture—contusion. Help him off with his coat. Another chair, ma'am; put up his poor legs. What age is he, ma'am?—Sixty-eight! Too old to bleed. Thank you. How is it, sir? Poorly, to be sure: will be comfortable presently—faintish still? Soon put all to rights."

"Tray! Tray! Where's Tray! Where's my dog, Mrs. Boxer?"

"Lord, sir! what do you want with your dog now? He is in the back-yard."

"And what business has my dog in the back-yard?" almost screamed the sufferer, in

accents that denoted no diminution of vigour.

"I thought as soon as my back was turned my dog would be ill-used! Why did I go without my dog? Let in my dog directly, Mrs. Boser!"

"All right you see, sir," said the apothecary, turning to Beaufort, "no cause for alarm—very comforting that little passion—does him good—sets one's mind easy. How did it happen? Ah, I understand! knocked down—might have been worse. Your groom (sharp fellow!) explained in a trice, sir. Thought it was my old friend here by the description. Worthy man—settled here a many year—very odd—eccentric (this in a whisper). Came off instantly—just at dinner—cold lamb and salad. 'Mrs. Perkins' says I, 'if any one calls for me, I shall be at No. 4 Prospect Place.' Your servant observed the address, sir. Oh, very sharp fellow! See how the old gentleman takes to his dog—fine little dog—what a stump of a tail! Deal of practice—expect two accouchements every hour. Hot weather

for child-birth. So says I to Mrs. Perkins, 'If Mrs. Plummer is taken, or Mrs. Everat, or if old Mr. Grub has another fit, send off at once to No. 4.' Medical men should be always in the way—that's my maxim. Now, sir, where do you feel the pain?"

"In my ears, sir."

"Bless me, that looks bad. How long have you felt it?"

"Ever since you have been in the room."

"Oh, I take. Ha! ha!—very eccentric—very!" muttered the apothecary, a little disconcerted. "Well, let him lie down, ma'am. I'll send him a little quieting draught to be taken directly—pill at night, aperient in the morning. If wanted, send for me—always to be found. Bless me, that's my boy Bob's ring! Please to open the door, ma'am. Know his ring—very peculiar kuzak of his own. Lay ten to one it is Mrs. Plummer, or, perhaps, Mrs. Everat—her ninth child in eight years—in the grocery line. A woman in a thousand, sir!"

Here a thin boy, with very short coat-sleeves, and very large hands, burst into the room with his mouth open.

"Sir—Mr. Perkins—sir!"

"I know—I know—coming. Mrs. Plummer or Mrs. Everat?"

"No, sir; it be the poor lady at Mrs. Lacy's; she be taken desperate. Mrs. Lacy's girl has just been over to the shop, and made me run here to you, sir."

"Mrs. Lacy's! oh, I know. Poor Mrs. Morton! Bad case—very bad—must be off. Keep him quiet, ma'am. Good day! Look in to-morrow—nine o'clock. Put a little lint with the lotion on the bead, ma'am. Mrs. Morton! Ah! bad job that."

Here the apothecary had shuffled himself off to the street door, when Arthur laid his hand on his arm.

"Mrs. Morton! Did you say *Morton*, sir? What kind of a person—is she very ill?"

"Hopeless case, sir—general break-up.

Nice woman—quite the lady—known better days, I'm sure."

"Has she any children—sons?"

"Two—both away now—fine lads—quite wrapped up in them—youngest especially."

"Good heavens! it must be she—ill, and dying, and destitute, perhaps"—exclaimed Arthur, with real and deep feeling; "I will go with you, sir. I fancy that I know this lady—that (he added generously) I am related to her."

"Do you?—glad to hear it. Come along then; she ought to have some one near her besides servants: not but what Jenny, the maid, is uncommonly kind. Dr. —, who attends her sometimes, said to me, says he,—'It is the mind, Mr. Perkins; I wish we could get back her boys.'"

"And where are they?"

"Prenticed out, I fancy. Master Sidney —"

"Sidney!"

"Ah! that was his name—pretty name.

D'ye know Sir Sidney Smith?—extraordinary man, sir! Master Sidney was a beautiful child—quite spoiled. She always fancied him ailing—always sending for me. ‘Mr. Perkins,’ said she, ‘there’s something the matter with my child; I’m sure there is, though he won’t own it. He has lost his appetite—had a headach last night.’ ‘Nothing the matter, ma’am,’ says I, ‘wish you’d think more of yourself.’ These mothers are silly, anxious, poor creatures. Nater, sir, nater—wonderful thing—nater!—Here we are.”

And the apothecary knocked at the private door of a milliner and hosier’s shop.

CHAPTER X.

"Thy child shall live, and I will see it nursed."

THE ANCESTOR.

As might be expected, the excitement and fatigue of Catherine's journey to N— had considerably accelerated the progress of disease. And when she reached home, and looked round the cheerless rooms, all solitary, all hushed— Sidney gone, gone from her for ever; she felt, indeed, as if the last reed on which she had leaned was broken, and her business upon earth was done. Catherine was not condemned to absolute poverty—the poverty which grinds and gnaws, the poverty of rags and famine. She had still left nearly half of such portion of the little capital, realised by the sale of her trinkets, as had escaped the clutch of the law;

and her brother had forced into her hands a note for 20*l.* with an assurance that the same sum should be paid to her half-yearly. Alas! there was little chance of her needing it again! She was not, then, in want of means to procure the common comforts of life. But now a new passion had entered into her breast—the passion of the miser; she wished to hoard every sixpence as some little provision for her children. What was the use of her feeding a lamp nearly extinguished, and which was fated to be soon broken up and cast amidst the vast lumber-house of Death? She would willingly have removed into a more homely lodging, but the servant of the house had been so fond of Sidney—so kind to *him*. She clung to one familiar face on which there seemed to live the reflection of her child's. But she relinquished the first floor for the second; and there, day by day, she felt her eyes grow heavier and heavier beneath the clouds of the last sleep. Besides the aid of Mr. Perkins, a kind enough man in his way,

the good physician, whom she had before consulted, still attended her, and—refused his fee. Shocked at perceiving that she rejected every little alleviation of her condition, and wishing at least to procure for her last hours the society of one of her sons, he had inquired the address of the elder; and on the day preceding the one in which Arthur discovered her abode, he despatched to Philip the following letter:—

“Sir, — Being called in to attend your mother in a lingering illness, which I fear may prove fatal, I think it my duty to request you to come to her as soon as you receive this. Your presence cannot but be a great comfort to her. The nature of her illness is such that it is impossible to calculate exactly how long she may be spared to you; but I am sure that her fate might be prolonged, and her remaining days more happy, if she could be induced to remove into a better air and a more quiet neighbourhood, to take more generous syste-

nance, and, above all, if her mind could be set more at ease as to your and your brother's prospects. You must pardon me if I have seemed inquisitive; but I have sought to draw from your mother some particulars as to her family and connexions, with a wish to represent to them her state of mind. She is, however, very reserved on these points. If, however, you have relations well to do in the world, I think some application to them should be made. I fear the state of her affairs weighs much upon your poor mother's mind; and I must leave you to judge how far it can be relieved by the good feeling of any persons upon whom she may have legitimate claims. At all events, I repeat my wish that you should come to her forthwith.

"I am, &c.

After he had despatched this letter, a sudden and marked alteration for the worse

took place in his patient's disorder; and in the visit he had paid that morning, he saw cause to fear that her hours on earth would be much fewer than he had before anticipated. He had left her, however, comparatively better; but two hours after his departure the symptoms of her disease had become very alarming, and the good-natured servant girl, her sole nurse, and who had, moreover, the whole business of the other lodgers to attend to, had, as we have seen, thought it necessary to summon the apothecary in the interval that must elapse before she could reach the distant part of the metropolis in which Dr. — resided.

On entering the chamber, Arthur felt all the remorse, which of right belonged to his father, press heavily on his soul. What a contrast, that mean and solitary chamber, and its comfortless appurtenances, to the graceful and luxurious abode, where full of health and hope he had last beheld her, the mother of Philip Beaufort's children! He remained

silent till Mr. Perkins, after a few questions, retired to send his drugs. He then approached the bed; Catherine, though very weak and suffering much pain, was still sensible. She turned her dim eyes on the young man; but she did not recognise his features.

“You do not remember me?” said he, in a voice struggling with tears: “I am Arthur—Arthur Beaufort.”

Catherine made no answer.

“Good God! Why do I see you here? I believed you with your friends—your children; provided for—as became my father to do. He assured me that you were so.”

Still no answer.

And then the young man, overpowered with the feelings of a sympathising and generous nature, forgetting for awhile Catherine's weakness, poured forth a torrent of inquiries, regrets, and self-upbraidings, which Catherine at first little heeded. But the name of her children, repeated again and again, struck upon that chord which, in a woman's heart, is the last

to break; and she raised herself in her bed, and looked at her visitor wistfully.

"Your father," she said, then—"your father was unlike my Philip: but I see things differently now. For me, all bounty is too late; but my children—to-morrow they may have no mother. The law is with you, but not justice! You will be rich and powerful;—will you befriend my children?"

"Through life, so help me Heaven!" exclaimed Arthur, falling on his knees beside the bed.

What then passed between them it is needless to detail; for it was little, save broken repetitions of the same prayer and the same response. But there was so much truth and earnestness in Arthur's voice and countenance, that Catherine felt as if an angel had come there to administer comfort. And when late in the day the physician entered, he found his patient leaning on the breast of her young visitor and looking on his face with a happy smile.

The physician gathered enough from the appearance of Arthur and the gossip of Mr. Perkins, to conjecture that one of the rich relations he had attributed to Catherine was arrived. Alas for her, it was now too late!

CHAPTER XI.

"D're stand amazed?—Look o'er thy head, Maximian!
Look to the terror which overhangs thee."

BEECHMIST AND FLEETNER: The Prophecy.

PHILIP had been five weeks in his new home: in another week, he was to enter on his articles of apprenticeship. With a stern, unbending gloom of manner, he had entered on the duties of his novitiate. He submitted to all that was enjoined him. He seemed to have lost for ever the wild and unruly waywardness that had stamped his boyhood; but he was never seen to smile—he scarcely ever opened his lips. His very soul seemed to have quitted him with its faults; and he performed all the functions of his situation with the quiet, listless regularity of a machine. Only when

the work was done and the shop closed, instead of joining the family circle in the back-parlour, he would stroll out in the dusk of evening, away from the town, and not return till the hour at which the family retired to rest. Punctual in all he did, he never exceeded that hour. He had heard once a-week from his mother; and only on the mornings in which he expected a letter did he seem restless and agitated. Till the postman entered the shop, he was pale as death—his hands trembling—his lips compressed. When he read the letter he became composed; for Catherine sedulously concealed from her son the state of her health: she wrote cheerfully, besought him to content himself with the state into which he had fallen, and expressed her joy that in his letters he intimated that content: for the poor boy's letters were not less considerate than her own. On her return from her brother, she had so far silenced or concealed her misgivings as to express satisfaction at the home she had provided for

Sidney; and she even held out hopes of some future, when, their probation finished and their independence secured, she might reside with her sons alternately. These hopes redoubled Philip's assiduity, and he saved every shilling of his weekly stipend; and sighed as he thought that in another week his term of apprenticeship would commence and the stipend cease.

Mr. Plaskwith could not but be pleased on the whole with the diligence of his assistant, but he was chafed and irritated by the sullenness of his manner. As for Mrs. Plaskwith, poor woman! she positively detested the taciturn and moody boy, who never mixed in the jokes of the circle, nor played with the children, nor complimented her, nor added, in short, any thing to the sociability of the house. Mr. Plimmins, who had at first sought to condescend, next sought to bully; but the gaunt frame and savage eye of Philip awed the smirk youth, in spite of himself; and he confessed to Mrs. Plaskwith that he should

not like to meet "the gipsy" alone, on a dark night; to which Mrs. Plaskwith replied, as usual, "that Mr. Plimmins always *did* say the best things in the world!"

One morning, Philip was sent some miles into the country, to assist in cataloging some books in the library of Sir Thomas Champdown—that gentleman, who was a scholar, having requested that some one acquainted with the Greek character might be sent to him, and Philip being the only one in the shop who possessed such knowledge.

It was evening before he returned. Mr. and Mrs. Plaskwith were both in the shop as he entered—in fact, they had been employed in talking him over.

"I can't abide him!" cried Mrs. Plaskwith. "If you choose to take him for good, I sha'n't have an easy moment. I'm sure the 'prentice that cut his master's throat at Chatham, last week, was just like him."

