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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OLLA PODRIDA ***

OLLA PODRIDA

BY

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

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Prefatory Note

[Pg ix]

This edition of *Olla Podrida* does not include the "Diary on the Continent" which appeared first in the *Metropolitan Magazine* 1835-1836 as "The Diary of a *Blasé*" continued in the *New Monthly Magazine* 1837, 1838, as "Confessions and opinions of Ralph the Restless." Marryat himself described the "Diary" as "very good magazine stuff," and it has no fitting place in an edition of his novels, from which the "Diary in America" is also excluded.

The space thus created is occupied by "The Gipsy," "The Fairy's Wand," and "A Rencontre," which I have ventured to print here in spite the author's protest,^[A] that the original edition of *Olla Podrida* contained all the miscellaneous matter contributed by him to periodicals that he wished to acknowledge as his writing. The statement may be regarded as a challenge to his editors to produce something worthy; and I certainly consider that the "Gipsy" is superior to some of his fragments, and may be paired, as a comedy, with "The Monk of Seville," as a tragedy.

[A] Preface to first edition of O.P. printed below.

But I have not attempted any systematic search for scraps. "The Fairy's Wand" was published in the same year as, and probably later than, *Olla Podrida* itself, and need not therefore be "considered as disavowed and rejected" by him. "A Rencontre" was always reprinted and acknowledged by its author, being, for no ostensible reason, bound up with *Joseph Rushbrook, or The Poacher*, 1841.

This seems the most appropriate occasion to supplement, and—in some measure—to correct, the list of novels contributed to periodicals by Marryat, which I compiled from statements in *The Life and Letters* by Florence Marryat (also tabulated in Mr David Hannay's "Life"), and printed on p. xix. of the General Introduction to this edition.

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TO THE METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE.

(Edited by Marryat, 1832-1835.)

The Pacha of Many Tales, May 1831—February 1833; and May 1834—May 1835.

Peter Simple, June 1832—September 1833. The novel is not completed in the Magazine, but closes with an announcement of the three volume edition.

Jacob Faithful, September 1833—September 1834.

Japhet in Search of a Father, September 1834—January 1836.

Snarleygow, January 1836—January 1837.

Midshipman Easy. One specimen chapter only. August 1835.

TO THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

The Privateersman, 1845-1846.

Valerie (the first eleven chapters), 1846-1847.

The Phantom Ship, 1838-1839.

The bulk of this volume is reprinted from the first edition of *Olla Podrida*, in three volumes, Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1840. "The Gipsy," from the *Metropolitan Magazine*; "The Fairy's Wand," from the *New Monthly Magazine*; and "A Rencontre," from the first Edition of *The Poacher*, 1841.

R. B. J.

[Pg xi]

I have not yet ventured upon a Preface to any of my writings, and I did not expect that I should ever have written one. Except in a work of importance, which may demand it, a Preface is, generally speaking, a request for indulgence which never will be accorded, or an explanation to which the Public is indifferent. It is only when an explanation is *due* to the Public, or to the Author's reputation, that he should venture to offer one. If a work is well written, the Public are satisfied; if not, they have just cause to feel otherwise; and if an Author obtains justice, he obtains all that he has a right to expect.

I write this Preface, because I consider that it may save me from a hasty remark or two, which it may be just as well to forestall. During the ten years which I have taken up the pen, I have furnished miscellaneous matter to various Periodicals, which, if it were all collected together, would swell into many volumes. Among it, as must be the case under the circumstances in which it was written, there is some which I consider tolerable; but the major portion is but indifferent; and I should be very sorry indeed, if at any future time, when I may not have the power to prevent it, all these articles should be collected and printed as mine. If ever it were done, it certainly would not be by my friends: I wish it, therefore, to be understood, that in the portions of these volumes which consist of republications, I have selected from the mass, all that I wish to acknowledge as my writing; and that the remainder (with the exception of the papers on nautical subjects, which are of no interest to the general reader) may be considered as disavowed and rejected. The major part of these volumes consist of a Diary written when I was on the Continent. It first appeared in the Periodicals, under the title of a "Diary of a *Blasé*:" the title was a bad one, as I did not write up to the character; I have, therefore, for want of a better name, simply called it a "Diary on the Continent;" and I mention this, that I may not be accused of having intentionally deceived.

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F. M.

THE MONK OF SEVILLE:

[Pg 1]

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

[Pg 2]

ANSELMO DON GASPAR, *A monk disguised as a cavalier.*

DON FELIX, *A Spanish nobleman.*

DON PEREZ, *Do.*

SUPERIOR *of the monastery.*

ANTONIO, *Servant to Don Gasper.*

MANUEL, *A monk.*

JACOBO, *Porter to the monastery.*

SANCHO, *Servant to Don Perez.*

DONNA INEZ, *A noble lady.*

ISIDORA, *Her niece.*

DONNA SERAFINA.

BEPPA, } *Servant to Serafina.*
 } *both wives of Antonio*

NINA, } *Do. to Isidora.*

Monks, Choristers, Attendants, &c.

Scene laid in Seville.

Olla Podrida

[Pg 3]

The Monk of Seville

Act I. Scene I.

Enter Don Felix and Don Perez.

Felix. You say his name's Don Gaspar?

Perez. So he styles himself; but of what house, parentage, or country, cannot be gained. He keeps aloof from all, bears himself gallantly; and 'tis manifest that any question discourteously put he'd answer with his sword.

Felix. He's skill'd in fence, then?

Perez. There's none to match him. I, who have foiled half Seville, am but a scholar in his hands, when at the School we've joined the assault in courtesy.

Felix. A proper man?

Perez. Beyond comparison. He hath all the stamp of true nobility. Pride in his eye; in his address, dignified; in modes most perfect; the most envied of the men, and the most admired by all the dames of Seville.

Felix. Successful, then?

Perez. He confides in none; and hath no intimate; but I am informed he is resistless, and I much suspect, my rival.

Felix. With the Donna Serafina?

Perez. Even so; she has changed much of late; and I have discovered that one, who, from report, answers to his description, is highly favoured.

[Pg 4]

Felix. But, Perez, did you not tell me you had left her?

Perez. In faith I had; but when I discovered that another sought her, my passion then returned; and now that she rejects me, I dote upon her more than ever.

Felix. Perez, when will you be wise? when will you cease to trifle with the sex?

Perez. Never, I hope: women are my game; and I live but on the chase. Sighs, oaths, and amorous ditties are my ammunition; my guitar is my fowling-piece, and you must acknowledge that I seldom miss my aim.

Felix. I grant it, Perez, but it's cruel sport, and quite unworthy of a cavalier. How many wounded birds have hid themselves to die!

Perez. Poor things—why did they not keep out of shot range? It's useless to preach, Felix, I must have my amusement.

Felix. Be careful, Perez, that it prove not dangerous; there is no honour gained by broken vows, false oaths, and tampering with maidens' hearts. It is a fault in you I would were mended; and our relationship makes me thus free to speak my mind. It is unworthy of you.

Perez. But sufficing good for women—they are but playthings; and thus far am I renegade, that, with the prophet, I cannot allow them souls.

Felix. You are incorrigible. Change the discourse, or I shall lose my temper and that opinion of you, which, 'gainst my better sense, I fain would keep. Our subject was Don Gaspar.

Perez. Yes—and my object is to find out who he is, and, if basely born, to hunt him out of Seville.

Felix. That there's mystery is evident; but when you hunt, see if such quarry, good Perez, turn not to bay. But new in Seville, I ne'er have encountered this prodigy; if his rank be mere assumption, he must be exposed; yet, Perez, there may be many causes for an incognito. Our Spain is wide and well peopled with those who boast high ancestry.

Perez. If then so wide, there's room for him elsewhere. But here comes Sancho with intelligence. [Pg 5]
(*Enter Sancho.*)

How now, Sancho,—what have you discovered?

San. (*Affectedly.*) I am not quite a fool, Santa Petronila knows that, good sirs,—not quite a fool. I think you are fortunate in your servant. You'll excuse me, but I have seen the person whom you mentioned.

Perez. Well—

San. I have seen him, sir, by Saint Petronila!

Perez. And spoke to him, I trust.

San. Yes, sir, and, by the same holy saint! I have spoken to him.

Perez. To what purpose have you spoken to this Antonio?

San. To *your* purpose, sir.

Perez. What did he tell you? I cry your patience, Felix, but this mule cannot be driven. What did he tell you, sirrah?

San. You do not know what first I said to *him*,—would you have the answer before the question?

Perez. Well, what said you first to him?

San. With all good courtesy I wished him a good morning. He did the same to me.

Perez. Well.

San. I then discoursed about Saint Petronila, the wind, the pope, and the weather. No, I recollect, it was the weather before the saint. I think—yes—I am sure it was; how the saint brought in the wine, I know not; but we proceeded on to wine and women, which last discourse made us thirsty, so we adjourned into a wine-house. Saint Petronila shrive me! when we became most intimate, and after much beating about the bush, I discovered that his master—

Perez. Who—what?

San. Don Gaspar, sir.

Perez. Idiot! is that all?

San. No,—only half; I found out more without him. He finished off his wine and left me without any more information, declaring that was all he knew himself; and that he had to meet a lady. Let me alone for finding out, Saint Petronila be my guide! I watched him, and as I turned the corner, found him in close whispering with the Señora Beppa. [Pg 6]

Perez. The attendant of Donna Serafina; then are my doubts confirmed. Treacherous sex!—but I'll be revenged! Did you speak to them?

San. Not when Antonio was there. I never interfere between man and wife, the blessed saint knows that.

Perez. His wife!

San. Yes, his wife; but when Antonio quitted her, I then accosted her; and to my cross questions—

Perez. She gave you crooked answers.

San. Precisely so, signor, and record it, Saint Petronila; she said that I was a fool!

Perez. The wisdom of the woman! Come, Felix—Sancho, you will go home and await my return.

[*Exit Perez and Felix.*]

San. That Antonio is a good fellow, Saint Petronila assist him! how he does make me laugh! we were sworn friends in two hours; and he promised to drink with me whenever I pleased: I wonder why he never offers to pay his share of the reckoning? He thinks it would affront me, I suppose! but when we are more intimate, I'll hint the contrary. Excellent fellow! how he did make me laugh! Then when next we meet, I'll ask his advice about my love affair! I am sadly in want of a confidant; now I've only my own wit, and the good saint. He's a man you may trust, I'll be sworn. Lord! how he did make me laugh! [*Exit.*]

Scene II.

Street opposite Anselmo's lodgings.

Enter Antonio.

Well, I'm supposed to have as much wit as my neighbours, and yet I cannot make out this master of mine. He's a perfect mystery, and the more I try to unriddle him the more he riddles me. If I am deep, he is deeper. In short, I am no match for him, and thus I prove it. In the first place, he finds out everything I would conceal, and conceals everything I would find out. Secondly, he reads all my thoughts, and takes care that I shall read none of his. Then he disappears when I turn my back, and re-appears before I turn my face. He has discovered that I am a rogue, yet retains me in his service. His chamber is always locked when he goes out, and I am obliged to wait below upon board wages. There's some mystery about that chamber. I have watched repeatedly on the staircase to see him enter, but never can; and when I would swear that he is not in, it is I only who am out; for I am summoned to his presence. There's mystery! When he does appear, who is he? Don Gaspar; but of what family, and from what part of Spain, no one can tell. Mystery upon mystery! He may be the devil, and I feel my conscience touched; for no good ever came from the devil's wages. I'll to my confessor, and seek his counsel. He's a good man, and lenient too, to such poor rogues as I. But he insists that I appear each se'nnight, and sum the catalogue of my offences: perhaps he's right; for if I staid longer away, *some* of them—as I am no scholar,—say half—would be forgotten. [*Enter Nina veiled, who passed by him, and exit.*] There's a nice girl! What a foot and ankle! Now had my master seen her, there had been a job for me to dog her home. We lacqueys are like sporting dogs; we follow up the game, and when they stop their running, make a dead point, until our masters bag them for themselves. [*Nina returns. Enter.*] She's coming back. This time I'll poach a little for myself. Fair lady, can I serve you? [*Nina stops, but turns away. Antonio kneels.*]

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"Turn not away, fair angel, for since last
You bless'd my eyes, my thoughts have been on you;
For weeks I've follow'd, not daring to address you.
As I'm a bachelor, and free to wed,
Might I your favour gain, a life of tenderness,
To you, my love, I'd tender."

[Pg 8]

(*Aside.*) I borrow'd that speech, excepting the last flourish, from my master: but since he has used it like his cast-off clothes, 'tis mine by custom. (*Aloud.*) Will you not answer? I love you, madam, have loved you long; and, by my soul! ne'er said so much before to any woman breathing. [*Nina turns round and lifts her veil, Antonio turns away.*] (*Aside.*) By all that's intolerable, my Toledo wife! (*Turning to her.*) Holy Saint Frances! It is, it is my wife!