"Pshaw, Mrs. P.!" said the bookseller, taking a huge pinch of snuff, as usual, from

his waistcoat pocket. "I myself was reserved when I was young;—all reflective people are. I may observe, by the by, that it was the case with Napoleon Buonaparte: still, however, I must own he is a disagreeable youth, though he attends to his business."

"And how fond of his money he is!" remarked Mrs. Plaskwith: "he won't buy himself a new pair of shoes!—quite disgraceful! And did you see what a look he gave Plumins, when he joked about his indifference to his *sole*? Plumins always does say such good things!"

"He is shabby, certainly," said the bookseller; "but the value of a book does not always depend on the binding."

"I hope he is honest!" observed Mrs. Plaskwith;—and here Philip entered.

"Hum," said Mr. Plaskwith; "you have had a long day's work: but I suppose it will take a week to finish?"

"I am to go again to-morrow morning, sir: two days more will conclude the task."

"There's a letter for you," cried Mrs. Plaskwith; "you owes me for it."

"A letter!" It was not his mother's hand—it was a strange writing—he gasped for breath as he broke the seal. It was the letter of the physician.

His mother then was ill—dying—wanting, perhaps, the necessaries of life. She would have concealed from him her illness and her poverty. His quick alarm exaggerated the last into utter want;—he uttered a cry that rang through the shop, and rushed to Mr. Plaskwith.

"Sir, sir! my mother is dying!—She is poor, poor—perhaps, starving;—money, money!—lend me money!—ten pounds!—five!—I will work for you all my life for nothing, but lend me the money!"

"Hoity-toity!" said Mrs. Plaskwith, nudging her husband—"I told you what would come of it: it will be 'money or life' next time."

Philip did not heed or hear this address,

but stood immediately before the bookseller, his hands clasped—wild impatience in his eyes. Mr. Plaskwith, somewhat stupefied, remained silent.

“Do you hear me?—are you human?” exclaimed Philip, his emotion revealing at once all the fire of his character. “I tell you my mother is dying; I must go to her! Shall I go empty-handed?—Give me money!”

Mr. Plaskwith was not a bad-hearted man; but he was a formal man and an irritable one. The tone his shopboy (for so he considered Philip) assumed to him, before his own wife too (examples are very dangerous), rather exasperated than moved him.

“That’s not the way to speak to your master;—you forget yourself, young man!”

“Forget!—But, sir, if she has not necessaries—if she is starving?”

“Fudge!” said Mr. Plaskwith. “Mr. Norton writes me word that he has provided for your mother! Does not he, Hannah?”

“More fool he, I’m sure, with such a fine

family of his own! Don't look at me in that way, young man; I won't take it—that I won't! I declare my blood friz to see you!”

“Will you advance me money?—five pounds—only five pounds, Mr. Plaskwith?”

“Not five shillings! Talk to me in this style!—not the man for it, sir!—highly improper. Come, shut up the shop, and recollect yourself; and, perhaps, when Sir Thomas's library is done, I may let you go to town. You can't go to-morrow. All a sham, perhaps; eh, Haueah?”

“Very likely! Consult Plimmins. Better come away now, Mr. P. He looks like a young tiger.”

Mrs. Plaskwith quitted the shop for the parlour. Her husband, putting his hands behind his back, and throwing back his chin, was about to follow her. Philip, who had remained for the last moment mute and white as stone, turned abruptly; and his grief taking rather

the tone of rage than supplication, he threw himself before his master, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said:—

“I leave you—do not let it be with a curse. I conjure you, have mercy on me!”

Mr. Plaskwith stopped; and, had Philip then taken but a milder tone, all had been well. But, accustomed from childhood to command—all his fierce passions loose within him—despising the very man he thus implored—the boy ruined his own cause. Indignant at the silence of Mr. Plaskwith, and too blinded by his emotions to see that in that silence there was relenting, he suddenly shook the little man with a vehemence that almost upset him, and cried:—

“You, who demand for five years my bones and blood—my body and soul—a slave to your vile trade—do you deny me bread for a mother’s lips?”

Trembling with anger and, perhaps, fear, Mr. Plaskwith extricated himself from the

gripe of Philip, and, hurrying from the shop, said, as he banged the door:—

“Beg my pardon for this to-night, or cut you go to-morrow, neck and crop! Zounds! a pretty pass the world’s come to! I don’t believe a word about your mother. Bangh!”

Left alone, Philip remained for some moments struggling with his wrath and agony. He then seized his hat, which he had thrown off on entering—pressed it over his brows—turned to quit the shop—when his eye fell upon the till. Plaskwith had left it open, and the gleam of the coin struck his gaze—that deadly smile of the arch tempter. Intellect, reason, conscience—all, in that instant, were confusion and chaos. He cast a hurried glance round the solitary and darkening room—plunged his hand into the drawer, clutched he knew not what—silver or gold, as it came uppermost—and burst into a loud and bitter laugh. That laugh itself startled him—it did not sound like his own. His cheek turned white, and his knees knocked

together—his hair bristled—he felt as if the very fiend had uttered that yell of joy over a fallen soul.

“No—no—no!” he muttered; “no, my mother—not even for thee!” And, dashing the money to the ground, he fled, like a maniac, from the house.

At a later hour that same evening, Mr. Robert Beaufort returned from his country mansion to Berkeley Square. He found his wife very uneasy and nervous about the non-appearance of their only son. He had sent home his groom and horses about seven o'clock, with a hurried scroll, written in pencil on a blank page torn from his pocket-book, and containing only these words:—

“Don't wait dinner for me—I may not be home for some hours. I have met with a melancholy adventure. You will approve what I have done when we meet.”

This note a little perplexed Mr. Beaufort; but, as he was very hungry, he turned a deaf ear, both to his wife's conjectures and his own

surmises, till he had refreshed himself; and then he sent for the groom, and learned that, after the accident to the blind man, Mr. Arthur had been left at a hosier's in H—. This seemed to him extremely mysterious; and, as hour after hour passed away, and still Arthur came not, he began to imbuë his wife's fears, which were now wound up almost to hysterics; and just at midnight he ordered his carriage, and taking with him the groom as a guide, set off to the suburban region. Mrs. Beaufort had wished to accompany him; but the husband observing that young men would be young men, and that there *might* possibly be a lady in the case, Mrs. Beaufort, after a pause of thought, passively agreed that, all things considered, she had better remain at home. No lady of proper decorum likes to run the risk of finding herself in a false position. Mr. Beaufort accordingly set out alone. Easy was the carriage—swift were the steeds—and luxuriously the wealthy man was whirled along.

Not a suspicion of the true cause of Arthur's detention crossed him; but he thought of the snares of London—of artful females in distress; “a melancholy adventure” generally implies love for the adventure, and money for the melancholy; and Arthur was young—generous—with a heart and a pocket equally open to imposition. Such scrapes, however, do not terrify a father when he is a man of the world, so much as they do an anxious mother; and with more curiosity than alarm, Mr. Beaufort, after a short doze, found himself before the shop indicated.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the door to the private entrance was ajar,—a circumstance which seemed very suspicious to Mr. Beaufort. He pushed it open with caution and timidity—a candle placed upon a chair in the narrow passage threw a sickly light over the flight of stairs, till swallowed up by the deep shadow thrown from the sharp angle made by the ascent. Robert Beaufort stood a moment in some doubt whether to call,

to knock, to recede, or to advance, when a step was heard upon the stairs above—it came nearer and nearer—a figure emerged from the shadow of the last landing-place, and Mr. Beaufort, to his great joy, recognised his son.

Arthur did not, however, seem to perceive his father; and was about to pass him, when Mr. Beaufort laid his hand on his arm.

“What means all this, Arthur? What place are you in? How you have alarmed us!”

Arthur cast a look upon his father of sadness and reproach.

“Father,” he said, in a tone that sounded stern—almost commanding—“I will shew you where I have been: follow me—nay, I say, follow.”

He turned, without another word reascended the stairs; and Mr. Beaufort, surprised and awed into mechanical obedience, did as his son desired. At the landing-place of the second floor, another long-wicked, neglected, ghastly candle, emitted its cheerless ray. It gleamed

through the open door of a small bedroom to the left, through which Beaufort perceived the forms of two women. One (it was the kindly maid-servant) was seated on a chair, and weeping bitterly; the other (it was a hiring nurse, in the first and last day of her attendance) was unpinning her dingy shawl before she lay down to take a nap. She turned her vacant, listless face upon the two men, put on a doleful smile, and decently closed the door.

"Where are we, I say, Arthur?" repeated Mr. Beaufort.

Arthur took his father's hand—drew him into a room to the right—and, taking up the candle, placed it on a small table beside a bed, and said, "Here, sir—in the Presence of Death!"

Mr. Beaufort cast a hurried and fearful glance on the still, wan, serene face beneath his eyes, and recognised in that glance the features of the neglected and the once-adored Catherine.

"Yes—she, whom your brother so loved—the mother of his children—died in this

squalid room, and far from her sons, in poverty, in sorrow!—died of a broken heart! Was that well, father? Have you in this nothing to repent?"

Conscience-stricken and appalled, the worldly man sank down on a seat beside the bed, and covered his face with his hands.

"Ay," continued Arthur, almost bitterly—"ay, we, his nearest of kin—we, who have inherited his lands and gold—we have been thus heedless of that great legacy your brother bequeathed to us:—the things dearest to him—the woman he loved—the children his death cast, nameless and branded, on the world. Ay, weep, father; and while you weep, think of the future, of reparation. I have sworn to that clay to befriend her sons; join you, who have all the power, to fulfil the promise—join in that vow: and may Heaven not visit on us both the woes of this bed of death."

"I did not know—I—I——" faltered Mr. Beaufort.

"But we should have known," interrupted

Arthur, mournfully. "Ah, my dear father! do not harden your heart by false excuses. The dead still speaks to you, and commends to your care her children. My task here is done: oh, sir! yours is to come. I leave you alone with the dead."

So saying, the young man, whom the tragedy of the scene had worked into a passion and a dignity above his usual character, unwilling to trust farther to his emotions, turned abruptly from the room, fled rapidly down the stairs, and left the house. As the carriage and liveries of his father met his eye, he groaned, for their evidences of comfort and wealth seemed a mockery to the deceased: he averted his face and walked on. Nor did he perceive or heed a form that at that instant rushed by him—pale, haggard, breathless—towards the house which he had quitted, and the door of which he left open, as he had found it—open, as the physician had left it when hurrying, ten minutes before the arrival of Mr. Beaufort, from the spot where his skill was impotent. Wrapped in

gloomy thought, alone, and on foot—at that dreary hour, and in that remote suburb—the heir of the Beauforts sought his splendid home. Anxious, fearful, hoping, the out-cast orphan flew on to the death-room of his mother.

Mr. Beaufort, who had but imperfectly heard Arthur's parting accents, lost and bewildered by the strangeness of his situation, did not at first perceive that he was left alone. Surprised, and chilled by the sudden silence of the chamber, he rose, withdrew his hands from his face, and again he saw that countenance so mute and solemn. He cast his gaze round the dismal room for Arthur; he called his name—no answer came; a superstitious tremor seized upon him; his limbs shook; he sunk once more on his seat, and closed his eyes; muttering, for the first time, perhaps, since his childhood, words of penitence and prayer. He was roused from this bitter self-abstraction by a deep groan. It seemed to come from the bed. Did his ears deceive

him? had the dead found a voice? He started up in an agony of dread, and saw opposite to him the livid countenance of Philip Morton; the Son of the Corpse had replaced the Son of the Living Man! The dim and solitary light fell upon that countenance. There, all the bloom and freshness natural to youth seemed blasted! There, on those wasted features, played all the terrible power and glare of precocious passions,—rage, woe, scorn, despair. Terrible is it to see upon the face of a boy the storm and whirlwind that should visit only the strong heart of a man!

“She is dead!—dead! and in your presence!” shouted Philip, with his wild eyes fixed upon the cowering uncle; “dead with care, perhaps with famine. And you have come to look upon your work!”

“Indeed,” said Beaufort, deprecatingly, “I have but just arrived: I did not know she had been ill, or in want, upon my honour. This is all a—a—mistake: I—I—came in search of—of—another——”

"You did *not*, then, come to relieve her?" said Philip, very calmly. "You had not learned her suffering and distress, and flown hither in the hope that there was yet time to save her?—You did not do this? Ha! ha!—why did I think it?"

"Did any one call, gentlemen?" said a whining voice at the door; and the nurse put in her head.

"Yes—yes—you may come in," said Beaufort, shaking with nameless and cowardly apprehension; but Philip had flown to the door, and, gazing on the nurse, said,

"She is a stranger!—see, a *stranger*! The son now has assumed his post. Begone, woman!" And he pushed her away, and drew the bolt across the door.