Nina. Yes, sir, your injured, your deserted wife!

Ant. And are you still alive? then I am once more happy! (*Offers to embrace her.*)

Nina. Forbear! When was I dead, you wretch?

Ant. Why, Nina, I've a letter from Toledo, that states that you are dead; you died a treble death, yourself and twins.

Nina. What?

Ant. Twins, my love, sweet pledges of affection. I've the letter in my pocket; I've kept it there for months, pored over it for weeks, and cried over it for days. (*Fumbles in his pocket.*) Now I recollect it is in the pocket of my gala suit. What an infamous forgery! Come to my arms, my dear lamented, but now recovered wife!

Nina. Keep off, you wretch! What did you say just now? "I've loved you long, and ne'er have said so much to any woman breathing."

Ant. Well, my love, no more I had, except to yourself; and you I thought were dead. Why, my dearest Nina, it is a proof of my constancy. When I first saw you, I said to myself "that is the only woman I ever saw with a foot and ankle so pretty as my Nina's;" and the more I looked at you, the more your sweet figure reminded me of yourself. In fact, it was your likeness to yourself that created the first emotion in my widowed heart. Had I fallen in love with anybody else, my dearest Nina, you might have cause for anger; but I assert, to fall in love with my own wife proves me a paragon of fidelity.

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Nina. O, Lopez, could I but believe you!

[*Antonio turns away and takes out his handkerchief.*] (*Aside.*) As my master says (*turning to*

Nina),

"Lay bare my heart, my Nina, read each thought,
And there your image, deeply graven, find."

[*She turns away. He pretends to be much affected; at last she embraces him.*

Ant. (Aside.) Into her arms and out of that scrape, thank my wits! (*Aloud.*) And now, my love, how long have you resided in this city?

Nina. But a few days. I serve the Donna Isidora. I was left behind in sickness, at their country seat, some time ago, and but now have joined her. Where have you been, my dear Lopez?

Ant. Wandering about everywhere and anywhere, a lost man, since I heard of your loss;—yes, a miserable man. But of that hereafter. What seek you now?

Nina. The lacquey of Don Gaspar, called Antonio;—can you assist me, as I am in haste?

Ant. Why yes, I think I can. Behold him here; I am that same Antonio, and, for my sins, Don Gaspar's lacquey.

Nina (walking away angrily). It was convenient, perhaps, for you to change your name. You are Antonio, indeed!

Ant. No, my dear wife; but it made me feel more happy (*placing his arm round her waist*). You used to call me Lopez; dearest Lopez; and when I thought you dead, the very name, when summoned by my masters, reminded me of your dear self. I could not bear it; so I changed my name.

Nina. Dear Lopez! And do you really tell the truth? [*Antonio kisses her.*]

Enter Beppa.

Ant. By this kiss I do!

[Pg 10]

Bep. (aside). So, so, good husband! I have long suspected this. I'll watch your motions.

Nina. Well then, dear Lopez, you must give this letter to your master. He must not fail to-night. When shall I see you?

Ant. This night, if possible, there shall be more than one love-tale, my Nina. [*Exit Nina.*

[*Beppa, who has gradually advanced, boxes Antonio's ears.*

Bep. "There shall be more than one love-tale, my Nina." And this hand shall tell another tale (*striking again*), thou base villain!

Ant. (escaping from her, rubbing his ears). O Lord! for tail read head. (*Aside.*) This it is to have two wives. (*Aloud.*) Why, Beppa, are you mad? How can I help it?

Bep. How can you help it!

Ant. Yes, how can I help it? I must obey my orders.

Bep. Obey your orders!

Ant. Yes, obey my orders, or lose my place. My master, who is amusing himself with a young lady, says to me, "Antonio, that servant girl hangs about much in my way, you must make love to her."

Bep. Make love to her!

Ant. Yes, make love to her. "I'll be hanged if I do," says I, thinking of my own sweet little Beppa. "Then you will be starved if you don't," said he. And as I found that he did not mean to be in earnest, I thought that there could be no harm in a little by-play.

Bep. By-play!

Ant. Yes, by-play. Well, I refused long, for it went against my conscience. Then he took this purse of ten moidores, and said, "Refuse me, and quit my service. Consent, and take this purse; the money will support your wife."

Bep. (snatching the purse). Now, am I to believe this?

Ant. Believe it! why, have you not the proofs? How should I possess ten moidores? Money is not to be had for nothing now-a-days. I meant to have told you all, but have not seen you since.

[Pg 11]

Bep. She called you Lopez?

Ant. She did. I would not give my name. No other shall call me "Dear Antonio," excepting my own true lawful wife!

Bep. (turning away with indifference, and putting the purse in her pocket). Well, allowing all this to be true, and that's of no great importance, what a villain is your master, sir, to pay his court unto another, when he vows fidelity to my mistress, Donna Serafina!

Ant. Upon my honour, I've enough to do to defend myself; though I must confess that his conduct

is infamous.

Bep. I'll to my mistress, and make known his treachery? [*Going.*]

Ant. Do no such thing! Bad news, though true, is never paid for; but the purse opens when the tidings please, although they're false as—(*points down below*). What's your message?

Bep. My mistress dies to see him.

Ant. Tell her he'll come to-morrow evening. He said as much when last I saw him.

Bep. When last you saw him! Is he not here?

Ant. He's here, and there, and everywhere, and nowhere.

Bep. Where is he now?

Ant. That I don't know; but not here, that's certain.

[*Window opens, Gaspar calls loudly from within window—*]

Gasp. Antonio!

Ant. Santa Maria! Yes, sir.

Gasp. Go to Castanos, and see if my guitar be strung.

Ant. Now, how did he get there? Beppa, I must off. Remember my advice!

Bep. (*scornfully*). I will. Good-by, Mr By-Play. [*Exit Beppa.*]

Ant. (*looking up*). How the devil did he get there, if not by the help of the devil! For it was not by the help of the door, I'll swear. To-morrow I'll confess—that's certain. [*Exit Antonio.*]

[Pg 12]

Scene III.

Moonlight.—*A garden belonging to the house of Donna Inez.—A balcony looking into the garden.—Donna Isidora and Nina discovered on balcony.*

Isid. He comes not yet.

Nina. Señora, 'tis not time.

Isid. 'Tis more than time; I heard the convent bell
Strike long ago.

Nina. 'Twas not the hour of night, but the sad toll
Announcing some high obsequy.

Isid. Yet, still, 'tis time he came.

Nina. And here he would have been, but you forget
You chided him for venturing so early.
Your aunt had not retired when last he came.

Isid. He does not wish to come,—I will not see him. Tell him my resolution. [*Exit, petulantly, Nina following.*]

Enter Gaspar, in the dress of a cavalier.

I overheard her vented thoughts, poor girl!
She counts the minutes by her throbbing heart,
And that beats time too fast.
Now will she hang her head, and weep awhile.
Like flow'rets waiting for the morning sun,
That raise their mournful heads at his approach,
And every dew-drop, like a diamond, glistens,
While they exhale sweet perfume in their joy,—
So at our meeting, smiling through her tears,
Will she appear more fresh and beautiful!

[*Re-enter Isidora and Nina. As they appear, Gaspar retires.*]

Isid. The moon's so bright, that faintly you discover
The little stars which stud th' unclouded heav'n;
The wind but scarcely moves the trembling aspen,
And not a sound breaks through the still of night.
All Nature's hush'd; and every passion lull'd,
Save love, or fierce revenge. Is this a night
To stay away, false, yet loved Don Gaspar?

[Pg 13]

Nina. Be patient, lady, he will soon be here.

Isid. He cannot sure be false.
Perchance some danger hangs upon his steps;
Men are so envious of the fair and good.

Nina (looking). Señora, look; I see him in the distance.

Isid. He comes! Where, Nina? O yes! that is he.
Well, now, I'll tease him. Nina, quickly in;
I vow I will not show myself this night. [*Exit Isidora.*]

Nina. I wish I had ten ducats on the hazard. [*Exit Nina.*]

[*Gaspar sings to his guitar without.*]

Song (mournful strain).

"The mocking moon doth coldly fling
Her rays upon my breast of flame,
And echo mocks me as I sing.
O my guitar! to thee what shame!
She answers not, though thy best string
Is loudly hymning forth her name.
Isidora! Isidora!"

[*Isidora appears at the balcony.*]

(*A livelier strain.*)

"No more the moon doth mock me now;
Her bright rays glad my breast of flame,
And echo, beautiful art thou!
O my guitar! to thee no shame!
She comes! love throned upon her brow!
My strings hymn forth once more her name!
Isidora! Isidora!"

Enter Gaspar, who approaches balcony.

Isid. Why hast thou staid so late? Did but the moon
Turn on my anxious features her soft rays,
Thou wouldst perceive how fretfulness and tears
Have doubled every minute of thine absence.

Gasp. And would 'twere day, that thou, sweet love, mightst see
The fervid passion stamp'd upon my brow.
I dared not disobey thy late command;
Yet, did I fret, and champ the bit of duty,
Like some proud battle steed arching his neck,
Spurning the earth, impatient for the fray.
So my young heart throbs with its new delight,
That it e'en now would burst its cords asunder,
And make one joyous bound into thy bosom.

Isid. Say, Gaspar, dost thou fondly, truly, love me?

Gasp. Do I love thee, Isidora?
If it were not for thee, sweet love,
The world would be a blank, and this existence
A dreary void, I would not stumble through;
But having thee, a paradise it is,
So full of perfumed airs and flow'rets sweet,
I would resist the angel's flaming sword,
If it were raised between our plighted loves,
Ere I would be from thy loved presence thrust.
Thou art the heav'n of my idolatry!
For thee I live and move,—for thee I breathe;
For thee and for thy love, if thou knew'st all——

Isid. I would know all—there's mystery about thee!
Gaspar, thine image here's so deeply graven,
That nought can e'er efface it. Trust me, then, love,
As I would thee. There's not a thought I own,
No, not a fond emotion of my soul,—
Not e'en the slightest ripple o'er the mind,
When calm and pensive as it used to be,
But I would tell it thee.

O couldst thou view my heart, and see thyself
 So firmly master of its deep recesses,
 Thou wouldst be confident.
 If thou shouldst be ignoble, fear not me,
 Love shall draw out thy patent of descent,
 And trace thy ancestry to more than mortal.
 If thou hast hated, and hast found revenge,
 Yet fear not me, dear Gaspar.
 Whate'er priests say, it is a noble passion,
 And holds an empire in the heart of man,
 Equal in strength and dignity with love.
 Be it a tale of sorrow or of crime,
 (O say 'tis not the last!) still let me share it,
 That I may comfort thee whene'er we meet,
 And mourn it only when I grieve thine absence.

Gasp. My Isidora, oft thou'st press'd me thus;
 Since thou wilt hear it, then, it shall be told;
 But one sad chance, most fatal to us both,
 Is fetter'd to it.

Isid. And what is that, my Gaspar?

Gasp. That once reveal'd, we ne'er may meet again.

Isid. Then I'll not hear't. Away with prying thoughts
 So fraught with mischief! Not to see thee more!
 Then might the angel pour the vial out,
 That vial of fierce wrath which is to quench
 The sun, the moon, the host of stars, in blood!
 Not see thee more! then may they work my shroud,
 And cull the flowers to strew my maiden corpse.
 Without thee, Gaspar, I should surely die!
 Wert thou the ruler of the universe,
 Commanding all, I could not love thee more!
 Wert thou a branded slave from bondage 'scap'd,—
 'Tis now too late,—I could not love thee less!

Gasp. (aside). One soul so pure redeems a world of sin!
 Thou Heav'n that I have mock'd, O hear me now,
 And spare! let her not feel the bitter pangs
 Of disappointed love! Draw the barb gently,
 That she may sigh her soul away, and sleep
 Throughout her passage to a better world!

Isid. What say'st thou, Gaspar!

Gasp. I call'd down blessings, loveliest, on thy head.
 Heav'n grant my prayers!

Isid. I, too, have pray'd for thee, and will again!
 But speak to me. Why didst thou come so late?
 How short, methinks, are nights. There's hardly time
 For those who've toil'd, to gain their needful rest,—
 For those who wake, to whisper half their love.

Gasp. Night is our day, and day becomes our night;
 Love changes all, o'er nature rules supreme;
 Alters her seasons, mocks her wisest laws,
 And, like the prophet, checks the planet's course.
 But from this world of hate, the night has fled,
 And I must hie me hence. O Isidora!
 Though my seeming's doubtful, yet remember,
 'Tis true as Heaven, I love thee!