And then there looked upon him, as there had looked upon his reluctant companion, calm and holy, the face of the peaceful corpse. He burst into tears, and fell on his knees so close to Beaufort that he touched him; he

took up the heavy hand, and covered it with burning kisses.

"Mother! mother! do not leave me! wake, smile once more on your son! I would have brought you money, but I could not have asked for your blessing, *then*; mother, I ask it now!"

"If I had but known—if you had but written to me, my dear young gentleman—but my offers had been refused, and——"

"Offers of a hireling's pittance to her; to her for whom my father would have coined his heart's blood into gold! My father's wife!—his wife!—offers!——"

He rose suddenly, folded his arms, and, facing Beaufort, with a fierce, determined brow, said,—

"Mark me, you hold the wealth that I was trained from my cradle to consider my heritage. I have worked with these hands for bread, and never complained, except to my own heart and soul. I never hated, and never

cursed you—robber as you were—yes, robber! For, even were there no marriage save in the sight of God, neither my father, nor Nature, nor Heaven, meant that you should seize all, and that there should be nothing due to the claims of affection and blood. He was not the less my father, even if the church spoke not on my side. Despoiler of the orphan, and derider of human love, you are not the less a robber, though the law fences you round, and men call you honest! But I did not hate you for this. Now, in the presence of my dead mother—dead far from both her sons—now I abhor and curse you. You may think yourself safe when you quit this room—safe, and from my hatred; you may be so: but do not deceive yourself, the curse of the widow and the orphan shall pursue—it shall cling to you and yours—it shall gnaw your heart in the midst of splendour—it shall cleave to the heritage of your son! There shall be a death-bed yet, beside which you shall see the spectre of her, now so calm, rising for retribution from the

grave! These words—no, you never shall forget them—years hence they shall ring in your ears, and freeze the marrow of your bones! And now begone, my father's brother—begone from my mother's corpse to your luxurious home!"

He opened the door, and pointed to the stairs. Beaufort, without a word, turned from the room, and departed. He heard the door closed and locked as he descended the stairs; but he did not hear the deep groans and vehement sobs in which the desolate orphan gave vent to the anguish which succeeded to the less sacred paroxysm of revenge and wrath.

BOOK II.

“Nicht ward's und wurde Alltags,
Nimmer, nimmer stand ich still;”

SCHILLER: *Der Pilgrim.*



CHAPTER I.

"Iris! Look to the cavalier. What ails he!

* * * * *

Hostess. And in such good clothes, too!"

BEAUFORT AND FLEMING: *Love's Pilgrimage.*

"Theod. I have a brother—there my last hope!

Thus as you feed me, without fear or wisdom,

I owe an only child of Hope and Danger."—*Ibid.*

THE time employed by Mr. Beaufort in reaching his home was haunted by gloomy and confused terrors. He felt inexplicably as if the denunciations of Philip were to visit less himself than his son. He trembled at the thought of Arthur meeting this strange, wild, exasperated scaterling—perhaps on the morrow—in the very height of his passions. And yet, after the scene between Arthur and himself, he saw cause to fear that he might not be able to exercise a sufficient authority

over his son, however naturally facile and obedient, to prevent his return to the house of death. In this dilemma he resolved, as is usual with cleverer men, even when yoked to yet feebler helpmates, to hear if his wife had any thing comforting or sensible to say upon the subject. Accordingly, on reaching Berkeley Square, he went straight to Mrs. Beaufort, and having relieved her mind as to Arthur's safety, related the scene in which he had been so unwilling an actor. With that more lively susceptibility which belongs to most women, however comparatively unfeeling, Mrs. Beaufort made greater allowance than her husband for the excitement Philip had betrayed. Still Beaufort's description of the dark manaces, the fierce countenance, the brigand-like form, of the bereaved son, gave her very considerable apprehensions for Arthur, should the young men meet; and she willingly coincided with her husband in the propriety of using all means of parental persuasion or command to guard against such an encounter. But, in the mean-

while, Arthur returned not, and new fears seized the anxious parents. He had gone forth alone, in a remote suburb of the metropolis, at a late hour, himself under strong excitement. He might have returned to the house, or have lost his way amidst some dark haunts of violence and crime; they knew not where to send, or what to suggest. Day already began to dawn, and still he came not. At length, towards five o'clock, a loud rap was heard at the door, and Mr. Beaufort, hearing some bustle in the hall, descended. He saw his son borne into the hall from a hackney-coach by two strangers, pale, bleeding, and apparently insensible. His first thought was that he had been murdered by Philip. He uttered a feeble cry, and sank down beside his son.

"Don't be daunted, sir," said one of the strangers, who seemed an artisan; "I don't think he be much hurt. You sees he was crossing the street, and the coach ran against him; but it did not go over his head; it be only the

stones that make him bleed so: and that's a mercy."

"A providence, sir," said the other man; "but Providence watches over us all, night and day, sleep or wake. Hem! We were passing at the time from the meeting—the Odd Fellows, sir—and so we took him, and got him a coach; for we found his card in his pocket. He could not speak just then; but the rattling of the coach did him a deal of good, for he groaned—my eyes! how he groaned;—did not he, Burrows?"

"It did one's heart good to hear him."

"Run for Astley Cooper—you—go to Brodie. Good God! he is dying. Be quick—quick!" cried Mr. Beaufort to his servants, while Mrs. Beaufort, who had now gained the spot, with greater presence of mind, had Arthur conveyed into his room.

"It is a judgment upon me!" groaned Beaufort, rooted to the stone of his hall, and left alone with the strangers.

"No, sir, it is not a *judgment*, it is a *pro-*

vidence," said the more saucy and better dressed of the two men: "for, put the question, if it had been a judgment, the wheel would have gone over him; and, whether he dies or not, I shall always say that if that's not a providence, I don't know what is. We have come a long way, sir; and Burrows is a poor man, though I'm well to do."

This hint for money restored Beaufort to his recollection; he put his purse into the nearest hand outstretched to clutch it, and muttered out something like thanks.

"Sir, may the Lord bless you! and I hope the young gentleman will do well. I am sure you have cause to be thankful that he was within an inch of the wheel; was not he, Burrows? Well, it's enough to convert a heathen. But the ways of Providence are mysterious, and that's the truth of it. Good night, sir."

Certainly it did seem as if the curse of Philip was already at its work. An accident almost similar to that which, in the ad-

venture of the blind man, had led Arthur to the chie of Catherine, within twenty-four hours stretched Arthur himself upon his bed. The sorrow Mr. Beaufort had not relieved was now at his own bearth. But *there*, were parents and nurses, and great physicians and skilful surgeons, and all the Army that combine against Death,—and *there*, were ease, and luxury, and kind eyes, and pitying looks, and all that can take the sting from pain. And thus, the very night on which Catherine had died, broken down and worn-out, upon a strange breast, with a feeless doctor, and by the ray of a single candle, the heir to the fortunes once destined to her son wrestled also with the grim Tyrant, that seemed, however, scared from his prey by the arts and luxuries which the world of rich men raises up in defiance of the grave.

Arthur was, indeed, very seriously injured; one of his ribs broken, and two severe contusions on the head. To insensibility succeeded fever, followed by delirium. He was

in imminent danger for several days. If any thing could have consoled his parents for such an affliction, it was the thought that, at least, he was saved from the chance of meeting Philip. Mr. Beaufort, in the instinct of that capricious and fluctuating conscience which belongs to weak minds, which remains still, and drooping, and lifeless, as a flag on a mast-head during the calm of prosperity, but flutters, and flaps, and tosses when the wind blows and the wave heaves, thought very acutely and remorsefully of the condition of the Murtons, during the danger of his own son. So far, indeed, from his anxiety for Arthur monopolising all his care, it only sharpened his charity towards the orphans; for many a man becomes devout and good when he fancies he has an immediate interest in appeasing Providence. The morning after Arthur's accident, he sent for Mr. Blackwell. He commissioned him to see that Catherine's funeral rites were performed with all due care and attention; he bade him obtain an inter-

view with Philip, and assure the youth of Mr. Beaufort's good and friendly disposition towards him, and to offer to forward his views in any course of education he might prefer, or any profession he might adopt; and he earnestly counselled the lawyer to employ all his tact and delicacy in conferring with one of so proud and fiery a temper. Mr. Blackwell, however, had no tact or delicacy to employ: he went to the house of mourning, forced his way to Philip, and the very exordium of his harangue, which was devoted to praises of the extraordinary generosity and benevolence of his employer, mingled with condescending admonitions towards gratitude from Philip, so exasperated the boy, that Mr. Blackwell was extremely glad to get out of the house with a whole skin. He, however, did not neglect the more formal part of his mission; but communicated immediately with a fashionable undertaker, and gave orders for a very genteel funeral. He thought after the funeral that Philip would be in a less excited state of

mind, and more likely to bear reason; he, therefore, deferred a second interview with the orphan till after that event; and, in the meanwhile, despatched a letter to Mr. Beaufort, stating that he had attended to his instructions; that the orders for the funeral were given; but that at present Mr. Philip Morton's mind was a little disordered, and that he could not calmly discuss, just at present, the plans for the future suggested by Mr. Beaufort. He did not doubt, however, that in another interview all would be arranged according to the wishes his client had so nobly conveyed to him. Mr. Beaufort's conscience on this point was therefore set at rest.

It was a dull, close, oppressive morning, upon which the remains of Catherine Morton were consigned to the grave. With the preparations for the funeral Philip did not interfere; he did not inquire by whose orders all that solemnity of mutes, and coaches, and black plumes, and crapelands, was appointed. If his vague and undeveloped conjecture

ascribed this last and vain attention to Robert Beaufort, it neither lessened the sullen resentment he felt against his uncle, nor, on the other hand, did he conceive that he had a right to forbid respect to the dead, though he might reject service for the survivor. He had remained in a sort of apathy or torpor since Mr. Blackwell's visit, which seemed to the people of the house to partake rather of indifference than woe.

The funeral was over; and Philip had returned to the apartments occupied by the deceased; and now, for the first time, he set himself to examine what papers, &c. she had left behind. In an old *escritoire*, he found, first, various packets of letters in his father's handwriting, the characters in many of them faded by time. He opened a few; they were the earliest love-letters. He did not dare to read above a few lines; so much did their living tenderness and breathing, frank, hearty passion, contrast with the fate of the adored one. In these letters, the very heart of the

writer seemed to beat! Now both hearts alike were stilled! And GHOST called vainly unto GHOST!

He came, at length, to a letter in his mother's hand, addressed to himself, and dated two days before her death. He went to the window and gasped in the mists of the sultry air for breath. Below, were heard the noises of London; the shrill cries of itinerant vendors, the rolling carts, the whoop of boys returned for awhile from school; amidst all these rose one loud, merry peal of laughter, which drew his attention mechanically to the spot whence it came; it was at the threshold of a public-house, before which stood the hearse that had conveyed his mother's coffin, and the gay undertakers, halting, there to refresh themselves. He closed the window with a groan, retired to the farthest corner of the room, and read as follows:—

“MY DEAREST PHILIP,—When you read this I shall be no more. You and poor Sidney

will have neither father nor mother, nor fortune nor name. Heaven is more just than man, and in heaven is my hope for you. You, Philip, are already past childhood; your nature is one formed, I think, to wrestle successfully with the world. Guard against your own passions, and you may bid defiance to the obstacles that will beset your path in life. And lately, in our reverses, Philip, you have so subdued these passions, so schooled the pride and impetuosity of your childhood, that I have contemplated your prospects with less fear than I used to do, even when they seemed so brilliant. Forgive me, my dear child, if I have concealed from you my state of health, and if my death be a sudden and unlooked-for shock. Do not grieve for me too long. For myself, my release is indeed escape from the prison-house and the chain—from bodily pain and mental torture, which may, I fondly hope, prove some expiation for the errors of a happier time. For I did err, when, even from the least selfish motives, I suffered

my union with your father to remain concealed, and thus ruined the hopes of those who had rights upon me equal even to *his*. But, oh! Philip, beware of the first false steps into deceit; beware, too, of the passions, which do not betray their fruit till years and years after the leaves that look so green and the blossoms that seem so fair.

“I repeat my solemn injunction,—Do not grieve for me, but strengthen your mind and heart to receive the charge that I now confide to you—my Sidney, my child, your brother! He is so soft, so gentle; he has been so dependent for very life upon me, and we are parted now for the first and last time. He is with strangers; and—and—O Philip, Philip, watch over him for the love you bear, not only to him but to me! Be to him a father as well as brother. Put your stout heart against the world so that you may screen him, the weak child, from its malice. He has not your talents nor strength of character; without you he is nothing. Live, toil, rise for his sake not less

than your own. If you knew how this heart beats as I write to you, if you could conceive what comfort I take for him from my confidence in you, you would feel a new spirit — my spirit — my mother-spirit of love, and forethought, and vigilance, enter into you while you read. See him when I am gone — comfort and soothe him. Happily he is too young yet to know all his loss; and do not let him think unkindly of me in the days to come, for he is a child now, and they may poison his mind against me more easily than they can yours. Think, if he is unhappy hereafter, he may forget how I loved him, he may curse those who gave him birth. Forgive me all this, Philip my son, and heed it well.

“And now, where you find this letter you will see a key; it opens a well in the bureau in which I have hoarded my little savings. You will see that I have not died in poverty. Take what there is, young as you are you may want it more now than hereafter. But hold it in trust for your brother as well as yourself.

If he is harshly treated (and you will go and see him, and you will remember that *he* would writhe under what *you* might scarcely feel), or if they overtask him, he is so young to work yet, it may find him a home near you. God watch over and guard you both. You are orphans now. But HE has told even the orphans to call him 'Father!'"

When he had read this letter, Philip Morton fell upon his knees, and prayed.

CHAPTER II.

"His curse! Dost comprehend what that word means!
Shot from a father's angry breath."

JAMES SUMNER: The Brothers.

"This term is fatal, and affrights me."—*Ibid.*

"Those frigid philosophers that magnify
Our human nature
Conversed but little with the world—they knew not
The force renative of community!"—*Ibid.*

AFTER he had recovered his self-possession, Philip opened the well of the bureau, and was astonished and affected to find that Catherine had saved more than 100*l.* Alas! how much must she have pinched herself to have hoarded this little treasure. After burning his father's love-letters, and some other papers, which he deemed useless, he made up a little bundle of those trifling effects belonging to the deceased, which he valued as memorials and relics of

her, quitted the apartment, and descended to the parlour behind the shop. On the way he met with the kind servant, and recalling the grief that she had manifested for his mother since he had been in the house, he placed two sovereigns in her hand, and bade her keep the scanty wardrobe poor Catherine had left behind. "And now," said he, as the servant wept while he spoke,—"now I can bear to ask you what I have not before done. How did my poor mother die? Did she suffer much—or—or—"

"She went off like a lamb, sir," said the girl, drying her eyes. "You see the gentleman had been with her all the day, and she was much more easy and comfortable in her mind after he came."

"The gentleman! Not the gentleman I found here?"

"Oh, dear no! Not the pale middle-aged gentleman nurse and I saw go down as the clock struck two. But the young, soft-spoken gentleman who came in the morning, and said

as how he was a relation. He stayed with her till she slept; and, when she woke, she smiled in his face—I shall never forget that smile—for I was standing on the other side, as it might be here, and the doctor was by the window, pouring out the doctor's stuff in the glass; and so she looked on the young gentleman, and then looked round at us all, and shook her head very gently, but did not speak. And the gentleman asked her how she felt, and she took both his hands and kissed them; and then he put his arms round and raised her up, to take the physis, like, and she said then, 'You will never forget *them*?' and he said, 'Never.—I don't know what that meant, sir!'

"Well, well—go on."

"And her head fell back on his buzzum, and she looked so happy; and, when the doctor came to the bedside, she was quite gone."

"And the stranger had my post! No matter; God bless him—God bless him. Who was he? what was his name?"

"I don't know, sir; he did not say. He stayed after the doctor went, and cried very bitterly; he took on more than you did, sir."

"Ay,"

"And the other gentleman came just as he was a-going, and they did not seem to like each other; for I heard him through the wall, as nurse and I were in the next room, speak as if he was scolding, but he did not stay long."

"And has never been since?"

"No, sir! Perhaps missus can tell you more about him. But won't you take something, sir? Do—you look so pale."

Philip, without speaking, pushed her gently aside, and went slowly down the stairs. He entered the parlour, where two or three children were seated, playing at dominoes; he despatched one for their mother, the mistress of the shop, who came in, and dropped him a courtesy, with a very grave, sad face, as was proper.

"I am going to leave your house, ma'am;

and I wish to settle any little arrears of rent, &c."

"Oh! sir, don't mention it," said the landlady; and, as she spoke, she took a piece of paper from her bosom, very neatly folded, and laid it on the table. "And here, sir," she added, taking from the same depository a card,—"here is the card left by the gentleman who saw to the funeral. He called half an hour ago, and bade me say, with his compliments, that he would wait on you to-morrow at eleven o'clock. So I hope you won't go yet: for I think he means to settle every thing for you, he said as much, sir."

Philip glanced over the card, and read, "Mr. George Blackwell, Lincoln's Inn." His brow grew dark—he let the card fall on the ground, put his foot on it with a quiet scorn, and muttered to himself, "The lawyer shall not wring me out of my purse!" He turned to the total of the bill—not heavy, for poor Catherine had paid regularly for her scanty maintenance and humble lodging—paid the

money, and, as the landlady wrote the receipt, he asked, "Who was the gentleman—the younger gentleman—who called in the morning of the day my mother died?"

"Oh, sir! I am so sorry I did not get his name. Mr. Perkins said that he was some relation. Very odd he has never been since. But he'll be sure to call again, sir; you had better much stay here."

"No: it does not signify. All that he could do is done. But stay, give him this note, if he should call."

Philip, taking the pen from the landlady's hand, hastily wrote (while Mrs. Lacy went to bring him sealing-wax and a light) these words:—

"I cannot guess who you are: they say that you call yourself a relation; that must be some mistake. I knew not that my poor mother had relations so kind. But, whoever you be, you soothed her last hours—she died in your arms; and if ever—years, long years

hence—we should chance to meet, and I can do any thing to aid another, my blood, and my life, and my heart, and my soul, all are slaves to your will. If you be really of her kindred, I commend to you my brother; he is at — with Mr. Morton. If you can serve him, my mother's soul will watch over you as a guardian angel. As for me, I ask no help from any one: I go into the world and will carve out my own way. So much do I shrink from the thought of charity from others, that I do not believe I could bless you as I do now if your kindness to me did not close with the stone upon my mother's grave.

“PHILIP.”

He sealed this letter, and gave it to the woman.

“Oh, by the by,” said she, “I had forgot; the Doctor said that if you would send for him, he would be most happy to call on you and give you any advice.”

“Very well.”

“And what shall I say to Mr. Blackwell?”

“That he may tell his employer to remember our last interview.”

With that Philip took up his bundle and strode from the house. He went first to the churchyard, where his mother's remains had been that day interred. It was near at hand, a quiet, almost a rural, spot. The gate stood ajar, for there was a public path through the churchyard, and Philip entered with a noiseless tread. It was then near evening; the sun had broke out from the mists of the earlier day, and the westering rays shone bright and holy upon the solemn place.

“Mother! mother!” sobbed the orphan, as he fell prostrate before that fresh green mound: “here—here I have come to repeat my oath, to swear again that I will be faithful to the charge you have intrusted to your wretched son! And at this hour, I dare ask if there be on this earth one more miserable and forlorn!”

As words to this effect struggled from his lips, a loud, shrill voice—the cracked, painful voice of weak age wrestling with strong passion, rose close at hand.

“Away, reprobate! thou art accursed!”

Philip started, and shuddered as if the words were addressed to himself, and from the grave. But, as he rose on his knee, and tossing the wild hair from his eyes looked confusedly round, he saw, at a short distance, and in the shadow of the wall, two forms; the one, an old man with grey hair, who was seated on a crumbling wooden tomb, facing the setting sun; the other, a man apparently yet in the vigour of life, who appeared bent as in humble supplication. The old man's hands were out-stretched over the head of the younger, as if suing terrible action to the terrible words; and, after a moment's pause—a moment, but it seemed far longer to Philip—there was heard a deep, wild, ghastly howl from a dog that cowered at the old man's feet; a howl, perhaps, of fear at the passion of his

master, which the animal might associate with danger.

"Father! father!" said the suppliant, reproachfully, "your very dog rebukes your curse."

"Be dumb! My dog! What hast thou left me on earth but him? Thou hast made me loathe the sight of friends, for thou hast made me loathe mine own name. Thou hast covered it with disgrace,—thou hast made mine old age a byword,—thy crimes leave me solitary in the midst of my shame!"

"It is many years since we met, father; we may never meet again—shall we part thus?"

"*Thus, alas!*" said the old man, in a tone of withering sarcasm; "I comprehend,—you are come for money!"

At this taunt the sea started as if stung by a serpent; raised his head to its full height, folded his arms, and replied,—

"Sir, you wrong me: for more than twenty years I have maintained myself—no matter

how, but without taxing you—and now, I felt remorse for having suffered you to discard me,—now, when you are old and helpless, and, I heard, blind; and you might want aid even from your poor, good-for-nothing son. But I have done. Forget not my sins, but this interview. Repeal your curse, father, I have enough on my head without yours; and so—let the son at least bless the father who curses him. Farewell!”

The speaker turned as he thus said, with a voice that trembled at the close, and brushed rapidly by Philip, whom he did not, however, appear to perceive; but Philip, by the last red beam of the sun, saw again that marked storm-bent face which it was difficult, once seen, to forget, and recognised the stranger on whose breast he had slept the night of his first fatal visit to R—.

The old man's imperfect vision did not detect the departure of his son, but his face changed and softened as the latter strode silently through the rank grass.

“William!” he said at last, gently; “William!” and the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; “my son!” but that son was gone—the old man listened for reply—none came. “He has left me—poor William!—we shall never meet again;” and he sank once more on the old tombstone, dumb, rigid, motionless—an image of Time himself in his own Domain of Graves. The dog crept closer to his master and licked his hand. Philip stood for a moment in thoughtful silence: his exclamation of despair had been answered as by his better angel. There was a being more miserable than himself; and the Accursed would have envied the Bereaved!

The twilight had closed in; the earliest star—the star of Memory and Love, the *Hesperus* hymned by every poet since the world began—was fair in the arch of heaven, as Philip quitted the spot, with a spirit more reconciled to the future, more softened, chastened, attuned to gentle and pious thoughts, than perhaps ever yet had made his soul dominant over the deep and dark tide of

his gloomy passions. He went thence to a neighbouring sculptor, and paid beforehand for a plain tablet to be placed above the grave he had left. He had just quitted that shop, in the same street, not many doors removed from the house in which his mother had breathed her last. He was pausing by a crossing, irresolute whether to repair at once to the home assigned to Sidney, or to seek some shelter in town for that night, when three men who were on the opposite side of the way suddenly caught sight of him.

“There he is—there he is; stop, sir!—stop!”

Philip heard these words, looked up and recognised the voice and the person of Mr. Plaskwith; the bookseller was accompanied by Mr. Plimmins and a sturdy, ill-favoured stranger.

A nameless feeling of fear, rage, and disgust seized the unhappy boy, and at the same moment a ragged vagabond whispered to him,—
 “Stump it, my cove; that’s a Bow-Street runner.”

Then, there shot through Philip's head the recollection of the money he had seized, though but to dash away: was he now—he, still to his own conviction, the heir of an ancient and spotless name—to be hunted as a thief; or, at the best, what right over his person and his liberty had he given to this taskmaster? Ignorant of the law—the law only seemed to him, as it ever does to the ignorant and the friendless—a Foe. Quicker than lightning these thoughts, which it takes so many words to describe, flashed through the storm and darkness of his breast; and at the very instant that Mr. Plimmins had laid hands on his shoulder his resolution was formed. The instinct of self beat loud at his heart. With a bound—a spring, that sent Mr. Plimmins sprawling in the kennel, he darted across the road, and fled down an opposite lane.

“Stop him! stop!” cried the book-seller, and the officer rushed after him with almost equal speed. Lane after lane, alley after alley, fled Philip; dodging, winding,

breathless, panting; and lane after lane, alley after alley, thickened at his heel the crowd that pursued. The idle, and the curious, and the officious, — ragged boys, ragged men, from stall and from cellar, from corner and from crossing, joined in that delicious chase, which runs down young error till it sinks, too often, at the door of the gaol or the foot of the gallows. But Philip slackened not his pace; he began to distance his pursuers. He was now in a street which they had not yet entered — a quiet street, with few, if any, shops. Before the threshold of a better kind of public-house, or rather tavern, to judge by its appearance, lounged two men; and as Philip flew on, the cry of “Stop him!” had changed as the shout passed to new voices, into “Stop the thief!” — that cry yet howled in the distance. One of the loungers seized him; Philip, desperate and ferocious, struck at him with all his force; but the blow was scarcely felt by that herculean frame.