Isid. I'm sure thou dost, and feeling thus assured,
 I am content.

Enter Nina, hastily, from balcony.

Nina. Madam, the lady Inez pass'd your door,
 And, passing, tried the bolt, e'en now I hear
 Her footsteps in the corridor.

Isid. We must away, dear Gaspar. Fare thee well!

Nina shall tell thee when we next can meet.

[*Exit Isidora and Nina at balcony.*]

Gasp. So parts the miser from his hoarded wealth,
And eyes the casket when the keys are turn'd.
I must away.
The world e'en now awakes, and the wan moon
(Like some tired sentinel, his vigil o'er)
Sinks down beneath yon trees. The morning mist
Already seeks the skies, ascending straight,
Like infant's prayers, or souls of holy martyrs.
I must away.
The world will not revolve another hour,
Ere hives of men will pour their millions forth,

To seek their food by labour, or supply
Their wants by plunder, flattery, or deceit.
Avarice again will count the dream'd-of hoards,
Envy and Rancour stab, whilst sobbing Charity
Will bind the fest'ring wounds that they have giv'n.
The world of sin and selfishness awakes
Once more, to swell its catalogue of crime,
So monstrous that it wearies patient Heav'n.
I must away. [*Exit.*]

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Act II. Scene I.

The street before Anselmo's lodgings.

Enter Antonio.

If ever fortune played me a jade's trick, 'twas when she brought my wives to Seville. So far have I contrived to keep them separate; but should they meet, they'll talk; and then, woe to that most interesting of all subjects, myself! I am sure to be discovered. Why, in half an hour, their rapid tongues would range o'er half the creation. Now, Beppa is my first wife, and, like all other first choices, the worst. There's vengeance in her, and she'll apply to the authorities; then must I to the galleys. Who wants a wife? I have one—aye two—to dispose of. Here comes a fool I trifle with. (*Enter Sancho.*) So, comrade, what's your business now? (*Mimicking him.*) Saint Petronila! you are a faithful servant, ever stirring to do your master's pleasure.

San. 'Tis not his pleasure that I am upon—it is my own: I go to Donna Isidora's.

Ant. What dost thou there?

San. (*affectedly*). I please a damsel, and she pleases me.

Ant. I do not wonder at it. Barring a certain too intelligent look that thou hast, thou art a pretty fellow, and made to charm the ladies. Who is this damsel of your choice? [Pg 18]

San. You'll keep my secret?

Ant. As faithfully as I do all others.

San. It is the maid of Donna Isidora. I knew her at Toledo, and for years kept her company. During my absence,—Saint Petronila strike him with the leprosy!—a certain Lopez, a dirty, shuffling, addle-pated knave, stepped in between us, and married her. She took the poor fool purely through pique, because I did not write to her; and the holy saint knows I had not then learned.

Ant. (*aside*). Now would I beat his pate, but that I think the fool may assist me out of my difficulties. (*Aloud.*) What! love a married woman! For shame, Sancho! I had thought better of you.

San. I loved her years before she married; and since the marriage, her husband has deserted her, and I have met her often. Nina, for that's her name, has often told me how much she repented of her marriage with the fellow; and could I prove that he were dead, she'd marry me, Saint Petronila directing her, and make a wiser choice in second wedlock.

Ant. (*aside*). The cockatrice. (*Aloud.*) Sancho, I knew this Lopez. He is not quite the person you describe; but never mind. Yesterday, he came to Seville, and told me how much surprised he was to find his wife here.

San. Then he's come back. Saint Petronila aid me! how unfortunate!

Ant. (*musings aside*). I have it! (*Aloud.*) Sancho, we have ever been the best of friends. I respect you much. I have most joyful tidings for you, and, if you will be counselled by me, Nina is yours.

San. Indeed! I can't see how. I think I had a better chance before.

San. The scoundrel dead! My dear Antonio (*embracing him*), I thank you for the news, and so will Nina too. But can you prove it?

Ant. I can, but in strict confidence. Pledge me your word you never will divulge, not even to Nina, what I now confide; for the women have the power to sap the stoutest resolution. Swear on your knees.

San. (*kneeling*). I swear by Petronila, my adopted saint.

Ant. Well, then, this Lopez was a noisy braggadocio. Last night we had some words whilst waiting near the gate of Donna Serafina. From words we came to weapons, and, by a lucky thrust, I sent his prying soul the devil knows where. His body I secreted in the garden.

San. I envy you. Would he were alive again, that I might kill him too, my guardian saint assisting! I should be the better welcome.

Ant. Indeed!

San. Not that it matters; I am convinced she loves me well. I'll to her straight, and with these welcome tidings make her right happy.

Ant. Not quite so fast. When that you tell her, she will ask for proofs, and from whence you had your information.

San. Why, that is true; and she'll never rest till she worms the secret from me: Saint Petronila, lock my breast!

Ant. Therefore, Sancho, it must appear as if there was no secret. Tell her 'twas by your hand that Lopez fell; I am content that you shall have with her all the credit of the deed. She'll love you better.

San. Why, so she will. My dear Antonio, you are like my holy saint, a friend indeed!

Ant. If she doubts the fact, you'll come to me. I'll give you proofs most positive.

San. Thanks—thanks!

Ant. Now take advice. Women, like eels, are rather slippery; already she has once slipped through your fingers. Their minds are weathercocks, and there's wind always blowing. Press her, then, hard, and marry her at once.

San. I will, I will. Thanks, dear Antonio!—Saint Petronila will reward you.

Ant. I risk much to serve you. You'll meet me here to-night. I must now to confess this heavy deed. You'll come.

San. I will—addio! [*Exit*].

Ant. So, so the fondling, ever coaxing Nina
Loves this soft fool, and wishes I were dead.
I did think better of her.
We men deceive, 'tis true; but still no longer
Keep on the mask, when we've our purpose gain'd.
With us 'tis tiresome; but with the women,
'Tis ne'er removed; for mask'd they live and die! [*Exit*].

Scene II.

The Monastery.

Gaspar, as Anselmo, enters with Jacobo.

Jac. Twice hath the brother Manuel sought for you;
He came from the Superior.

Gasp. You told him I was absent?

Jac. I did, and also where you might be found.
They sent a messenger, who soon return'd,
Declaring there thou hadst not been to-day.

Gasp. Truly, I had forgotten 'twas the day
That I with Don Baltasar did appoint.
'Twas thus my treach'rous memory did beget
This chapter of cross purposes. [*Bell without*].

Jac. Someone rings.
That jingling bell pursues me unto death;
In faith, this porter's is a tedious office. [*Exit*].

Gasp. More tedious still the wearing of the knees
Upon this pavement. I am weary of it.

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Enter Jacobo, with Antonio.

Jac. One who inquires for thee, Anselmo,
Who would confess.

Gasp. (*Takes a confessional chair.*) I know the man:
Jacobo, leave us. [*Exit Jacobo.*]
My son, we are alone; now thou may'st profit
By holy rite, and on thy bended knees
Pour out thy soul to me in deep contrition.
Hast thou perform'd the penance I enjoin'd
For the sad stumblings thou did'st last confess?

Ant. I have, most holy father, to my belief
Obey'd thy strict injunction.
I have so much to think of for my master,
My thoughts are scarce mine own;
Still do I often call upon the saints.

Gasp. I trust thou dost—and not as I have heard
That worldlings do, invoke them in mere blasphemy.

Ant. Nay, father, when I call, I am sincere.

Gasp. Thou dost evade, I fear, with double meaning.
But to the purpose—by what sins hast thou,
Since last we met, endanger'd thy poor soul?

Ant. Father, my mind is ill at ease. I serve
A master most equivocal—a false one
In all he says and does; in love—in everything.
I know not what to think. He's here and there—
In fact, I do believe he is—the devil.

Gasp. Give me the grounds for this thy strange suspicion.

Ant. He keeps his chamber lock'd, his haunts unknown.
He comes when least expected. How he comes
I cannot tell. He goes, and Heaven knows where.
I ne'er can make him out with all my prying.

Gasp. It would appear thy master doth not trust thee.
Why should'st thou watch, and seek to find out that
He would conceal? This base prying nature
Is a dark sin, and must be check'd by penance.
Hast thou no more?

Ant. Yes, father, I've a grievous fault to tell;
One that I'm fearful thou wilt much abhor—
An accident, 'tis true, and most unlucky—
I have two wives in Seville.

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Gasp. Two wives! Thou hast profaned the holy rite!
What! wedded twice! and say 'twas accident!

Ant. An accident—they both have come to Seville.

Gasp. It is a heinous sin—one that demands
Justice on earth; scarce pardon claims from Heaven.
Two wives! How long hast thou thus lived in sin?

Ant. 'Tis now three years since I did wed the second!
I had forgot, my memory is so bad,
I wedded was before—till yesterday,
I chanced to meet with both of them in Seville.

Gasp. Thy memory's most convenient, but the law
Will not o'erlook thy crime when it is known.

Ant. We'll leave it to the law, then, please thee, father.
The sin is one that carries its own penance.

Gasp. How could'st thou venture on so foul a deed?

Ant. Example, holy father! bad example.
It is our masters who do ruin us.
My present one, for instance, loves two ladies,
And woos them both. Sad reprobate he is!

Gasp. Another's fault can't sanctify thine own,
Else all th' ordinances of our church were useless;
Thou art more knave than fool, Antonio,
And yet made up of both. For this thy crime
I have no absolution. Haste thee hence,
And tremble at thy state of sad perdition!
[*Exit Gaspar.*]

Ant. (looking after him). More knave than fool!—why, yes, that's true. What a scurvy fellow! No absolution! I shall take the liberty of changing my confessor. So, good sir, I give you your warning. Must not pry either! Does he not pry into my conscience as far as he can? Why, his whole life is a life of prying!—I have no opinion of these monks! They're no better than they should be. The law must take its course—there's the mischief. Let me only contrive to get out of its clutches now, and I'll take my chance for getting out of the devil's hereafter! [*Exit.*]

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Scene III.

A Street in Seville.

Enter Felix and Perez, meeting.

Felix. Perez, well met; I hoped to find you. Have you discovered who your rival may be? and what answer have you gained from Donna Serafina to your most urgent pleadings?

Perez. Confusion light upon her! She hath returned my letter without opening it; and sent a request that I will desist from useless persecution. Beppa, her confidante, I have contrived to parley with; and what with bribes and much entreaty, I have ascertained that this Don Gaspar *is* the rival who supplants me.

Felix. I doubt it, Perez—doubt it much. I, too, have gained some information from Sancho, who associates much with one Nina, Isidora's favoured woman. From this source I've learned that this Don Gaspar is her favoured cavalier, and that last night they had a meeting.

Perez. Yet I am sure my knowledge is correct, and that the Donna Serafina grants him those favours which I consider are but due to me.

Felix. Why, what a conscientious cavalier is this, who thus monopolises all our beauties! I fain would see him. What is he like? His properties must be wondrous indeed. Where is he to be met?

Perez. He often passes this way to the Prado. I wish to meet him also, but not in courtesy. Indeed! see, here he comes!

[*Enter Don Gaspar and as he would pass by, Perez steps before him. Gaspar moves on one side and Perez again intercepts him.*]

Gasp. Don Perez, at first I imagined this was accident, but now your conduct will admit no such interpretation. Do you dispute my passage?

Perez. I do—until we have had some little parley.

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Gasp. Then, sir, your parley. Be brief. Indeed, I know not what there is between us that demands it.

Perez. I believe, Don Gaspar, that you woo a lady.

Gasp. 'Tis not impossible.

Perez. You will oblige me if you cease to woo.

Gasp. Don Perez, I never brook affront. What has already passed demands a deadly meeting. But to reply to your strange request, who is the lady I am commanded not to woo, and upon what grounds?

Perez. The lady is the Donna Serafina—I grant a fickle, yet a lovely one. You call yourself Don Gaspar. Who is this Don Gaspar that ruffles thus with our nobility? Detail your ancestry and lineage. Of what family are you? Where are your possessions? show me the patent of your descent or else—

Gasp. Or else, Don Perez?

Perez. I publish you through Seville!

Gasp. Then do it quickly; you've no time to lose. First let me tell you, sir, that had not reasons, and those the most cogent ones, forced me to hide my quality, I had not so long submitted to the doubts which are abroad. Still my secret is mine own and shall remain so. Who and what I am,

Don Perez, you shall never know. You have not long to live; and now, sir, let me pass. We meet again when least you wish it.

Felix. Perez, indeed you are to blame. Don Gaspar has the right of every man to wear the incognito, either from choice or from necessity. He has never intruded on your company, bears himself correctly, and wears the form and stamp of true nobility. Thus much in justice must I say. If you must quarrel let your cause be good.