“Pish!” said the man, scornfully; “I am

no spy; if you run from justice, I would help you to a sign-post."

Struck by the voice, Philip looked hard at the speaker. It was the voice of the Accursed Son.

"Save me! you remember me?" said the orphan, faintly.

"Ah! I think I do; poor lad! Follow me—this way!"

The stranger turned within the tavern, passed the hall through a sort of corridor that led into a back-yard which opened upon a nest of courts or passages.

"You are safe for the present; I will take you where you can tell me all at your ease—See!" As he spoke they emerged into an open street, and the guide pointed to a row of hackney-coaches. "Be quick—get in. Coachman, drive fast to ——" Philip did not hear the rest of the direction.

Our story returns to Sidney.

CHAPTER III.

" Nous vous mettrons à couvert
Repondit le pot de fer,
Si quelque matière dure
Vous menace d'ireture,
Entre deux je passerai,
Et du coup vous sauverai

.....
Le pot de terre en souffre!" —La FOSTAINE.

"SIDNEY, come here, sir! What have you been at? you have torn your frill into tatters! How did you do this? Come, sir, no lies."

"Indeed, ma'am, it was not my fault. I just put my head out of the window to see the coach go by, and a nail caught me here."

"Why, you little plague! you have scratched yourself—you are always in mischief. What business had you to look after the coach?"

"I don't know," said Sidney, hanging his head ruefully.

"La, mother!" cried the youngest of the cousins, a square-built, ruddy, coarse-featured urchin, about Sidney's age,— "La, mother, he never see a coach in the street when we are at play but he runs arter it."

"After, not arter," said Mr. Roger Morton, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"Why do you go after the coaches, Sidney?" said Mrs. Morton; "it is very naughty, you will be run over some day."

"Yes, ma'am," said Sidney, who during the whole colloquy had been trembling from head to foot.

"'Yes, ma'am,' and 'no, ma'am,' you have no more manners than a cobbler's boy."

"Don't tense the child, my dear; he is crying," said Mr. Morton, more authoritatively than usual. "Come here, my man!" and the worthy uncle took him in his lap and held his glass of brandy-and-water to his lips; Sidney, too frightened to refuse, sipped hurriedly, keeping his large eyes fixed on his aunt, as children do when they fear a cuff.

"You spoil the boy more than you do your

own flesh and blood?" said Mrs. Morton, greatly displeased.

Here Tom, the youngest-born before described, put his mouth to his mother's ear, and whispered loud enough to be heard by all, — "He runs arter the coach 'cause he thinks his ma may be in it. Who's home-sick I should like to know? Ba! Baa!"

The boy pointed his finger over his mother's shoulder, and the other children burst into a loud giggle.

"Leave the room, all of you, — leave the room!" said Mr. Norton, rising angrily and stamping his foot.

The children, who were in great awe of their father, huddled and hustled each other to the door; but Tom, who went last, bold in his mother's favour, popped his head through the doorway, and cried, "Good-by, little home-sick!"

A sudden slap in the face from his father changed his chuckle into a very different kind of music, and a loud indignant sob was heard without for some moments after the door was closed.

"If that's the way you behave to your children, Mr. Morton, I vow you sha'n't have any more if I can help it. Don't come near me—don't touch me!" and Mrs. Morton assumed the resentful air of offended beauty.

"Pshaw!" growled the spouse, and he re-seated himself and resumed his pipe. There was a dead silence. Sidney crouched near his uncle, looking very pale. Mrs. Morton, who was knitting, knitted away with the excited energy of nervous irritation.

"Ring the bell, Sidney," said Mr. Morton. The boy obeyed—the parlour-maid entered. "Take Master Sidney to his room; keep the boys away from him, and give him a large slice of bread and jam, Martha."

"Jam indeed!—treacle," said Mrs. Morton.

"Jam, Martha!" repeated the uncle authoritatively.

"Treacle!" reiterated the aunt.

"Jam, I say!"

"Treacle, you hear: and for that matter Martha has no jam to give!"

The husband had nothing more to say.

"Good night, Sidney; there's a good boy, go and kiss your aunt and make your bow; and, I say, my lad, don't mind those plagues. I'll talk to them to-morrow, that I will; no one shall be unkind to you in my house."

Sidney muttered something, and went timidly up to Mrs. Morton. His look, so gentle and subdued; his eyes full of tears; his pretty mouth which, though silent, pleaded so eloquently; his willingness to forgive and his wish to be forgiven, might have melted many a heart harder, perhaps, than Mrs. Morton's. But, there, reigned what is worse than hardness, prejudice and wounded vanity — maternal vanity. His contrast to her own rough, coarse children grated on her, and set the teeth of her mind on edge.

"There, child, don't tread on my gown; you are so awkward: say your prayers, and don't throw off the counterpane! I don't like slovenly boys."

Sidney put his finger in his mouth, drooped, and vanished.

"Now, Mrs. M." said Mr. Morton abruptly, and knocking out the ashes of his pipe; "now, Mrs. M., one word for all: I have told you that I promised poor Catherine to be a father to that child, and it goes to my heart to see him so scubbed. Why you dislike him I can't guess for the life of me; I never saw a sweeter-tempered child."

"Go on, sir,—go on: make your personal reflections on your own lawful wife. They don't hurt me—oh no, not at all! Sweet-tempered, indeed; I suppose your own children are not sweet-tempered?"

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Morton: "my own children are such as God made them, and I am very well satisfied."

"Indeed you *may* be proud of such a family; and to think of the pains I have taken with them, and how I have saved you in nurses, and the bad times I have had; and now, to find their noses put out of joint by that little mischief-making interloper—it is too bad of you, Mr. Morton; you will break my heart,—*that* you will!"

Mrs. Morion put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed.

The husband was moved: he got up and attempted to take her hand. "Indeed, Margaret, I did not mean to vex you."

"And I who have been such a fa-fai-faithful wi-wi-wife, and brought you such a deal of mon-mon-money, and always stud-stud-studied your interests; many's the time when you have been fast asleep, that I have sat up half the night men-men-mending the house linen; and you have not been the same man, Roger, since that boy came!"

"Well, well!" said the good man, quite overcome, and fairly taking her round the waist and kissing her; "no words between us; it makes life quite unpleasant. If it pains you to have Sidney here, I will put him to some school in the town, where they'll be kind to him. Only, if you would, Margaret, for my sake,—old girl! come now! there's a darling!—just be more tender with him. You see he frets so after his mother. Think how little

Tom would fret if he was away from you!
Poor little Tom!"

"La! Mr. Morton, you are such a man!
—there's no resisting your ways! You know
how to come over me,—don't you?"

And Mrs. Morton smiled benignly, as she
escaped from his conjugal arms and smoothed
her cap.

Peace thus restored, Mr. Morton refilled his
pipe, and the good lady, after a pause, re-
sumed, in a very mild, conciliatory tone,—

"I'll tell you what it is, Roger, that vexes
me with that there child. He is so deceitful,
and he does tell such fibs!"

"Fibs! that is a very bad fault," said Mr.
Morton, gravely. "*That* must be corrected."

"It was but the other day that I saw him
break a pane of glass in the shop; and when I
taxed him with it he denied it;—and with
such a face! I can't abide story-telling."

"Let me know the next story he tells; I'll
cure him," said Mr. Morton, sternly. "You
know how I broke Tom of it. Spare the rod
and spoil the child. And when I promised to

be kind to the boy, of course I did not mean that I was not to take care of his morals, and see that he grew up an honest man. Tell truth and shame the devil—that's my motto."

"Spoke like yourself, Roger!" said Mrs. Morton, with great animation. "But you see he has not had the advantage of such a father as you. I wonder your sister don't write to you. Some people make a great fuss about their feelings; but out of sight out of mind."

"I hope she is not ill. Poor Catherine! she looked in a very bad way when she was here," said Mr. Morton, and he turned uneasily to the fireplace and sighed.

Here the servant entered with the supper-tray, and the conversation fell upon other topics.

Mrs. Roger Morton's charge against Sidney was, alas! too true. He had acquired, under that roof, a terrible habit of telling stories. He had never incurred that vice with his mother, because then and there he had nothing to fear; now, he had every thing to fear;—the grim aunt—even the quiet, kind, cold,

austere uncle—the apprentices—the strange servants—and, oh! more than all, those hard-eyed, loud-laughing tormentors, the boys of his own age! Naturally timid, severity made him actually a coward; and when the nerves tremble, a lie sounds as surely as, when I vibrate that wire, the bell at the end of it will ring. Beware of the man who has been roughly treated as a child.

The day after the conference just narrated, Mr. Morton, who was subject to erysipelas, had taken a little cooling medicine. He breakfasted, therefore, later than usual—after the rest of the family; and at this meal—*pour lui seulager*—he ordered the luxury of a muffin. Now it so chanced, that he had only finished half the muffin, and drank one cup of tea, when he was called into the shop by a customer of great importance,—a prosy old lady, who always gave her orders with remarkable precision, and who valued herself on a character for affability, which she maintained by never buying a penny riband without asking the shopman how all his family were, and

talking news about every other family in the place. At the time Mr. Morton left the parlour, Sidney and Master Tom were therein, seated on two stools, and casting up division sums on their respective slates; a point of education to which Mr. Morton attended with great care. As soon as his father's back was turned, Master Tom's eyes wandered from the slate to the muffin, as it leered at him from the slop-basin. Never did Pythian sibyl, seated above the bubbling spring, utter more oracular eloquence to her priest, than did that muffin—at least the parts of it yet extant—utter to the fascinated senses of Master Tom. First he sighed; then he moved round on his stool; then he got up; then he peered at the muffin from a respectful distance; then he gradually approached, and walked round, and round, and round it—his eyes getting bigger and bigger; then he peeped through the glass-door into the shop, and saw his father busily engaged with the old lady; then he began to calculate and philosophise,—perhaps his father had done breakfast; perhaps he would not come back at all; if he

came back he would not miss one corner of the muffin, and if he did miss it, why should Tom be supposed to have taken it? As he thus communed with himself, he drew nearer into the fatal vortex, and at last, with a desperate plunge, he seized the triangular temptation:

“And ere a man had power to say ‘Behold!’

The jaws of *Thomas* had devoured it up.”

Sidney, disturbed from his studies by the agitation of his companion, witnessed this proceeding with great and conscientious alarm.

“O Tom!” said he, “what will your papa say?”

“Look at that!” said Tom, putting his fist under Sidney’s reluctant nose. “If father misses it, you’ll say the cat took it. If you don’t—my eye! what a wapping I’ll give you!”

Here Mr. Morton’s voice was heard, wishing the lady “Good morning!” and Master Tom, thinking it better to leave the credit of the invention solely to Sidney, whispered—“Say I’m gone up-stairs for my pocket-banker,” and hastily absconded.

Mr. Morton, already in a very bad humour, partly at the effects of the cooling medicine, partly at the suspension of his breakfast, stalked into the parlour. His tea—the second cup already poured out—was cold. He turned towards the muffin, and missed the lost piece at a glance.

“Who has been at my muffin?” said he, in a voice that seemed to Sidney like the voice he had always supposed an ogre to possess.

“Have you, Master Sidney?”

“N—n—no, sir; indeed, sir!”

“Then Tom has. Where is he?”

“Gone up-stairs for his handkerchief, sir.”

“Did he take my muffin? Speak the truth!”

“No, sir; it was the—it was the—the cat, sir!”

“O you wicked, wicked boy!” cried Mrs. Morton, who had followed her husband into the shop; “the cat kitted last night, and is locked up in the coal-cellar!”

“Come here, Master Sidney! No!—first go down, Margaret, and see if the cat is in the

cellar: it might have got out, Mrs. M.," said Mr. Morton, just even in his wrath.

Mrs. Morton went, and there was a dead silence, except indeed in Sidney's heart, which beat louder than a clock ticks. Mr. Morton, meanwhile, went to a little cupboard;—while still there, Mrs. Morton returned: the cat was in the cellar—the key turned on her—in no mood to eat muffins, poor thing!—she would not even lap her milk!—like her mistress, she had had a very bad time!

"Now come here, sir!" said Mr. Morton, withdrawing himself from the cupboard, with a small horsewhip in his hand. "I will teach you how to speak the truth in future! Confess that you have told a lie!"

"Yes, sir, it was a lie! Pray—pray forgive me; but Tom made me!"

"What! when poor Tom is upstairs? worse and worse!" said Mrs. Morton, lifting up her hands and eyes. "What a viper!"

"For shame, boy,—for shame! Take that—and that—and that——"

Withing—shrinking, still more terrified than hurt, the poor child covered beneath the lash.

“Mamma!—mamma!” he cried at last, “Oh why—why did you leave me!”

At these words Mr. Norton stayed his hand, the whip fell to the ground.

“Yet it is all for the boy’s good,” he muttered. “There, child, I hope this is the last time. There, you are not much hurt. Zounds, don’t cry so!”

“He will alarm the whole street,” said Mrs. Norton; “I never see such a child! Here, take this parcel to Mrs. Birnie’s—you know the house—only next street, and dry your eyes before you get there. Don’t go through the shop, this way out.”

She pushed the child, still sobbing with a vehemence that she could not comprehend, through the private passage into the street, and returned to her husband.

“You are convinced now, Mr. M.?”

“Pshaw! ma’am; don’t talk. But, to be sure, that’s how I cured Tom of fibbing.—The tea’s as cold as a stone!”

CHAPTER IV.

*“Le bien nous le faisons : le mal c'est la Fortune,
On a toujours raison, le Destin toujours tort.”*

LA FONTAINE.

Upon the early morning of the day commemorated by the historical events of our last chapter, two men were deposited by a branch coach at the inn of a hamlet about ten miles distant from the town in which Mr. Roger Morton resided. Though the hamlet was small, the inn was large, for it was placed close by a huge finger-post that pointed to three great roads: one led to the town before mentioned; another, to the heart of a manufacturing district; and a third, to a populous seaport. The weather was fine, and the two travellers ordered breakfast to be taken into

an arbour in the garden, as well as the basins and towels necessary for ablution. The elder of the travellers appeared to be unequivocally foreign; you would have guessed him at once for a German. He wore what was then very uncommon in this country, a loose, brown linen *Waise*, buttoned to the chin, with a leathern belt, into which were stuck a German meerschaum and a tobacco-pouch. He had very long flaxen hair, false or real, that streamed half way down his back, large light mustachios, and a rough, sunburnt complexion, which made the fairness of the hair more remarkable. He wore an enormous pair of green spectacles, and complained much, in broken English, of the weakness of his eyes. All about him, even to the smallest minutiae, indicated the German; not only the large, muscular frame, the broad feet, and vast though well-shaped hands, but the brooch—evidently purchased of a Jew in some great fair—stuck ostentatiously and superfluously into his stock; the quaint, droll-looking carpet-bag, which he refused to

trust to the boots; and the great, massive, dingy ring which he wore on his fore-finger.

The other was a slender, remarkably upright and sinewy youth, in a blue frock, over which was thrown a large cloak, a travelling cap, with a shade that concealed all of the upper part of his face, except a dark quick eye, of uncommon fire, and a shawl handkerchief, which was equally useful in concealing the lower part of the countenance.

On descending from the coach, the German, with some difficulty, made the hostler understand that he wanted a post-chaise in a quarter of an hour; and then, without entering the house, he and his friend strolled to the arbour.

While the maid-servant was covering the table with bread, butter, tea, eggs, and a huge round of beef, the German was busy in washing his hands, and talking in his national tongue to the young man, who returned no answer. But as soon as the servant had completed her operations, the foreigner turned round, and observing her eyes fixed on his

brooch with much female admiration, he made one stride to her.

"Der Teufel, mein goot madchen—but you are von var—pretty—vat you call it;" and he gave her, as he spoke, so hearty a smack that the girl was more flustered than flattered by the courtesy.

"Keep yourself to yourself, sir!" said she, very tartly,—for chambermaids never like to be kissed by a middle-aged gentleman when a younger one is by: whereupon the German replied by a pinch,—it is immaterial to state the exact spot to which that delicate caress was directed. But this last offence was so inexpiable, that the "madchen" bounced off with a face of scarlet, and a "Sir, you are no gentleman,—that's what you arn't!" The German thrust his head out of the arbour, and followed her with a loud laugh; then, drawing himself in again, he said, in quite another accent and in excellent English, "There, Master Philip, we have got rid of the girl for the rest of the morning, and that's exactly what I wanted to

do—women's wits are confoundedly sharp. Well, did I not tell you right, we have baffled all the bloodhounds!"

"And here then, Gawtrej, we are to part," said Philip, mournfully.

"I wish you would think better of it, my boy," returned Mr. Gawtrej, breaking an egg; "how can you shift for yourself, no kith nor kin, not even that important machine for giving advice called a friend—no, not a friend, when I am gone? I foresee how it must end. [D— it, salt butter, by Jove!"]

"If I were alone in the world, as I have told you again and again, perhaps I might pin my fate to yours. But my brother!"

"There it is, always wrong when we act from our feelings. My whole life, which some day or other I will tell you, proves that. Your brother—bah! Is he not very well off with his own uncle and aunt?—plenty to eat and drink, I dare say. Come, man, you must be as hungry as a hawk—a slice of the beef. Let

well alone, and shift for yourself. What good can you do your brother?"

"I don't know, but I must see him; I have sworn it."

"Well, go and see him, and then strike across the country to me. I will wait a day for you,—there now!"

"But tell me first," said Philip, very earnestly, and fixing his dark eyes on his companion; "tell me—yes, I must speak frankly—tell me, you who would link my fortune with your own,—tell me, what and who are you?"

Gawtrey looked up.

"What do you suppose?" said he, drily.

"I fear to suppose any thing, lest I wrong you: but the strange place to which you took me the evening on which you saved me from pursuit, the persons I met there——"

"Well-dressed, and very civil to you?"

"True; but with a certain wild looseness in their talk that—— But I have no right to judge others by mere appearance. Nor is it

this that has made me anxious, and, if you will, suspicious."

"What then?"

"Your dress—your disguise."

"Disguised *yourself!*—ha! ha!—Behold the world's charity! You fly from some danger, some pursuit, disguised—you, who hold yourself guiltless—I do the same, and you hold me criminal—a robber, perhaps—a murderer, it may be! I will tell you what I am, I am a son of Fortune, an adventurer, I live by my wits—so do poets and lawyers, and all the charlatans of the world; I am a charlatan—a chameleon. 'Each man in his time plays many parts;' I play any part in which the Manager of the Vast Boards Money promises me a livelihood. Are you satisfied?"

"Perhaps," answered the boy, sadly, "when I know more of the world, I shall understand you better. Strange—strange, that you out of all men should have been kind to me in distress!"

"Not at all strange. Ask the beggar

whom he gets the most pence from—the fine lady in her carriage—the bean smelling of Eau de Cologne? Pish! the people nearest to being beggars themselves keep the beggar alive. You were friendless, and the man who has all earth for a foe befriends you. It is the way of the world, sir,—the way of the world. Come, eat while you can, this time next year you may have no beef to your bread.”

Thus masticating and moralising at the same time, Mr. Gawtreys at last finished a breakfast that would have astonished the whole Corporation of London; and then taking out a large old watch, with an enamelled back—doubtless, more German than its master—he said, as he lifted up his carpet-bag, “I must be off—*tempus fugit*, and I must arrive just in time to meek the vessels. Shall get to Ostend, or Rotterdam, safe and snug; thence to Paris. How my pretty Fan will have grown! Ah, you don’t know Fan—make you a nice little wife one of these days! Cheer up, man, we shall meet again. Be sure of it; and bark ye, that

strange place, as you call it, where I took you,
—you can find it again!”

“Not I.”

“Here, then, is the address. Whenever you want me, go there, ask to see Mr. Gregg—old fellow with one eye, you recollect—shake him by the hand just so—you catch the trick—practise it again. No, the fore-finger thus, that’s right. Say ‘blater,’ no more—‘blater;’—stay, I will write it down for you; and then ask for William Gawtre’s direction. He will give it you at once, without questions—these signs understood; and if you want money for your passage, he will give you that, also, with advice into the bargain. Always a warm welcome with me. And so take care of yourself, and good-by. I see my chaise is at the door.”

As he spoke, Gawtre shook the young man’s hand with cordial vigour, and strode off to his chaise, muttering,—“Money well laid out—fee money; I shall have him, and, God, I like him,—poor devil!”

CHAPTER V.

"He is a cunning coachman that can turn well in a narrow
room." — *Old Play: from Lark's Spectacles.*

"Here are two pilgrims,
And neither knows the footstep of the way,"
Herwood's *Duchess of Suffolk*. *Ibid.*

THE chaise had scarce driven from the in-
door, when a coach stopped to change horses
on its last stage to the town to which Philip
was bound. The name of the destination, in
gilt letters on the coach-door, caught his eye,
as he walked from the arbour towards the
road, and in a few moments he was seated as
the fourth passenger in the "Nelson Slow and
Sure." From under the shade of his cap, he
darted that quick, quiet glance, which a man
who hunts, or is hunted — in other words, who
observes, or chums, soon acquires. At his left
hand sat a young woman in a cloak lined

with yellow; she had taken off her bonnet and pinned it to the roof of the coach, and looked fresh and pretty in a silk handkerchief, which she had tied round her head, probably to serve as a nightcap during the drowsy length of the journey. Opposite to her was a middle-aged man of pale complexion, and a grave, pensive, studious expression of face; and *vis-à-vis* to Philip, sat an overdressed, showy, very good-looking man of about two or three-and-forty. This gentleman wore auburn whiskers, which met at the chin; a foraging cap, with a gold tassel; a velvet waistcoat, across which, in various folds, hung a golden chain, at the end of which dangled an eye-glass, that from time to time he screwed, as it were, into his right eye; he wore, also, a blue silk stock, with a frill much crumpled; dirty kid gloves; and over his lap lay a cloak lined with red silk. As Philip glanced towards this personage, the latter fixed his glass also at him, with a scrutinising stare, which drew fire from Philip's dark eyes. The man

dropped his glass, and said in a half provincial, half *bon-hour* tone, like the stage-exquisite of a minor theatre, "Pardou me, and split legs!" therewith stretching himself between Philip's limbs, in the approved fashion of inside passengers! A young man in a white-great coat now came to the door with a glass of warm sherry and water.

"You must take this—you *must* now; it will keep the cold out" (the day was broiling), said he, to the young woman.

"Gracious me!" was the answer, "but I never drink wine of a morning, James; it will get into my head."

"To oblige me!" said the young man, sentimentally; whereupon the young lady took the glass, and looking very kindly at her Gany-mede, said, "Your health!" and sipped, and made a wry face—then she looked at the passengers, tittered, and said, "I can't bear wine!" and so, very slowly and daintily, sipped up the rest. A silent and expressive squeeze of the hand, on returning the glass, rewarded the

young man, and proved the salutary effect of his prescription.

"All right!" cried the coachman: the hostler twitched the cloths from the leaders, and away went the "Nelson Slow and Sure," with as much pretension as if it had meant to do the ten miles in an hour. The pale gentleman took from his waistcoat-pocket a little box containing gum Arabic, and having inserted a couple of morsels between his lips, he next drew forth a little thin volume, which from the manner the lines were printed was evidently devoted to poetry.

The smart gentleman, who since the episode of the sherry and water had kept his glass fixed upon the young lady, now said, with a genteel smirk,—“That young gentleman seems very attentive, miss?”

“He is a very good young man, sir, and takes great care of me.”

“Not your brother, miss,—eh?”

“La, sir!—why not?”

“No family likeness—noice-looking fellow

enough! But your eyes and mouth—ah, miss!”

Miss turned away her head, and uttered, with pert vivacity,—

“I never likes compliments, sir! But the young man is not my brother.”

“A sweetheart,—eh? Oh fie, miss! Haw! haw!” and the auburn-whiskered Adonis poked Philip in the knee with one hand, and the pale gentleman in the ribs with the other. The latter looked up, and reproachfully; the former drew in his legs, and uttered an angry ejaculation.

“Well, sir, there is no harm in a sweetheart, is there?”

“None in the least, ma’am; I advise you to double the dose. We often hear of two strings to a bow. Dain’t you think it would be noicer to have two *bowz* to your string?”

As he thus wittily expressed himself, the gentleman took off his cap, and thrust his fingers through a very curling and comely head of hair; the young lady looked at him with evi-

dent coquetry, and said, "How you do run on, you gentlemen!"

"I may well run on, miss, as long as I run aufer you," was the gallant reply.

Here the pale gentleman, evidently annoyed by being talked across, shut his book up, and looked round. His eye rested on Philip, who, whether from the heat of the day or from the forgetfulness of thought, had pushed his cap from his brows; and the gentleman, after staring at him for a few moments with great earnestness, sighed so heavily that it attracted the notice of all the passengers.

"Are you unwell, sir?" asked the young lady, compassionately.

"A little pain in my side, nothing more."