Gasp. Sir, I thank you (*bowing to Don Felix*).

Perez. Still do I hold my words, and challenge him impostor!

Gasp. Did you retract them it would not avail. But time is pressing, and I cannot wait.

Perez. When do we meet again?

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Gasp. I said before, when least you wish it. (*To Don Felix*) Signor, farewell! [*Exit Gaspar*].

Perez. By heavens! I hold him craven! Do you think that I shall hear from him?

Felix. Hear from him! I saw no signs of fear, but much of rage, and that but ill suppressed. In faith he is a noble cavalier! You'll hear, and see, and suffer from him too, or I mistake.

Perez. What did he say? when least I wished it?

Felix. Those were his words.

Perez. They're pregnant with some meaning.

Felix. No doubt—we'll ravel out this mystery as we walk. Come to the Prado: this smiling day will bring the fair ones forth. Come, come! [*Exeunt*].

Scene IV.

A Street before Anselmo's Lodgings.

Enter Antonio.

What with the messages from my master's two mistresses, I am not a little puzzled to keep my two wives apart. I have spread a report of my absence by another channel, which will reach Nina; and, unless she comes for my effects, which Beppa surely would, there is no fear. Now must I wait for Sancho.

Enter Beppa.

Bep. One is as sure to find you standing here, as to find the figure of our lady in the church.

Ant. I wish the likeness went further, and that the same presents were offered to me. I should be rich.

Bep. You will never be rich. You are not honest.

Ant. It is my poverty has made me otherwise.

Bep. And while you are otherwise you will be poor. You shut the only gate by which riches can enter.

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Ant. And yet, good wife, I have occasionally seen great rogues amass great wealth.

Bep. Castles built upon the sand, without a good foundation!—a pile of industry heaped up in vain. But I have known you long, and it is useless to reason with you.

Ant. Pray, may I ask, what has made you in such a sermonising humour to-day?

Bep. No; but you may hear why I am come to you. I am sent to know if your rogue of a master comes to my lady to-night.

Ant. He does, to the best of my knowledge, and belief.

Enter Sancho.

Ant. Sancho, I have been waiting for you (*to Sancho aside*). I'll speak to you directly (*pointing to Beppa*).

Bep. I'm sure there is mischief. I'll stay to plague him.

Ant. Well, Beppa, you have your answer, and I have no doubt but Donna Serafina is impatient.

Bep. She may be: but, Antonio, I want to put a question to you, now that I am here; who is that girl with whom I caught you the other day,—that Nina!

San. Saint Petronila! caught him with Nina? Why he's a married man and your husband.

Bep. I know he is, to my misfortune. Yet still he makes love to other women. I caught him kissing her.

Ant. (aside). Confound her!

San. Kissing her! (*To Antonio*) Your most obedient! Then I understand why you fought her husband.

Bep. Fought her husband did you say?

San. Yes, and killed him—a dirty rascal, whose name was—

Ant. (putting his hand on Sancho's mouth). Your honour, Sancho! recollect your oath!

San. I had forgotten. Saint Petronila, refresh my memory! But this requires some little explanation.

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Ant. And you shall have it, but not now. All's right.

San. All's right?

Ant. (aside to Sancho). Yes—this woman's jealous of her. As soon as she is gone I will explain the whole.

Bep. (aside). Now are there knavish tricks in practice. (*Aloud*) You know this Nina—this girl of his?

San. Why, yes—I know the woman.

Bep. Then if you do, tell her she's a shameless wanton, thus to seduce a married man, and that Antonio's wife will spoil her beauty if she come across her. You understand me?

San. Why, yes; it is very plain, by Saint Petronila!

Bep. Husband, farewell. I trust you'll mend your ways. [*Exit Beppa.*]

Ant. Cursed jealous cockatrice! Why, Sancho, you are serious.

San. Why, yes, a little. I thought you were my friend, but if you are only doing a friendly act for Nina in getting her a husband—

Ant. My dear Sancho, I'll explain it all. Nina is virtuous. It was her husband that she kissed, and this alone has made that woman jealous.

San. Why should she be jealous of Nina's kissing her own husband?

Ant. Because that husband had my livery on; and Beppa swears 'twas I. When Lopez arrived here he wanted a situation, but his clothes were so shabby, he could not offer himself to any gentleman. I lent him a suit of mine, a very good one too, and yet the wretch had the ingratitude to quarrel with me, although dressed in my clothes. They are on his body now. When he met his wife he kissed her, and Beppa, who was passing by, thought it was I; and this is the whole mystery. You can ask Nina how her husband was dressed when she met him, and her answer will prove the truth of what I say. Only, you must not mention a word of me or of Beppa. I hope you're satisfied.

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San. Why, yes—it seems the truth.

Ant. Well, now, Sancho, let me know how Nina received the news of her husband's death.

San. Women are strange creatures! Would you believe it? When I told his death—Saint Petronila, be merciful to me!—although she always disliked him, she cried and sobbed most bitterly; and when I would have consoled her she pushed me—yes, me, Sancho, away! Saint Petronila!

Ant. I almost repent of my scheme. I wish it had been Beppa that the fool fancied.

San. But this did not last above ten minutes. She then wiped her eyes, and suffered me to kiss her.

Ant. So soon—confound her! He shall have her (*aside*).

San. O more than that: when she became more tranquil she smiled—hi, hi, hi! by the lips of the holy saint, she did!

Ant. (aside). The Jezebel! (*Aloud*) But, Sancho, was she quite satisfied with your assertion of his being killed?

San. No; she said she must have more proof, that there might be no mistake; for, as she truly observed, it would be an awkward thing to have two husbands.

Ant. (aside). It is to have two wives. (*Aloud*) Sancho, proceed.

San. I followed your advice, and told her 'twas by my hand that Lopez fell—Saint Petronila pardon me the lie.

Ant. What said she then?

San. Why, at first, she repulsed; but then remembering that second thoughts as well as second husbands were the best, she dried her eyes, and was content; don't you see how fresh I am with the joy?

Ant. (aside and looking contemptuously on Sancho). Confound him!

San. What say you?

Ant. That you're a happy man. Did you press her hard to marry you at once, as I advised you?

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San. I did, and at last she promised, as soon as she had seen her husband dead, to marry me immediately.

Ant. Now, Sancho, I will be your friend. Of course I must not appear in this, nor must my name be mentioned. But if to-morrow at dusk will suit you, I'll drag his body from the place where I concealed it, and lay it in the path which leads to the summer house—you know where I mean, just where the row of tall chestnut trees—

San. I know exactly. Thank you, Antonio. She said to-morrow night she thought she would be able to come out. I'll go to her immediately, and make the appointment. Saint Petronila, smile on my joys of wedlock! [*Exit Sancho.*]

Ant. How I hate women!... If that fool had mentioned the name of Lopez, the crafty Beppa would have discovered the whole affair. What with keeping my own secrets, and finding out those of my master, I have enough to do. So far the former has been well managed, now for the latter. [*Exit into house.*]

Scene V.

An Apartment in the Guzman Palace. Donna Inez discovered seated at table.

Inez. Last night, again, beneath my niece's window
I heard that tuneful voice; and if mine ears
Deceived me not, my Isidora's too.
As I pass'd by, a light whose feeble rays
Shone thro' the vacancy beneath the door
Proved that she'd not retired. I much suspect
She is entangled in some web of love.
Yet oft have I enjoin'd her to advise
With me, her friend, and truest counsellor.

But 'tis in vain;

Love ne'er would be so sweet,—so fondly cherish'd,
If not envelop'd in the veil of secrecy:
And good intents are oft in maidens check'd

By that strange joyous fear, that happy awe,
Which agitates the breast when first the trembler
Receives its dangerous inmate.
I've summon'd her, for now I must endeavour
To be her confidante. (*Muses.*) 'Twere better first
I made her mine.
And sympathy may win the treasured key,
Which startled love would willingly retain.

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Enter Isidora.

Isid. You wish my presence. (*Aside*) Hush, my tell-tale heart.

Inez. Hast thou slept well, my child?

Isid. My dreams have been confused, but not unhappy.

Inez. Oh! may'st thou never wake to mystery!
Thine is a dang'rous age: my Isidora,
Thou little know'st, that while thy path is strew'd
With flow'rs, how many serpent dangers lurk
Beneath the sweets.

Isid. I will not stray, then.

Inez. It is a happy resolution.
If, in my youth, I had been so resolved,
I had not loaded mine old age with care,
Nor soak'd my pillow with remorseful tears.

Isid. I've often seen you weep, and then retire,
Nor glad me with your presence, until after
You had communion held with Father Philip;
Then have you smiled again, that is to say,
Smiled mournfully, as does the winter's sun,
Gleaming through heavy clouds, and scarce deigning

To light up sober nature for the minute.

Inez. True, dearest child, for such is our blindness,
That we reject our greatest boon, until
We can receive support from it alone.
'Tis time thou should'st receive my confidence,
And learn the danger of clandestine love.

Isid. (aside). She must suspect me. (*Aloud*) I'm all attention.

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Inez. To say I once was fair, and that mine eyes
Were bright as thine are now, were almost needless.
I had a mother most considerate—
Kind to excess, yet ever pointing out
The path to virtue, and to happiness.
One precept above all did she enjoin,
And sure 'twas little in exchange to ask
For so much kindness—wisely to seek her counsel
Ere the heart was wounded. You hear me, love,
I oft have made the same request of you.

Isid. (faintly). You have.

Inez. I promised faithfully, as thou hast done,
And well, I know, wilt keep the promise made.
But virgin fear induced *me* to withhold
My confidence, until it was too late.
My heart was given and my troth was plighted;
Don Felipe, such was his cherish'd name,
Implor'd my silence; our frequent meetings
Were sanctified by marriage: then I learn'd
It was an old and deadly feud that barr'd
His long sought entrance to our house; but soon
He hop'd our marriage publicly t'announce,
And strife of years to end, and peace restore
By our acknowledged union.
Alas! two days before this much-sought hour,
My brothers were inform'd I did receive
My husband in my chamber. He was surprised
And murder'd—basely in my presence slain!

Isid. Oh Heavens!

Inez. They would not listen to my frantic words!
They would not credit our asserted union!
They dragg'd me to a convent in their wrath,
And left me to my widowhood and tears,
Tore my sweet infant from my longing arms,
And while I madly scream'd, and begg'd for pity,
The abbess spoke of penitence and prayer.
Reason, for weeks, forsook me: when again
I was awaken'd to a cruel world,
They would have forced me to assume the veil.

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Isid. To me, that force had been most needlessly
Exerted. What haven could the world offer
So meet for such a wreck of happiness?
What could induce you to repel that force?

Inez. The hope, that one day I might find my boy—
A hope which still I cherish. Years have fled;
My brothers fell by those who sought revenge,
And I remain'd, sole scion of our noble house,
In line direct. Then did I seek my child.
Those who attended at the birth inform'd me
It had a sanguine bracelet on the wrist.
By threats and bribes at last I ascertained
My child had been removed unto the hospital
Built in this city for receiving foundlings.
Full of a mother's joy, a mother's fear,
I hasten'd there, alas! to disappointment!
All clue of him was lost, and should my boy survive,
The heir of Guzman's noble house may be

Some poor mechanic's slave!
(*In anguish throws herself into a chair.*)

Isidora (kneels beside Inez).
Indeed 'tis dreadful. I marvel not you grieve
To think that he survives in hapless penury,
Unconscious of his right, perchance unfitted,
And if recover'd, prove no source of joy,
But one of deep regret, that a young stock
Which culture and the graft of education
Would now have loaded on each bough with fruit,
Neglect hath left degenerate and worthless.
How should I joy, yet dread to meet my cousin,
Should your maternal hopes be realised!

Inez. He is my child. You cannot feel the pangs
Which rack a mother sever'd from her own.

Isid. I've often thought how sweet that love must be
Where all is sanction'd, nought is to conceal—
When hand may lock in hand, heart beat with heart,
And the whole world may smile but not upbraid.
Such love a sister towards a brother bears,
And such a mother feels towards her son.
I have no brother—none of kin but you.
Now, dearest mother, for mother you have been
Unto my childhood and now budding youth,
Would that my feebleness could e'er repay
Your years of love. O that I could console you,
And prove me grateful! Heaven ne'er be mine
If these, my sobbing words, be not sincere.

Inez. 'Tis well, my child, thou canst console me much:
Let my sad tale but prove to thee a beacon
And I am satisfied. Tell me, my love,
Hast thou no secrets hidden in thy breast?
[*Isidora, still kneeling, covers her face with her hands.*]
Hast thou fulfill'd thy oft-repeated promise?