"Change places with me, sir," cried the Lothario, officiously. "Now do!" The pale gentleman, after a short hesitation, and a bashful excuse, accepted the proposal. In a few moments the young lady and the beau were in deep and whispered conversation, their heads turned towards the window. The pale gentle-

man continued to gaze at Philip, till the latter, perceiving the notice he excited, coloured and replaced his cap over his face.

"Are you going to X——?" asked the gentleman, in a gentle, timid voice.

"Yes!"

"Is it the first time you have ever been there?"

"Sir!" returned Philip, in a voice that spoke surprise and distaste at his neighbour's curiosity.

"Forgive me," said the gentleman, shrinking back; "but you remind me of—of—a family I once knew in the town. Do you know—the—*the Mortons!*"

One in Philip's situation, with, as he supposed, the officers of justice in his track (for Gawtre, for reasons of his own, rather encouraged than allayed his fears), might well be suspicious. He replied therefore shortly, "I am quite a stranger to the town," and ensconced himself in the corner, as if to take a nap. Alas! that answer was one of the many obstacles he was

doomed to build up between himself and a fairer fate.

The gentleman sighed again, and never spoke more to the end of the journey. When the coach halted at the inn—the same inn which had before given its shelter to poor Catherine—the young man in the white coat opened the door, and offered his arm to the young lady.

“Do you make any stay here, sir?” said she to the beau, as she unpinched her bonnet from the roof.

“Perhaps so: I am waiting for my phaeton, which my fellow is to bring down,—tanking a little tour.”

“We shall be very happy to see you, sir,” said the young lady, on whom the phaeton completed the effect produced by the gentleman’s previous gallantries; and with that, she dropped a very neat card, on which was printed “Waters and Snow, Staymakers, High Street,” into his hand.

The beau put it gracefully into his pocket—leaped from the coach—nudged aside his rival

of the white coat, and offered his arm to the lady, who leaned on it affectionately as she descended.

"This gentleman has been so polite to me, James," said she. James touched his hat; the beau clapped him on the shoulder,—“Ah! you are not a happy man,—are you? Oh no, not at all a happy man!—Good day to you! Guard, that hat-box is mine.”

While Philip was paying the coachman, the beau passed, and whispered him,—

“Recollect old Gregg—any thing on the lay here—don't spoil my sport if we meet!” and bustled off into the inn, whistling “God save the king!”

Philip started, then tried to bring to mind the faces which he had seen at the “strange place,” and thought he recalled the features of his fellow-traveller. However, he did not seek to renew the acquaintance, but inquired the way to Mr. Morton's house, and thither he now proceeded.

He was directed, as a short cut, down one of

those narrow passages at the entrance of which posts are placed, as an indication that they are appropriated solely to foot-passengers. A dead white wall, which screened the garden of the physician of the place, ran on one side; a high fence to a nursery-ground was on the other; the passage was lonely, for it was now the hour when few persons walk either for business or pleasure in a provincial town, and no sound was heard save the fall of his own step on the broad flag-stones. At the end of the passage in the main street to which it led, he saw already the large, smart, showy shop, with the hot sun shining full on the gilt letters that conveyed to the eyes of the customer the respectable name of "Morton,"—when suddenly, the silence was broken by choked and painful sobs. He turned, and beneath a *compo portico*, jutting from the wall, which adorned the physician's door, he saw a child seated on the stone steps weeping bitterly—a thrill shot through Philip's heart! Did he recognise, disguised as it was by pain and sorrow, that voice? He paused, and laid

his hand on the child's shoulder : " Oh, don't—don't—pray don't—I am going, I am indeed!" cried the child, quailing, and still keeping his hands clasped before his face.

" Sidney!" said Philip. The boy started to his feet, uttered a cry of rapturous joy, and fell upon his brother's breast.

" O Philip!—dear, dear Philip! you are come to take me away back to my own—own mamma; I will be so good; I will never tease her again,—never, never! I have been so wretched!"

" Sit down, and tell me what they have done to you," said Philip, checking the rising heart that heaved at his mother's name.

So, there they sat, on the cold stone under the stranger's porch, these two orphans: Philip's arm round his brother's waist, Sidney leaning on his shoulder, and imparting to him—perhaps with pardonable exaggeration—all the sufferings he had gone through; and, when he came to that morning's chastisement, and shewed the wale across the little hands which

he had vainly held up in supplication, Philip's passion shook him from limb to limb. His impulse was to march straight into Mr. Morton's shop and gripe him by the throat; and the indignation he betrayed encouraged Sidney to colour yet more highly the tale of his wrongs and pain.

When he had done, and clinging tightly to his brother's broad chest, said,—

“But never mind, Philip; now we will go home to mamma.”

Philip replied,—

“Listen to me, my dear brother. We cannot go back to my mother. I will tell you why, later. We are alone in the world—we two! If you will come with me—God help you!—for you will have many hardships: we shall have to work and drudge, and you may be cold, and hungry, and tired, very often, Sidney,—very, very often! But you know that, long ago, when I was so passionate, I never was knowingly unkind to you; and I declare now, that I would bite out my

tongue rather than it should say a harsh word to you. That is all I can promise. Think well. Will you never miss all the comforts you have now?"

"Comforts!" repeated Sidney, ruefully, and looking at the wale over his hand. "Oh! let—let—let me go with you: I shall die if I stay here. I shall, indeed—indeed!"

"Hush!" said Philip; for at that moment a step was heard, and the pale gentleman walked slowly down the passage, and started, and turned his head wistfully as he looked at the boys.

When he was gone, Philip rose.

"It is settled then," said he, firmly. "Come with me at once. You shall return to their roof no more. Come, quick: we shall have many miles to go to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

"He comes—

Yet careless what he brings; his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on—
To him indifferent whether grief or joy."

COOPER: Description of the Postman.

THE pale gentleman entered Mr. Morton's shop; and, looking round him, spied the worthy trader shewing shawls to a young lady just married. He seated himself on a stool, and said to the bowing foreman,—

"I will wait till Mr. Morton is disengaged."

The young lady having closely examined seven shawls, and declared they were beautiful, said "she would think of it," and walked away. Mr. Morton now approached the stranger.

"Mr. Morton," said the pale gentleman; "you are very little altered. You do not recollect me?"

"Bless me, Mr. Spencer! is it really you?"

Well, what a time since we met! I am very glad to see you. And what brings you to X—? Business?"

"Yes, business. Let us go within."

Mr. Norton led the way to the parlour, where Master Tom, perched on the stool, was rapidly digesting the plundered muffin. Mr. Norton dismissed him to play, and the pale gentleman took a chair.

"Mr. Norton," said he, glancing over his dress, "you see I am in mourning. It is for your sister. I never got the better of that early attachment—never."

"My sister! Good Heavens!" said Mr. Norton, turning very pale; "is she dead?—Poor Catherine!—and I not know of it! When did she die?"

"Not many days since; and—and—" said Mr. Spencer, greatly affected, "I fear in vain. I had been abroad for some months: on my return last week, looking over the newspapers (for I always order them to be filed), I read the short account of her lawsuit against Mr. Beaufort sometime back. I resolved to find her out. I did so through the

solicitor she employed: it was too late; I arrived at her lodgings two days after her corpse had left it for the grave. I then determined to visit poor Catherine's brother, and learn if any thing could be done for the children she had left behind."

"She left but two. Philip, the elder, is very comfortably placed at R—; the youngest has his home with me; and Mrs. Morton is a moth—that is to say, she takes great pains with him. Ehem! and my poor—poor sister!"

"Is he like his mother?"

"Very much, when she was young—poor dear Catherine!"

"What age is he?"

"About ten, perhaps; I don't know exactly; much younger than the other. And so she's dead!"

"Mr. Morton, I am an old bachelor" (here a sickly smile crossed Mr. Spencer's face); "a small portion of my fortune is settled, it is true, on my relations: but the rest is mine, and I live within my income. The elder one is probably old enough to begin to take care of himself. But, the younger—perhaps you

have a family of your own, and can spare *him?*"

Mr. Morton hesitated, and twitched up his trousers.

"Why," said he, "this is very kind in you. I don't know—we'll see. The boy is out now; come and dine with us at two—pot-luck. Well, so she is no more!—Heigho! Meanwhile, I'll talk it over with Mrs. M."

"I will be with you," said Mr. Spencer, rising.

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Morton, "if Catherine had but married you, she would have been a happy woman."

"I would have tried to make her so," said Mr. Spencer, as he turned away his face, and took his departure.

Two o'clock came; but no Sidney. They had sent to the place whither he had been despatched; he had never arrived there. Mr. Morton grew alarmed; and, when Mr. Spencer came to dinner, his host was gone in search of the truant. He did not return till three. Doomed that day to be belated both at breakfast and dinner, this decided him to part with

Sidney whenever he should be found. Mrs. Morton was persuaded that the child only sulked, and would come back fast enough when he was hungry. Mr. Spencer tried to believe her, and ate his mutton, which was burnt to a cinder; but, when five, six, seven o'clock came, and the boy was still missing,—even Mrs. Morton agreed that it was high time to institute a regular search. The whole family set off different ways. It was ten o'clock before they were reunited; and then, all the news picked up was that a boy, answering Sidney's description, had been seen with a young man in three several parts of the town; the last time at the outskirts, on the highroad towards the manufacturing districts. These tidings so far relieved Mr. Morton's mind that he dismissed the chilling fear that had crept there,—that Sidney might have drowned himself. Boys will drown themselves sometimes! The description of the young man coincided so remarkably with the fellow-passenger of Mr. Spencer, that he did not doubt it was the same; the more so, when he recollected having seen him with a fair-haired child under the

portico; and, yet more, when he recalled the likeness to Catherine that had struck him in the coach, and caused the inquiry that had roused Philip's suspicion. The mystery was thus made clear—Sidney had fled with his brother. Nothing more, however, could be done that night. The next morning active measures should be devised; and when the morning came, the mail brought to Mr. Morton the two following letters. The first was from Arthur Beaufort.

“*Sir,*—I have only been prevented by severe illness from writing to you before. I can now scarcely hold a pen; but the instant my health is recovered I shall be with you at Y—.

“On her deathbed, the mother of the boy under your charge, Sidney Morton, committed him solemnly to me, the heir and representative of his father. I make his fortunes my care, and shall hasten to claim him at your kindly hands. But the elder son,—this poor Philip, who has suffered so unjustly,—for our lawyer has seen Mr. Plaskwith and heard the whole

story;—what has become of *him*? All our inquiries have failed to track him. Alas, I was too ill to institute them myself while it was yet time. Perhaps he may have sought shelter with you, his uncle: if so, assure him that he is in no danger from the pursuit of the law,—that his innocence is fully recognised; and that my father and myself implore him to accept our affection. I can write no more now; but in a few days I shall hope to see you.

“I am, sir, &c.

“ARTHUR BEAUFORT.”

“Berkeley Square.”

The second letter was from Mr. Plaskwih, and ran thus:—

“DEAR MORRIS,—Something very awkward has happened,—not my fault, and very unpleasant for me. Your relation, Philip, as I wrote you word, was a pains-taking lad, though odd, and bad-mannered,—for want, perhaps, poor boy, of being taught better; and Mrs. P. is, you know, a very genteel woman—women go too much by manners—

so she never took much to him. However, to the point, as the French emperor used to say: one evening he asked me for money for his mother, who, he said, was ill, in a very insolent way: I may say, threatening. It was in my own shop, and before Plummins and Mrs. P.; I was forced to answer with dignified rebuke, and left the shop. When I returned, he was gone, and some shillings—fourteen I think, and three sovereigns—evidently from the till, scattered on the floor. Mrs. P. and Mr. Plummins were very much frightened; thought it was clear I was robbed, and that we were to be murdered. Plummins slept below that night, and we borrowed butcher Johnson's dog. Nothing happened. I did not think I was robbed: because the money, when we came to calculate, was all right. I know human nature: he had thought to take it, but repented—quite clear. However, I was naturally very angry, thought he'd come back again—meant to reprove him properly—waited several days—heard nothing of him—grew uneasy—would not attend longer to Mrs. P.: for, as Napoleon Buonaparte ob-

served, "women are well in *their* way, not in *ours*." Made Plimmins go with me to town—hired a Bow Street runner to track him out—cost me 1*l.* and two glasses of brandy and water. Poor Mrs. Morton was just buried—quite shocked! Suddenly saw the boy in the streets. Plimmins rushed forward in the kindest way—was knocked down—hurt his arm—paid 2*s.* 6*d.* for lotion. Philip ran off, we ran after him—could not find him. Forced to return home. Next day, a lawyer from a Mr. Beaufort—Mr. George Blackwell, a gentleman-like man—called. Mr. Beaufort will do any thing for him in reason. Is there any thing more *I* can do? I really am very uneasy about the lad, and Mrs. P. and I have a tiff about it: but that's nothing—thought I had best write to you for instructions.

"Yours, truly,

"C. PLASKWITH."

"P. S.—Just open my letter to say, Bow Street officer just been here—has found out that the boy has been seen with a very suspi-

ious character: they think he has left London. Bow Street officer wants to go after him — very expensive: so now you can decide."

Mr. Spencer scarcely listened to the former letter, but of the latter he felt jealous. He would fain have been the only protector to Catherine's children; but he was the last man fitted to head the search, now so necessary to prosecute with equal tact and energy.

A soft-hearted, soft-headed man, a confirmed valetudinarian, a day-dreamer, who had wasted away his life in dawdling and mauling over Simple Poetry, and sighing over his unhappy attachment; no child, no babe, was so thoroughly helpless as Mr. Spencer.

The task of investigation devolved, therefore, on Mr. Morton, and he went about it in a regular, plain, straight-forward way. Hand-bills were circulated, constables employed, and a lawyer, accompanied by Mr. Spencer, despatched to the manufacturing districts: towards which the orphans had been seen to direct their path.

CHAPTER VII.

"Give the gentle South
Yet leave to court those sails."

BEAUCHAMPEL AND FLETCHER: Beggar's Bush.

"Cut your cloth, sir,
According to your calling."

Ibid.

MEANWHILE the brothers were far away, and He who feeds the young ravens made their paths pleasant to their feet. Philip had broken to Sidney the sad news of their mother's death, and Sidney had wept, with bitter passion. But children, what can *they* know of death? Their tears over graves dry sooner than the dews. It is melancholy to compare the depth, the endurance, the far-sighted, anxious, prayerful, love of a parent, with the inconsiderate, frail, and evanescent affection of the infant, whose eyes the hues of the butterfly yet

dazzle with delight. It was the night of their flight, and in the open air, when Philip (his arms round Sidney's waist) told his brother-orphan that they were motherless. And the air was balmy, the skies filled with the effulgent presence of the August moon; the corn-fields stretched round them wide and far, and not a leaf trembled on the beech-tree, beneath which they had sought shelter. It seemed as if Nature herself smiled pityingly on their young sorrow, and said to them, "Grieve not for the dead: I, who live for ever, *I* will be your mother!"

They crept, as the night deepened, into the warmer sleeping-place afforded by stacks of hay, mown that summer, and still fragrant. And the next morning the birds woke them betimes, to feel that Liberty, at least, was with them, and to wander with her at will.

Who in his boyhood has not felt the delight of freedom and adventure? to have the world of woods and sward before him—to escape restriction—to lean, for the first time, on his own resources—to rejoice in the wild but

manly luxury of independence—to act the Crusoe—and to fancy a Friday in every foot-print—an island of his own in every field? Yes, in spite of their desolation, their loss, of the melancholy past, of the friendless future, the orphans were happy—happy in their youth—their freedom—their love—their wanderings in the delicious air of the glorious August. Sometimes they came upon knots of reapers lingering in the shade of the hedgerows over their noontday meal; and, grown sociable by travel, and bold by safety, they joined and partook of the rude fare with the zest of fatigue and youth. Sometimes, too, at night, they saw, gleam afar and red by the wood-side, the fires of gipsy tents. But these, with the superstition derived from old nursery tales, they scrupulously shunned, eyeing them with a mysterious awe! What heavenly twilights belong to that golden month!—the air so lucidly serene, as the purple of the clouds fades gradually away, and up soars, broad, round, intense, and lustrous, the full moon which belongs to the

joyous season! The fields then are greener than in the heats of July and June, they have got back the luxury of a second spring. And still, beside the paths of the travellers, lingered, on the hedges, the clustering honeysuckle—the convolvulus glittered in the tangles of the brake—the hardy heath-flower sunbed on the green waste.

And ever, at evening, they came, field after field, upon those circles which recall to children so many charmed legends, and are fresh and frequent in that month—the Fairy Rings! They thought, poor boys, that it was a good omen, and half fancied that the Fairies protected them, as in the old time they had often protected the desolate and outcast.

They avoided the main roads, and all towns, with suspicious care. But sometimes they paused, for food and rest, at the obscure hostels of some scattered hamlet: though, more often, they loved to spread the simple food they purchased by the way under some thick tree, or beside a stream, through whose limpid waters they could watch the trout glide

and play. And they often preferred the chance-shelter of a haystack, or a shed, to the less romantic repose offered by the small inns they alone dared to enter. They went, in this, much by the face and voice of the host or hostess. Once only Philip had entered a town, on the second day of their flight, and that solely for the purchase of ruder clothes, and a change of linen for Sidney, with some articles and implements of use necessary in their present course of shift and welcome hardship. A wise precaution, for, thus clad, they escaped suspicion.

So journeying, they consumed several days; and, having taken a direction quite opposite to that which led to the manufacturing districts, whither pursuit had been directed, they were now in the centre of another county—in the neighbourhood of one of the most considerable towns of England; and here Philip began to think their wanderings ought to cease, and it was time to settle on some definite course of life. He had carefully hoarded about his person, and most thrif-
tily

managed, the little fortune bequeathed by his mother. But Philip looked on this capital as a deposit sacred to Sidney; it was not to be spent, but kept and augmented—the nucleus for future wealth. Within the last few weeks his character was greatly ripened, and his powers of thought enlarged. He was no more a boy, he was a man; he had another life to take care of. He resolved, then, to enter the town they were approaching, and to seek for some situation by which he might maintain both. Sidney was very loath to abandon their present roving life; but he allowed that the warm weather could not always last, and that in winter the fields would be less pleasant. He, therefore, with a sigh, yielded to his brother's reasonings.

They entered the fair and busy town of — one day at noon; and, after finding a small lodging, at which he deposited Sidney, who was fatigued with their day's work, Philip sallied forth alone.

After his long rambling, Philip was pleased and struck with the broad bustling streets,

the gay shops—the evidences of opulence and trade. He thought it hard if he could not find there a market for the health and heart of sixteen. He strolled slowly and alone along the streets, till his attention was caught by a small corner-shop, in the window of which was placed a board, bearing this inscription:—

“OFFICE FOR EMPLOYMENT.—RECIPROCAL
ADVANTAGE.

“Mr. John Champ’s bureau open every day from ten till four. Clerks, servants, labourers, &c., provided with suitable situations. Terms moderate. N. B.—The oldest established office in the town.

“Wanted, a good Cook. An under Gardener.”

What he sought was here! Philip entered, and saw a short, fat man with spectacles, seated before a desk, poring upon the well-filled leaves of a long register.

“Sir,” said Philip, “I wish for a situation; I don’t care what.”

“Ho!—a-crown for entry, if you please. That’s right. Now for particulars. Ham!—you don’t look like a servant!”

"No; I wish for any place where my education can be of use. I can read, write; I know Latin and French; I can draw; I know arithmetic and summing."

"Very well; very genteel young man—prepossessing appearance—(that's a fudge!)—highly educated; nsher in a school—eh?"

"What you like."

"References?"

"I have none."

"Eh!—none!" and Mr. Clump fixed his spectacles full upon Philip.

Philip was prepared for the question, and had the art to perceive that a frank reply was his best policy. "The fact is," said he, boldly, "I was well brought up; my father died; I was to be bound apprentice to a trade I disliked; I left it, and have now no friends."

"If I can help you, I will," said Mr. Clump, coldly. "Can't promise much. If you were a labourer, character might not matter; but educated young men must have a character. Hands always more useful than head. Education no avail nowadays; common, quite common. Call again on Monday."

Somewhat disappointed and chilled, Philip turned from the bureau; but he had a strong confidence in his own resources, and recovered his spirits as he mingled with the throng. He passed, at length, by a livery-stable, and paused, from old associations, as he saw a groom in the mews attempting to manage a young, hot horse, evidently unbroken. The master of the stables, in a green short jacket, and top boots, with a long whip in his hand, was standing by, with one or two men who looked like horse-dealers.

"Come off, clumsy! you can't manage that 'ere fine animal," cried the liveryman. "Ah! he's a lamb, sir, if he were backed properly. But I has not a man in the yard as can ride since Will died. Come off, I say, lubber!"

But to come off, without being thrown off, was more easily said than done. The horse was now plunging as if Juno had seat her gadfly to him; and Philip, interested and excited, came near and nearer, till he stood by the side of the horse-dealers. The other hostlers ran to the help of their comrade, who, at last, with

white lips and shaking knees, found himself on *terra firma*; while the horse, snorting hard and rubbing his head against the breast and arms of the hostler who held him tightly by the rein, seemed to ask, in his own way, "Are there any more of you?"

A suspicion that the horse was an old acquaintance crossed Philip's mind; he went up to him, and a white spot over the left eye confirmed his doubts. It had been a foal reserved and reared for his own riding; one that, in his prosperous day, had ate bread from his hand, and followed him round the paddock like a dog; one that he had mounted in sport, without saddle, when his father's back was turned: a friend, in short, of the happy *lang sguie*;—nay, the very friend to whom he had boasted his affection, when, standing with Arthur Beaufort under the summer sky, the whole world seemed to him full of friends. He put his hand on the horse's neck, and whispered, "Soho! So, Billy!" and the horse turned sharp round with a quick joyous neigh.

"If you please, sir," said Philip, appealing to the liveryman, "I will undertake to ride this horse, and take him over yon leaping bar. Just let me try him."

"There's a fine-spirited lad for you!" said the liveryman, much pleased at the offer. "Now, gentlemen, did I not tell you that ere hanimal had no vice if he was properly managed?"

The horse-dealers shook their heads.

"May I give him some bread first?" asked Philip; and the hostler was despatched to the house. Meanwhile the animal evinced various signs of pleasure and recognition, as Philip stroked and talked to him; and, finally, when he ate the bread from the young man's hand, the whole yard seemed in as much delight and surprise as if they had witnessed one of Monsieur Van Amburgh's exploits.

And now, Philip, still caressing him, slowly and cautiously mounted; the horse made one bound half-across the yard—a bound which sent all the horse-dealers into a corner—and then went through his paces, one after the

other, with as much ease and calm as if he had been broke in at Mr. Fozard's to carry a young lady. And when he crowned all by going thrice over the leaping-bar, and Philip, dismounting, threw the reins to the hostler, and turned triumphantly to the horse-dealer, that gentleman slapped him on the back, and said, emphatically, "Sir, you are a man! and I am proud to see you here."

Meanwhile the horse-dealers gathered round the animal; looked at his hoofs, felt his legs, examined his windpipe, and concluded the bargain, which, but for Philip, would have been very abruptly broken off. When the horse was led out of the yard, the liveryman, Mr. Stubmore, turned to Philip, who, leaning against the wall, followed the poor animal with mournful eyes.

"My good sir, you have sold that horse for me—that you have! Any thing as I can do for you! One good turn deserves another. Here's a brace of shiners."

"Thank you, sir; I want no money, but I do want some employment. I can be of use

to you, perhaps, in your establishment. I have been brought up among horses all my life."

"Saw it, sir! that's very clear. I say that ere horse knows you!" and the dealer put his finger to his nose. "Quite right to be mum! He came from an old customer of mine—famous rider!—Mr. Beaufort. Aha! that's where you knew him, I s'pose. Were you in his stables?"

"Dem—I knew Mr. Beaufort well."

"Did you? You could not know a better man. Well, I shall be very glad to engage you, though you seem by your hands to be a bit of a gentleman—eh? Never mind; don't want you to groom!—but superintend things. D'ye know accounts, eh?"

"Yes."

"Character?"

Philip repeated to Mr. Stubmore the story he had imparted to Mr. Clump. Somehow or other, men who live much with horses are always more lax in their notions than the rest of mankind. Mr. Stubmore did not seem to grow more distant at Philip's narration.

"Understand you perfectly, my man.

Brought up with them ere fine creturs, how could you nail your nose to a desk? I'll take you without more palaver. What's your name?"

"Phillips."

"Come to-morrow, and we'll settle about wages. Sleep here?"

"No. I have a brotther whom I must lodge with, and for whose sake I wish to work. I should not like him to be at the stables—he is too young. But I can come early every day, and go home late."

"Well, just as you like, man. Good day."

And thus, not from any mental accomplishment—not from the result of his intellectual education, but from the mere physical capacity and brute habit of sticking fast on his saddle, did Philip Morton, in this great, intelligent, gifted, civilised, enlightened community of Great Britain, find the means of earning his bread without stealing it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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