Isid. Forgive me, dearest aunt; forgive and pity me!

Inez. Last night, my child, I heard the sound of music:
Methought thy name was wafted by the air
With most harmonious utterance.

Isid. Forgive me, aunt, but say that you forgive me!
You shall know all.

Inez. I do, my Isidora, I forgive thee (*raises her*).
But I must have thy confidence, my child.
Who is this cavalier?

Isid. Alas! I know not.

Inez. Not know, my Isidora? Hast thou then
Been so unwise as to receive a stranger?

Isid. Alas! I have, but too much for my peace.

Inez. Thou lov'st him then? [*Isidora throws herself into
the arms of Inez and bursts into tears.*]
(*Aside*) The barb has entered deeply. (*Aloud*) Isidora,
Come, come, cheer up, my love,
I mean not to reproach. All may yet be well.

(*Inez kisses Isidora, and they separate.*)

Thou say'st he is a stranger?

Isid. I only know he calls himself Don Gaspar.
I have indeed been foolish.

Inez. Has he ne'er mention'd his condition,
His family or descent?

Isid. Never; and when that I would question him,
He answers vaguely. There is some mystery.

Inez. With honest love concealment never dwells.
When does he come again?

Isid. To-morrow even—and he'll keep his word.

Inez. Then will I see him. Fear not, my love,
No trifling cause shall bar thy happiness.
Be he but gentle, e'en of Moorish blood,
And honest, he is thine. Go to thy chamber,
Thither will I follow, that we some project
May devise, which shall remove all obstacle.

[*Exit Isidora.*]

I like not this Don Gaspar, and my heart
Forebodes some evil nigh. I may be wrong,
But in my sear'd imagination,
He is some snake whose fascinating eyes,
Fix'd on my trembling bird, have drawn her down
Into his pois'nous fangs. How frail our sex!
Prudence may guard us from th' assaults of passion,
But storm'd the citadel, in woman's heart,
Victorious love admits no armistice
Or sway conjoint. He garrisons alone. [*Exit Inez.*]

Act III. Scene I.

The monastery.—Procession of monks, choristers, &c., returning from performing service in the chapel.—The organ still playing in the chapel within, Anselmo at the head of the choristers.—They pass on bowing to the Superior, who, with Manuel, remain.—The organ ceases.

Sup. (*looking round*). Anselmo hath pass'd on. I do observe,
Of late he shuns communion. 'Tis most strange.
Say, Manuel, hast thou discover'd aught?
Doth he continue steadfast and devout?
Or, borne away by youthful phantasies,
Neglect the duties of our sacred order?

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Man. He bears himself correctly, and e'er since
His last offence, when self-inflicted pain
Proved his contrition, he hath ever seem'd
To be absorb'd in holy meditation.

Sup. May this continue, he's of great import
To the well doing of our monastery—
Yet he hath not of late confess'd his sins.

Man. Perchance he hath not err'd. Forgive me, Heav'n,
Rash words like these when all are born to sin!
I deem'd that he had nothing to confess
Except the warring of his youthful passions,
O'er which he strives to hold dominion.

Sup. I would it were so; but, too frequently,
I do perceive a furtive glance of fire
From 'neath his fringed eyelash wildly start,
As does the lightning from a heavy cloud:
It doth denote strong passion—much too strong
For youthful resolution to control.

Man. Why then permit him to behold the world
And all its vanities? 'Tis true, our coffers
Are somewhat help'd by that he brings to them,
Instructing music, a gift from nature
In him most perfect. Were it not better
That he within our cloister'd gates should stay?

Sup. Then would he pine; for our monastic vows
Are much too harsh, too rigid save for those
Who, having proved the world, at length retire

When they have lost the appetite to sin.
There's much depending on the boy Anselmo;
He is a prize whose worth I little knew
When first into our brotherhood he came.

Man. I comprehend you not.

Sup. Thou canst not, Manuel, but I will confide
What has been reveal'd to me alone.
Well thou know'st for years I have confess'd
The Donna Inez. From her I late have learn'd
She bore a child in wedlock, which she lost;
And, by the notices which she has given,
I find him in Anselmo.

Man. In Anselmo! Then he's the rightful heir
To all the Guzman wealth.

Sup. 'Tis even so.

Man. Father, how long since you discover'd this?

Sup. But a few months before he took his vows.

Man. Why did you then permit them?

Sup. To serve our holy church; which either way
Must gain by his belonging to our order.
The lady mourns her son. If I restore him,
She must be grateful. Thus our convent will
Become endow'd with acres of broad land.
And should he choose still to retain his vows,
When he has learnt the story of his birth,
Then will our monast'ry no doubt receive
The wealth *he* values not, but *we* require.

Man. I do perceive—'twas prudently arranged—
What wait you for?

Sup. To see if he will turn his thoughts to Heav'n;
But, look, he moves this way. Leave me with him.
[Exit Manuel, and enter Anselmo.]
Where hast thou been, my child?

Ans. Lending mine ear to those who would unload
A conscience heavy with repeated sin—
Giving advice and absolution free
To those who riot in a sinful world.

Sup. Yet still be lenient. We in holy bonds
Expect not men exposed, to be so perfect.
Tell me, for lately thou hast not confess'd,
How throbs thy heart? Do holy thoughts prevail?
Art thou at peace within, or does thy youth
Regret its vow, and yield to vain repinings?

Ans. I am, most holy father, as Heav'n made me—
Content, and not content, as in their turns
The good or evil thoughts will be ascendant.
When that the evil thoughts the mastery gain,
I try to curb them. Man can do no more.

Sup. At thy rebelling age, 'tis doing much.
Now put my question to thy inmost soul
And answer me:—could'st thou rejoin the world
And all its pleasures, now so bright in fancy
To youth's all ardent mind, tell me sincerely,
Would'st thou reject them?

Ans. Why call in question that which ne'er can be?
My vows are ta'en, therefore no choice is mine.

Sup. Most things are possible to mother church,
As would this be—a dispensation sought
Might be obtain'd.

Ans. (at first with joy in his countenance, then assuming a mournful expression). It would not be a kindness. Who, my father, In this wide glorious world is kindred to Anselmo? I will confess, I sometimes have indulged Half dreaming thoughts (O say not they are sinful!) Of the sweet hours of those, who, lapp'd in bliss, See brothers, sisters, offspring, clust'ring round, Loving and loved; then have I wept to think That I have none, and sadly felt convinced 'Tis for my happiness that I am here.

Sup. True, my Anselmo, 'tis a dreary world, And still more dreary when we've nought to cling to, But say, if thou hadst found a doting mother, One that was nobly born and rich, who hail'd In thee the foundling heir to large estates, What then?

Ans. (starts, and after a pause). I cannot say—my thoughts ne'er stray'd so far. Father, you oft the dangers have set forth Of dreaming fancies which may lead astray; Yet do you try to tempt me, by supposing that Which shakes my firmness, yet can never be.

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Sup. We are but mortal. I did wish to know Thy secret thoughts, and thou withhold'st them still. At night come to me, then shalt thou confess, For I would learn the workings of thy soul.

Ans. First let me strive to calm my troubled mind: I will confess to-morrow.

Sup. Then, be it so. [*Exit Superior.*]

Ans. 'Tis strange. He ne'er before essay'd me thus. A doting mother, wealthy too, and noble! O! if 'twere true, and I could gain my freedom! But these are very dreamings. Hold, my brain! For he has conjured up a vision wild, And beautiful as wild! Wealth, ancestry, A mother's love! But what are these to thee, Thou monk Anselmo? go—go and hang thy head Within the cowl, droop'd humbly on thy breast— For know, thou art a monk, and vow'd to Heav'n! Oh parents stern! to fling me thus on fate! But vows more stern that thus debar me from The common rights of man! Why were we made With passions strong, that even Nature laughs When we would fain control them? Lone to live And die are rebel acts, to Heav'n unpleasing. Say I were humbly born of peasant race, I should have glided on the silent brook; Or highly bred and nobly father'd, Dash'd proudly like the rapid flowing river. But in these confines against Nature pent, I must remain a stagnant torpid lake; Or else marking my wild course with ruin, Till my force is spent and all is over, Burst forth a mad, ungovernable torrent.

Enter Jacobo.

Jac. What Anselmo! not outside the convent gates, and service over this half hour! By St Dominic, it is as I expected—thou hast fallen in with the Superior, and hast been ordered home with penance.

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Ans. Not so, Jacobo. The Superior and I roll on in different orbits. Saturn and Venus are as like to jostle as we upon our travels.

Jac. Well, I've an idea that there's something wrong, and my news will not be very agreeable to you: the key is, in future, to be delivered to the Superior at nine o'clock, and, if required, it must be sent for.

Ans. Indeed! then he must suspect that we are not so regular. Still, I must out to-night, Jacobo—I

must indeed!

Jac. Impossible!

Ans. (*giving him money*). I must, Jacobo. Here's for thy wine, much watching needs it.

Jac. The Superior calls me, brother; I only wish there was brotherhood in our drinking. The noble juice which mantles in his cup would cheer me in my vigils.

Ans. And that will purchase it. I must be out to-night. Let the Superior have the key, but do not lock the door. You understand, Jacobo?

Jac. I do; but there's danger in it. Holy Virgin! the Superior comes this way. Anselmo, you had better to your cell.

Ans. I detest it. Now must I play the hypocrite.

Enter Superior followed by Jacobo.

Sup. (*observing Anselmo*). Thou here, my son! I thought thee at thy cell.

Ans. I wish'd to seek it; but till vesper chimes
I must employ in teaching melody;
But that the coffers of our holy church
Receive the thrift, my mind were ill at ease
Thus mixing with the world; for holy vigils
Are better suited to my early years.
(*Kneeling.*) O bless, my father, my untoward youth
And teach my thoughts to find the path to Heav'n.

Sup. (*bending over Anselmo*).

Bless thee, my child, may thy young heart
Turn now to Heav'n, as Samuel's did of old!
May holy thoughts pervade thy youthful mind!
May holy dreams enrich thy peaceful sleep!
May heavenly choristers descend in visions,
And point thee out the joys awaiting those
Who dedicate on earth their lives to Heav'n.

[*Exit Superior, after blessing Anselmo.—Anselmo, still kneeling, watches the departure of the Superior.*]

Ans. (*rising.*) He's safe.

Jac. Hah, hah! do you edify?

Ans. Peace, peace, Jacobo! 'Tis time that I were gone.

Jac. You will return before the door is lock'd?

Ans. Because you will not lock it. I shall be home at midnight: it must be so, Jacobo. If not, expect no further gifts from me; and what is more, a full confession of the many times you have been bribed to secrecy. [*Exit Anselmo.*]

Jac. Why, what a penance if this should be discovered! They know how much I love my wine, and always punish me with water. I should have to drink the Guadalquiver dry before the Superior would give me absolution. Well, we all have our besetting sin; and a pot of good wine will put my soul in more jeopardy than all the temptations that the world contains. I suppose I must forget to lock the door. I'll only bolt it; that will satisfy my conscience as a porter. [*Exit Jacobo.*]

Scene II.

Street before Don Gaspar's lodgings.—Enter Antonio.

Ant. I wonder where my master is! I expected him sooner. He may be in his chamber, but 'tis impossible to say. Why, here comes Beppa, and that knave Garcias with her. I've often thought they are too intimate; I will retire and watch them.

Enter Beppa, followed by Garcias.—Antonio advances behind.

Bep. But, Garcias, is this true?

Gar. It is, upon my faith! Sancho revealed it in his cups. Don Perez, afraid to encounter with Don Gaspar, has hired bravos to dispatch him.

Bep. I rejoice at it. A wretch like him deserves no better fate, and my poor mistress will be well revenged. Indeed, his servant is no better.

Gar. What! your dear husband?

Bep. My scoundrel husband! Unhappy day I married him! It was but yesterday that I found him

kissing another.

Gar. Indeed!—You can revenge yourself.

Bep. I almost wish I could.

Gar. (*kissing her hand*). Then kiss again.

Bep. Pshaw! that's but poor revenge.

Gar. I'll join the bravos, and strike him down, if you will marry me.

Bep. Not so, good sir: it were indeed to make a better choice, to take a murderer in second wedlock. I ask but to be free; and leave the time to Heaven.

Gar. Then fare ye well. [*Exit Garcias.*]

Ant. A very pretty proposal, and a very pretty plot have I discovered! yet will I conceal my knowledge. (*Shows himself.*) Good day, again, my Beppa! Who is that friend of yours? (*smacking lips in imitation of kissing*).

Bep. (*after a pause*). Well, good husband, how could I help it?

Ant. How could you help it!

Bep. My mistress ordered me.

Ant. Oh, I understand!

Bep. Yes, only a little by-play, you know.

Ant. Or else you must quit your service. Pray who is the gentleman to whom your mistress is making love?

Bep. That's a secret.

Ant. Of course she gave you ten moidores for me.

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Bep. Really I don't remember.

Ant. Indeed! why, thou—thou—

Bep. Good morning. I must to my mistress. Adieu, Antonio. [*Exit Beppa.*]

Ant. Well; I like thee better than usual. Thou hast refused him for me, and would not have him murder me; that's something in a wife now-a-days. I have obtained a key which fits my master's door; and now I feel assured he'll not come back, I'll find his secret out. I must be quick. Suppose he should be there. Impossible! he would have summoned me. At all events I'll risk it. [*Exit Antonio.*]

Scene III.

Interior of Don Gaspar's room.—Enter Antonio.

Ant. Pugh! what a heat I'm in! I really tremble with delight or fear—I can't tell which. If he should come, what shall I say? Oh, the news I gained from Beppa. That will do. (*Looking round.*) Well, I see nothing after all. Why should he keep his chamber locked? But, then, there's that chest; let me try—locked fast;—nothing to be gained from that. Still, he comes in by some other way than the door, that's clear; we must have a search for a trap door. (*He looks round, and then under the bed. While he is on his knees, feeling the boards, Don Gaspar enters by the secret sliding panel, and observing him, draws his sword, and, as Antonio rises, he points it to his breast.*)

Gasp. Villain! how cam'st thou hither?

Ant. (*much alarmed*). Sir, sir, I came—came (*recovers himself*)—I came to save your life, unless it please you to take mine before I can speak to you.

Gasp. To save my life!

Ant. Yes, sir; I knew not where to find you; I thought you might be here, and so I forced the lock with a rusty key. I meant to say, that I knew you had another way out from your chamber, and I have been looking for it, that I might hasten to you, to save your life.

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Gasp. Well, sirrah, first prove to me that you *can* save my life, and then, perhaps, I may overlook this impertinent intrusion.

Ant. Sir, I overheard a conversation between the valet of Don Felix and a woman, in which they stated that bravos were hired by Don Perez to waylay and murder you, Don Perez not caring to meet you with his sword. This night they wait for you.

Gasp. Is Don Perez then so basely treacherous?

Ant. Indeed he is, sir! You must not out to-night.

Gasp. I must, and fear them not. For this I overlook your prying—nay, more, I will in confidence

explain the secret of this chamber; but, mark you! keep it, or I shall soil my rapier with thy knavish blood. This private entrance hath much served me (*showing the sliding panel*).

Ant. May I be so bold as to ask how?

Gasp. It oft has saved my life. It is about a year since, and about three months before you entered my service, that I gained the love of one named Julia; she was too fond, and urged me to marry her, which I refused. Her brothers, who were at home at the time, wrested from her the cause of those tears which she could not control. I met them both, and with ease disarmed them; I did not wish to slay them, I had already done them injury. These officers, who were more annoyed by my conquest than even their sister's shame, hired bravos, as Perez now has done, who sought to murder me. Each night that I went home I found them near my door: twice I fought an entrance to my own house; a friend, who was aware of the inveteracy of those who toiled to procure my assassination, hired me this chamber. For months they watched the door with disappointment, until the brothers being recalled to join their troops in Murcia, the bravos ceased their persecutions.

Ant. How did you escape them in the city, senor?

Gasp. In daylight I was safe; at night I wore the garb of a holy monk, that lies upon that chair. You'll keep my secret?

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Ant. Yes, sir, when I know it.

Gasp. Have I not told it you?

Ant. You have told me that at times you are a monk, and at times a cavalier. Which is the real character, him of the rosary, or him of the rapier?

Gasp. (*aside*). The knave is deep. (*Aloud*.) I am a monk but when it suits me.

Ant. But, sir, is there not danger in thus assuming a holy character, if it were known—the Inquisition?

Gasp. I grant it: but we do many things which, if known, would subject us to something unpleasant. I serve two mistresses; but, should I marry them both—

Ant. (*starting back*). Then would you to the galleys, at east.

Gasp. Exactly so. I merely put the case, for I was told by Donna Isadora's maid, you are her husband; and this I also know, from your own mouth, you are married to Beppa.

Ant. There's some mistake, sir; for Nina is married to one whose name is Lopez. I cannot, sure, be he!

Gasp. If I can be both monk and cavalier, as you assert, why may not you be Lopez and Antonio? A name is changed as easily as a garment. But in your face I read conviction; I'm certain you have two wives!

Ant. It must be as you please, sir. Perhaps I may have confessed as much to you as a holy monk.

Gasp. (*Laughs*.) When did you ever meet me in a church?

Ant. I do not say I have, sir; but then your knowledge is so certain.

Gasp. Suppose, then, that I know your secrets, thou wilt surely not reveal mine. There's for thine intelligence. (*Throws him a purse*.)

Ant. May Heaven preserve my gracious master!

Gasp. This night must I to Donna Serafina's.

Ant. Will you, then, venture forth?

Gasp. Yes, I'll robe myself as holy monk. They dare not strike, even though they have suspicion. You may go. I shall not return to-night. [*Exit Antonio*].

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Scoundrel!—he is too cunning to believe me—

Yet still I have the secret of his wives.

(*Muses*.) This night I have discover'd the base Perez

Again essays his most inconstant fair,

Blind as inconstant. She rejected me

When, as Friar Anselmo teaching music,

I offer'd her—'tis true, unholy love;

And I by Perez was thrust out with shame,

Spurn'd with contumely as the door was closed,

With threats if ever I appear'd again,

To blazon forth my impious attempt, and—

Yet did she cozen me with melting eyes,

And first roused up the demon in my breast,

Then laugh'd in malice.—I hate her for it!

Now as Don Gaspar, I've supplanted him,

Pride and revenge, not love, impelling me;

These gratified, I would shake off a chain
Which now, in amorous violence, she'd rivet.
Further, Don Perez, in his jealous mood,
Has as Don Gaspar braved me. They shall find,
I hold life cheap when I would have revenge!
[Exit.]

Scene IV.

A garden near the house of Donna Serafina, which is in the back of the scene.—A balcony.—Enter Gaspar in a friar's dress, over that of a cavalier.

I pass'd them, and they bow'd unto my blessing.
Why, what a world of treachery is this!
Who would imagine that this holy robe,
Professing but humility and love,
Conceal'd the cavalier, swelling in pride,
Seeking revenge, and thirsting for hot blood?
Off with this first disguise! (*Throws off friar's gown.*)

What then appears?

A fair proportion, more deceiving still.
—In holy garb I fret within my cell,
Sigh for the joyous world I have renounced,
And spurn the creed which hath immured me there.
When like the chrysalis I 'scape my prison,
And range a free and garish butterfly,
I find the world so hollow, base, and vile,
That, in my mood, I hasten back once more,
With thoughts of never wand'ring forth again,
But, see,—Don Perez comes. I will retire.

[*Gaspar withdraws.*]

Enter Perez.

Perez. Fool that I am! like some robb'd bird to hover
About the nest that's void. Her heart's not mine.
'Tis now three moons that I have sued in vain;
Her casement closed by night, her door by day.
O woman, woman! thy mysterious power
Chains the whole world, and men are nought but slaves
Unto the potent talisman—
If man prove false and treach'rous, he is spurn'd,
Contemn'd, and punish'd with resentment just.
To woman faithless still we kneel and sue,
For that return our reason holds as worthless.
Well! this shall be my last—for, by yon moon,
So oft a witness to my fervent vows,
So true an emblem of inconstant beauty,
This night I woo her back, or woo no more.

[*Retires; sings to his guitar, unseen; or beckons on chorus.*]

Ere lady that you close in sleep
Those eyes that I would die to view,
Think, think on mine that watch and weep,
And on my heart that breaks for you!

The sun does not disdain to turn,
And on the meanest weed to shine,
That scorch'd up dies, and seems to burn
With love, as hopelessly as mine.

One look—one word—hear, hear my call!
O cruel! can you still deny
One look,—though it in scorn should fall?
One word,—although it bid me die?

Perez, coming forward, looking up at the window after pause.

She will not hear, nor bless me with her sight!

Enter Gaspar in cavalier's dress.

Gasp. Well met, Don Perez. Thus I keep my word.
And "when you least do wish it," I am here.

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Was it well done to send out hired stiletos
When you had challenged me to measure swords?

Perez (aside). The scoundrels then have miss'd him!
(*Aloud.*) Know, Don Gaspar,
I do not deem thee worthy of my steel.
But, as we meet—'tis well—defend thyself! (*Draws.*)

Gasp. Defend *thyself*, Don Perez! Thy best might
And skill befriend thee,—else thy life is nought!
(*They fight round. Don Perez falls.*)

Perez. I'm slain! Don Gaspar, or whoe'er thou art,
If thou have Christian charity, seek out
Some holy man. (*Gaspar retires.*) He's gone!

[*Gaspar, with friar's gown and hood on, returns to Don Perez.*]

Gasp. Look up, Don Perez! Knowest thou this form?
Thou dost require some holy man to shrive thee,
Ere thou pass away.—Don Perez, answer!
Know'st thou this form,—these features?

Perez. Thou art the Friar Anselmo. I have wrong'd thee,
And ask forgiveness. O then pardon me!
And, as thou hop'st t' enjoy eternal life,
Feel no resentment 'gainst a dying man!
(*Faintly.*) Shrive me, good father, for I'm sinking fast.
Yon stream of blood will not creep on its course
Another foot, ere I shall be no more.

Gasp. Thou saw'st Anselmo. Now raise up thine eyes,
(*Throws off his disguise.*)
And see Don Gaspar! who has just reveng'd
The wrongs inflicted on the spurn'd at monk.

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Perez. Whoe'er thou art, mysterious, awful being!
At least be satisfied with thy revenge.
If thou art holy, shrive me!

Gasp. I am a monk, and yet not holy (*putting on gown,
and folding his arms*).

Perez. If thou art a monk by vows, thou'rt holy.
'Tis not my blood that's now upon thy hand,
And shall hereafter be upon thy soul,
Which makes thee less so: thou'rt but an instrument.
I pray thee, shrive me, that my guilty soul
May quit in peace this tenement of clay.

Gasp. Does he not speak the truth? Tell me, my heart,
I think—I feel—I can forgive him now!

[*Gaspar takes out his crucifix, returns to Don Perez,
and, kneeling, presents it to him. Perez kisses
the crucifix, and falls back dead. Gaspar remains
hanging over him.*]

Don Felix (without). What hoa!

Enter Don Felix with servants bearing torches.

Gasp. (still kneeling by the body). Who calls?

Felix. We seek Don Perez, who this way did bend
His steps some hours ago; and not returning
At th' appointed time, we fear some mischief
Hath befallen him.

Gasp. Behold then here the body of some gallant,
Whose face I know not. As I pass'd this way
I heard the clash of high and fierce contention,
And when I came, this most unhappy man
Lay breathing here his last. I shrived him,
And he since has died.

Felix. It is Don Perez. Holy father, saw you
The other party in the contest?

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Gasp. Save that a manly figure flitted by,
And vanish'd in the shadow of yon trees.

Felix. Raise up the corpse, and bear it to my house.
This bloody work, Don Gaspar, must be thine!
Perez, thou hear'st me not! but, by this sword,
I will revenge thy death!

[*Exit Don Felix and servants carrying body.*]

Gasp. Thus far have I escaped suspicion—
Now will I to the monastery.

[*Casement opens, and Donna Serafina appears at window.*]

Ser. Who's there?

Gasp. (aside). I had forgotten her.

Ser. Who's there?

Gasp. A father of the neighbouring monastery,
Attracted hither by the clash of swords,
And but in time to shrive a dying man.

Ser. Good father, didst thou hear the names of those
Who were engaged?

Gasp. Not of the murderer, who has escaped.
The one whose body has been borne away,
Was call'd—Don Gaspar.

Ser. Don Gaspar! Father, surely thou mistak'st?
It was the other cavalier who fell.

Gasp. The words of dying men are those of truth;
He call'd himself Don Gaspar, and he begg'd
I would take off his scarf, and, with his love,
Bear it to Donna Serafina.

Ser. Then it is true—and I am lost for ever!
Father, recall those words, those dreadful words!
Say 'twas not Don Gaspar, and I'll load
Thy monastery with the wealth of India.
Its shrines shall blaze with gold and precious gems,
And holy relics shall be purchased thee,
To draw all faithful Christians to thy gates!

Gasp. I cannot change the name, and, if I could,
'Twere no less a murder. Lady, good-night.

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Ser. Good father, stop—thou hast a scarf
For Donna Serafina. I am she—
Where is it? give it me.

Gasp. Are you that woe-struck lady, Serafina?
Alas! indeed you have much cause to grieve.
He loved you well.

Ser. Give me the scarf.

Gasp. I cannot, lady; 'tis not fit to offer,
For it is tinged with blood.

Ser. Give me the scarf! I'll kiss away the blood,
Or wash it off with tears!

Gasp. That I cannot, the casement is too high;
Nor can I tarry longer. The last message,
Together with the scarf, I will deliver
Before to-morrow's sun shall gild these trees.

Ser. Then be it so. O Gaspar! Gaspar!
[Exit from window, and closes it.]

Gasp. One hour of misery, like hers, exceeds
An age of common earthly suffering;
And when at last she hears the unvarnish'd truth,
'Twill but perplex her more. Oh destiny!
Why am I thus a blood-stain'd guilty man
In early years? still yearning towards virtue,
Yet ever falling in the snares of vice!
Now do I loathe the amorous Serafina,
Who sacrifices all—her fame—her honour,
At Passion's shrine. How do I adore
The chaste, the innocent, sweet Isidora!
Yet in my love, so ardent and so pure,
There's guilt—deep damning guilt—and more,
There's cruelty and baseness! I plant a dagger
In the fond breast that cherishes the wound;
Nor will she feel the pain until withdrawn,
And happiness—nay, life—will issue with it.
How inconsistent, selfish, treacherous!
Heav'n pardon me—how can I pardon ask
For that I never can forgive myself! [Exit Gaspar.]

Act IV. Scene I.

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Street before Anselmo's lodgings.

Enter Antonio.

Ant. At last I have his secret, and one of moment too. A monk, and yet a cavalier! A friar's gown and a gala suit! vowing to heaven and vowing to the ladies! Abjuring the world, and roaming through it with a vengeance! Telling his beads, and telling me lies! But I am not so easily to be deceived. I thought very often that there was a similarity of voice between his and my confessor's, but when I saw the friar's gown, and he accused me of having two wives, it all flashed upon me at once. A pretty fool has he made of me! No wonder that he knew my rogueries when I confessed them to him. What's the having two wives to this? Mine is a paltry secret of a poor lacquey, but his is one which will obtain a price, and it is well to be first in the market. Whom shall I sell it to? let me see—Don Felix—?

Enter Beppa.

Bep. What of Don Felix, husband? Do you wish to serve him?

Ant. Yes, if he'll pay me well.

Bep. I presume Don Gaspar has not paid you: then must you help yourself.

Ant. Why so I do, whenever I can. But he takes care of that.

Bep. He might have done, but hardly will do so now.

Ant. Why not?

Bep. Because he's dead.

Ant. Dead! Are you sure of that?

Bep. Quite sure, for I myself beheld the contest. Such fierce exchange of hate I ne'er imagined, or that you men were such incarnate devils.

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Ant. Pray tell me where this happened.

Bep. 'Twas in the garden near our house, under the chestnut trees, deep in the shade. The full moon could not pierce the closely woven foliage. All her beams were caught on the topmost boughs which waved in silver. A lovely night to stain with murder! Oh me! I see them now.

Ant. Proceed, good Beppa, I'm eager to know all.

Bep. Their forms were not distinct, yet could we perceive their gleaming swords darting like fiery serpents; 'twas horrible. At last one fell; it proved to be Don Gaspar.

Ant. Indeed! you're sure there's no mistake?

Bep. I saw the body borne away. My mistress weeps and tears her hair, nor deems that he was false. I must to the church, but will return again immediately. [Exit.]

Ant. Now could I weep, and tear my hair, like Donna Serafina. My secret is worth nothing. 'Tis strange, too, that he should be o'ermatched by Don Perez, whose sword he so despised; I cannot

yet believe it; and yet, she saw the body, and her mistress weeps. What can she gain by this, if 'twere deceit? Nothing. Why, then, 'tis plain Don Gaspar's dead. His foot slipped, I suppose, and thus the vaunted skill of years will often fail through accident. What's to be done now? I'm executor of course. Here comes Don Felix.

Enter Don Felix.

Felix. Art thou the lacquey of Don Gaspar?

Ant. (*pulling out his handkerchief, and putting it to his eyes*). I was, most noble sir.

Felix. You've left him then?

Ant. He hath left me. Last night he fell, in combat with Don Perez.

Felix. 'Tis false. He hath slain my friend, whose body now lies in my house.

Ant. Indeed, sir! may I credit this?

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Felix. I tell you it is true. Where can a message find your master?

Ant. Wherever he may be, sir.

Felix. And where is that? Trifle not with me, knave, or you'll repent it sorely.

Ant. I do not trifle, sir. Don Gaspar's motions are unknown to me. Give me your message; when he re-appears I will deliver it.

Felix. Then tell him he's a villain of no parentage; a vile impostor whom I mean to punish;—that if there's manhood in him he will appoint a time and place where we may meet.

Ant. You seek his life then?

Felix. You may so construe by the message.

Ant. Pardon me, sir; but will you risk your noble person against one but too well practised in the sword? Excuse me, sir, you're hasty: there are other means more fitting for your purpose. I have his secret; one that will administer to your revenge, and win a triumph far greater than your sword.

Felix. Tell me this secret.

Ant. Why should I sacrifice a liberal master, whom, just now, you saw me weep for? and that to one to whom I have no obligation?

Felix. I understand thee, knave! Thou'lt sell it me? (*Takes out a purse.*)

Ant. Softly, Don Felix! it bears no common price, nor can I tell it here. I've paid most dearly for it, and from distress alone am now obliged to sell it.

Felix. And I will buy it dearly. In half an hour come to my house; there will I exchange a heavy purse for what you may confide to me, if, as you say, it leads to his perdition. [*Exit Felix.*]

Ant. So, this works well; and yet my conscience smites me! Why does it smite me? Because 'tis heavily laden. With what? This secret. Then must I unburthen myself of it; and as, till lately, I have confessed to one Don Gaspar, I will now confess to one Don Felix. The former refused me absolution—the latter offers me a purse. I was right when I gave warning to my old confessor; the new one is more suited to me. Here come my ten plagues of Egypt in one.

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Enter Beppa.

Bep. Well, Antonio, you have lost no time, I hope. What have you collected? You often quote the proverb, "Service is no inheritance."

Ant. Service *is* no inheritance; yet you would that I constituted myself my master's heir. I cannot do it, Beppa—I dare not! There's something tells me it is wrong to rob so good a master; I am more honest than you take me to be.

Bep. Then is the devil turned saint! Think not that you deceive me. There's nought but cowardice that will prevent your knavery. Now tell me, how long have you been thus scrupulous?

Ant. Ever since I found out that my master was not dead.

Bep. Not dead?

Ant. Don Perez 'twas who fell.

Bep. A holy friar who shrived the dying man told me the name of him who fell was Gaspar.

Ant. He was a holy friar, said you? I see it all (*aside*).

Bep. He said he had a scarf to give to Donna Serafina, at the request of him who died.

Ant. Hath he delivered it?

Bep. No; and Donna Serafina in frantic grief awaits his coming.

Ant. (aside). She'll wait till doomsday; I understand it all. (*Aloud.*) Beppa! Don Gaspar now will soon be here; go and console your mistress.

Bep. Then it must have been a plan of Don Gaspar's to rid himself of my mistress. I do not understand it, but believe you *do*. When master and man are so much alike, they cannot deceive each other. I'll to Donna Serafina, and tell her of this base stratagem, which, with his wooing of another, will make her cease to grieve for the treacherous villain, and turn her ardent love to deadly hate. [*Exit Beppa.*]

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Ant. As I have mine for you, I was about to say; only I do not recollect that I ever loved you. I think I married her to keep myself from starving; but I forget why exactly, 'tis so long ago. What a fool is a man who marries—but a double fool is he who, like me, am doubly—I can't bear to mention it. [*Exit Antonio.*]

Scene II.

Donna Serafina's Chamber.—Donna Serafina discovered.

Ser. They tell me I am fair: yet what avails
This gift of nature?
Could those who envy me but see my heart—
My bleeding, lacerated, breaking heart!
How would their bitter nature change to pity!
I did require but him in this wide world;
My beauty valued, but to gain his love!
My wealth rejoiced in, but to share with him!
He was my all! and every other 'vantage
Was but of value as subservient to him.
As is the gold of costly workmanship
Round the fair gem imbedded in the centre.
Oh! Gaspar, were I sure I could o'ertake
Thy spirit, soaring up in its young flight,
This little steel should free my anxious soul,
To join thine in the high empyrean,
And, fondly link'd, in joy ascend to Heaven.
Why waits the friar? Some idle mummery,
To him more sacred than my Gaspar's relic,
From his dull memory hath chased his promise.
Why waits my woman, whom I have despatch'd
To learn the history of my Gaspar's death?
Alas! alas! they know not love.

Enter Beppa.

Bep. Madam, I've news for you; but news so strange
That I can scarce impart it. Dry your tears,
Nor more lament Don Gaspar,—for he lives!

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Ser. He lives? say that again! You said he lived—
Did you not, Beppa? Then may Heav'n reward you
For those blissful words!—He lives!—support me—
(*Faints in Beppa's arms.*)

Bep. I should have first inform'd her he was false.
Now will the shock be greater.—Dear lady—(*Serafina
recovering gradually.*)

Ser. (faintly). Now do I feel like some poor criminal,
Who, having closed his eyes, to look no more
Upon the world he is about to leave,
With curdling blood, and faint and flutt'ring pulse,
Waits for the last terrific moment
When the sharp axe shall free his trembling soul.
So wakes he at the distant shouts of men,
Rolling the waves of sound until they dash
Against his worn-out sense the glad reprieve.
Don Gaspar lives! Oh Heav'n, I thank thee!

Bep. At the cup's brim the sweets have kiss'd your lips.
But, madam, like some weak, distemper'd child,
You've yet to taste the nauseous dreaded draught
Which is to cure you.

Ser. What mean you? Cure me!

Bep. 'Tis true Don Gaspar lives—as true he's false.

Ser. False! Beppa—false?

Bep. Most false and treacherous!
He loves another.

Ser. (*after a pause*). Did I hear rightly?
Impossible! It was but three days gone,
He swore such oaths, if true, as Heav'n would register—
Should they prove false, as hell might chuckle at.

Bep. And yet it is so, I am most assured.

Ser. If it be true, then everything is false.
It cannot, cannot be. Have I not lavish'd
All I could bestow, myself and mine,
Rejected all, to live within his arms,
To breathe one breath with him, and dwell in ecstasy
Upon his words. Oh no! he is not false
You must belie him.

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Bep. Nay, I would I did:
I wonder not your dotting heart rejects
Such monstrous treachery. Yet it is true,
And true as curs'd. The Donna Isidora
By her charms has won him; and his feign'd death
Was but a stratagem to shake you off.
As you last night asserted, Perez fell;
Don Felix, swearing vengeance, seeks Don Gaspar.

Ser. (*after a pause*). Who is this Isidora?

Bep. A lovely creature in her early bloom,
The noble blood of Guzman in her veins,
A rival worthy of your beauty, madam,
And therefore one most dangerous.

Ser. Would that I had her here. My heart is now
So full of anger, malice, and fierce hate,
With all those direful and envenom'd passions
By which the breasts of demons are infected;
If I but even look'd upon her face,
My scorching breath would wither up her charms
Like adder's poison. Would I had her here!

Bep. Yet blame her not. She's good and beautiful:
Report doth much commend her early worth
And ever active charity.

Ser. Were she not so, I yet might have retain'd
My truant love. Each virtue that she hath
With me's a vice—each charm, deformity.
They are my foes, array'd against my power,
And I must hate them, as they've vanquish'd me.

Bep. But *my* hate should fall on Gaspar, lady.

Ser. That's not so easy; the strong tide of love,
Though check'd, still flows against the adverse hate.
In their opposing strife, my troubled breast
Heaves as the elements in wild commotion.

Bep. It must not last. I've much to tell you yet
Of this base man. When you have heard it all,
A rapid flood of rage shall sweep its course,
Lash'd by the storm raised in your much-wrong'd soul,
O'erwhelming all remorse, to Gaspar's ruin.

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Ser. Direct me, Heav'n! Come to my chamber, Beppa,
I must unrobe me. When my swollen heart
Can throb more freely, I will hear your tale.
Come on, good Beppa. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.

Street in Seville.

Enter Antonio.

Ant. This is a strange world! What a simpleton is this Don Felix! First he buys my secret at a heavy price, and then, after two minutes' deliberation, declares that he will make no use of it, but that I must deliver the message that he gave me. I've no objection. I like to see my betters dismiss each other to the next world;—the more room for those who remain behind, and poor rogues like me are not so much jostled. This world is certainly much too full for comfort. Ah! here comes one that stands a chance of going out of it.

Enter Don Gaspar.

Gasp. Antonio, I must for a time remain concealed. Don Perez is no more, and in this friar's gown, which I put on to elude the bravos, I have convinced the Donna Serafina of my death. Thus do I rid myself of her unwelcome love. Remember, should you meet your wife, I don't know which of them, you will keep my secret. You will remain here in charge till I return.

Ant. Most certainly, sir. But I had almost forgotten; I have a message which may interfere with your departure.

Gasp. From whom?

Ant. Don Felix, sir. The friend of him you slew last night.

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Gasp. Well, what is this message?

Ant. One, sir, that will demand a life—or yours or his. It is so coarsely worded that I dare not give it. It will too much provoke you.

Gasp. Give it me straight, and let me have it word for word.

Ant. He told me first, sir, that you were—a villain.

Gasp. (catching Antonio by the throat). How, sirrah?

Ant. It was not I who said so—'twas Don Felix.

Gasp. True. I was hasty. Now proceed.

Ant. A villain—of no parentage.

Gasp. What? scoundrel!

Ant. I have said too much, sir.—You'll excuse the rest.

Gasp. (much irritated). No, no, no—go on; leave out a word and I will murder you.

Ant. (aside). Then I stand a bad chance either way, not so amusing as I thought. (*Aloud.*) He did say something else, but 'twas of no moment—

Gasp. (putting his hand to his sword). Your message, to the letter.

Ant. A vile impostor.

Gasp. (striking him). How?

Ant. Oh, mercy, sir! you take me for Don Felix.

Gasp. I am wrong. (*Throws his purse to Antonio.*) You said a villain—of no parentage—a vile impostor—ha! was there any more?

Ant. Yes, sir; and which I think I may deliver without farther danger to myself. He added, "If there's manhood in him, he will appoint a time and place, when and where I may meet him."

Gasp. I ask no better. Tell him, this evening, at the copse of trees where Perez fell, he may expect me. Take my answer straight.

Ant. Shall I go now?

Gasp. Yes; fly to his house. Tell him from me—no, no—tell him no more than I have said already, I'll wait for your return. Haste, haste. [*Exit Antonio.*]

A villain of no parentage!—Impostor!
A vile impostor!—He but states the truth,
Yet will I crush him, that he hath stumbled
On that truth. Yes! of no parentage!—Why—
Why is this constant pining of the heart,
As if it felt itself defrauded still
Of rights inherent? If I'm basely born
Why do I spurn the common herd of men?
The eaglet that regains its liberty,
Soars to the sun at once—it is its nature:

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While meaner birds would hop from spray to spray.
Oh! would I had ne'er been born.—
To-morrow I intend to leave for ever
Her whom I love—the sacred walls I hate,
In some far distant land to die unheeded.
My Isidora has desired my presence,
And strange, admits me in the open day.
Within an hour of this she will receive me,
Then must I falter out my last adieu.
This evening also I must meet Don Felix.—

Re-enter Antonio.

So soon return'd! Hast thou then seen him?

Ant. I have, sir; I met him as I gained the door, and your message was duly delivered. He answered, that *he* would not fail, and that he trusted his *sword* would not fail either.

Gasp. Should his sword fail, I must not return for many days; should it not *fail*, I return no more.

But having balanced thus my brief account
Of love and hate, I'll quit fair Spain for ever. [*Exit.*]

Ant. (taking out a purse). This purse is a heavy one, but not so heavy as the one I received from Don Felix. I hardly dared deliver the message, but there's seldom profit without danger. I will say this for my master, that he knows the salve for every wound. Let me see—one purse for my intelligence, or rather for keeping my master's secret, and another from Don Felix for betraying it—and a third for a blow. Ah! here comes Beppa. (*Puts up purse hastily.*)

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Enter Beppa.

Bep. What's that you've put into your pocket?

Ant. Only an empty purse.

Bep. It appeared to me well filled.

Ant. Appearances are very deceitful. How is your mistress?

Bep. Alas! she has watched all night—now the tears pouring down her cheeks, whilst heavy sobs hindered all utterance, and then would she turn to rage, and pace her chamber with frantic gestures. Oh! what a wretch is this Don Gaspar!

Ant. He fights this evening.

Bep. With whom?

Ant. Don Felix—a better match for him than Perez.

Bep. They say the former's skilled in fence. Heaven grant his sword may prove the master! Where do they meet?

Ant. Nay, that's a secret.

Bep. Tell me, Antonio. Should Don Felix not prevail, a woman's vengeance yet may reach Don Gaspar. Antonio, do tell me where they meet.

Ant. It is a secret.

Bep. But I must know. There is nothing I would not give to win this secret from you. Antonio, you must tell me.

Ant. That I cannot, I made a promise. (*Puts his hand to his heart.*)

Bep. (scornfully). You made a promise. I know your promises too well. What will you sell this secret for?

Ant. My purse of ten moidores!

Bep. Then you shall have it. But will you tell it truly?

Ant. Honour! when I have the money.

Bep. (Takes out purse and throws it at him.) Then, there it is. I believe that you will keep a roguish contract, although no other.

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Ant. You're right. They meet at sunset under the copse of trees where Perez fell.

Bep. The copse of trees where Perez fell! Does he not fear his ghost? No, he fears nothing. Breaking the hearts of women, and piercing those of men, is all the same to this fell Gaspar. Well, I have bought your secret, and will make good use of it.

Ant. Had you not known that it was a marketable commodity, you never had purchased it. You'll turn a penny, never fear. I must unto my master's lodgings. [*Exit.*]

Bep. Yes, to follow thy old trade of pilfering. I must unto my lady, and bear her this intelligence.

Thus will I rouse the woman in her, and urge her to revenge. [*Exit.*]

Scene IV.

A Room in the Guzman Palace.

Enter Nina, ushering in Don Gaspar.

Stay here, senor. You'll not be long alone. [*Exit Nina.*]

Gasp. Thus am I hurried, by resistless love,
To follow that I never can obtain.
I love thee, Isidora, dote upon thee,
There's not a boiling drop within these veins
I'd not pour out, could it but make thee happy.
And yet I 'gainst my better reason plunge,
Dragging thee with me deep into perdition.
A monk, and marry! 'Tis impossible!
Each time I quit her, then do I resolve
Never to see her more; yet one hour's absence
Kills my resolution, and each moment
Seems an eternity, till in her presence
Vows I repeat, that vows alone make false.
'Tis not in human nature to withstand
Against such strong temptation,—
To fold her in my arms—inhale her breath,
Kiss tears away, neither of grief nor joy,
But from both fountains equally o'erflowing—
Oh! 'tis a bliss indeed, to gain which
Angels might leave their bright cerulean home,
And barter their eternal heaven of joy.

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Enter Donna Inez. Gaspar advances quickly to her, thinking it is Isidora, but finding his mistake stops abruptly, and bows to Donna Inez.

Inez. Don Gaspar—for 'tis so I hear you're styled—
Hither you came in ardent expectation
Of meeting one more suited to your age,
My beauteous niece, the Donna Isidora.
Now would I have some conference with one
Who by insidious means hath gain'd her heart,
Yet shrouds himself in mystery: she has placed
Her fortunes in my hands—she resigns her all,
To me confiding to unlock your secret.
When once you're manifest and fully known,
A task which must precede, senor, it will decide
Whether I join your hands and bless your union,
Or curse the fatal day she first beheld you!

Gasp. Madam, I thank you much, I'll speak directly.
But I'm so overcome with wretchedness,
Your kindness must bear with me.
You ask me who I am—a question fair,
As fairly answer'd now—I cannot tell.

Inez. Is it you know not, or you will not tell?

Gasp. I do not know—and therefore cannot tell—
Though from this hour I date my misery,
I am resign'd. You may dismiss me
With stern remonstrance at my daring love—
Yet it is better. I am of those forsaken—
Who have no parents—owing to the state
A nurture most unkind—a foundling child.

Inez. A foundling child? (*Aside.*) His voice—his presence—
And those words make my heart leap in agony.

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Gasp. Yes, and must live to curse the hearts of those
Unnatural parents, who could thus renounce me.
Love conquer'd shame, and brought me into being,
But in her turn shame triumph'd over love,
And I was left to destiny.—
The bloody tigress parts not with her young:—
Her cruel nature, never known to pity,
Is by maternal feeling changed to tenderness.

The eyes which fiercely gleam on all creation,
Beam softly, as she views her snarling cubs.
But cruel man, unruly passion sated,
Leaves to neglect the offspring of his guilt.
I have no more to say. Dismiss me now,
And when, henceforth, you rail at my presumption,
Consider the perfection that has caused it.
I oft have made the healthy resolution
To quit for ever her whom I adore.
Take my farewell to her—your lovely niece,
Although I'm friendless, she will pity me.

Inez. (aside). How strange it is
I feel not anger'd! Strange indeed, there is a pulse
Which makes me lean to his presumptuous love.

[Gaspar is going.]

(Aloud.) Yet stay awhile, for I would know your age?

Gasp. 'Twas at nine years I left the hospital,
And now have been for ten a wanderer.

Inez. (aside). The age exact. O Heav'n! let not these hopes
For ever springing, be for ever wither'd!
(Aloud.) Youth, have you any mark, should you be sought,
Might lend a clue to your discovery?

Gasp. I have; they who deserted me, if ever
Their intention to reclaim my person,
May safely challenge me among ten thousand.
(Baring his wrist.) 'Tis here—a ruby band upon my wrist.

*[Inez goes towards him, catches his hand, and gazes
on the wrist intently without speaking.]*

What can this mean? oh, speak, dear lady, speak!

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Inez. (throwing herself into his arms). My child, my child!

Gasp. I, I your child! almighty Heaven, I thank thee!
My heart is bursting in its wild emotion,
Till all be understood. Oh, speak again!

Inez. Thou art my son—he whom I've mourn'd so long,
So long have sought. Features thou hast, my boy,
Which in the memory of all save her,
Who fondly loved, long, long have pass'd away.

Gasp. Who was my father?

Inez. One of most ancient name, Don Felipo.

Gasp. Then I am noble?

Inez. And by each descent.

Gasp. Pardon me, lady, if I seem more eager
To know this fact, than render unto you
My love and duty.—From the world's scorn
I've suffer'd much; and my unbending pride
Would rather that my birth remain'd in doubt,
Than find a parentage which was obscure.
Now all is perfect, and to you I tender
(Kneeling) My truth and love, still in their infancy,
And therefore may they seem to you but feeble.
(Rises.) Yet blame me not: this sudden change of state
Hath left me so bewilder'd I scarce know
Myself, or what I feel; like to the eyes
Of one long plunged in gloom, on whom the sun,
At length admitted, pours at once a flood
Of glorious light—so are my senses dazzled.

Inez. And I am faint with gratitude and love.
Come in with me. Then shall you learn
The cruel cause that cast you out a foundling,
And I, the bounteous, blessed providence,

Act V. Scene I.

A chamber in the Guzman Palace.

Enter Donna Inez, meeting Superior.

Sup. Save thee, good lady! I have stolen an hour
From holy prayer, for which may I be pardon'd,
To weigh the merits of a mother's virtue
Against the errors of an impious son;
To put in counterpoise the deep disgrace,
The insult offer'd to our brotherhood,
With the atonement you would make to Heav'n.

Inez. And you are merciful!

Sup. Lady, there is nought
Which Heav'n detests so much as sacrilege;
'Tis the most damn'd of all the damning sins.
The fire of hell can purge away all crimes,
Howe'er atrocious, save this deed of death,
To life eternal, if not here atoned for
By a surrender of all earthly goods.

Inez. All, father!

Sup. All!

Inez. Father, this cannot be.
Surely there is
In our extensive wealth enough for both—
To satisfy the holy church, yet leave
Withal to grace his rank and dignity.

Sup. He that hath mock'd high Heav'n with sacrilege
Should live for nought except to make his peace.
Your son must straight renew his broken vows,
With tears and penance must wash out his sin—
His life, however long, too short to plead
For mercy and forgiveness, and his wealth,
However great, too small to make atonement.

Inez. Father, this cannot be.

Sup. It shall be so.

Inez. Then I'll appeal elsewhere. I'll to the king,
And tell him this sad story. The Guzmans
Have too well served him, not to gain his help
In this their need. If we must pay a price,
The bargain shall be made with Rome herself,
Who will be less exacting.

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Sup. (aside). I must not grasp too much, or I lose all.
(Aloud) Lady, I know your thoughts, and do not blame you.
You are divided, as frail mortals are
In this imperfect state, 'twixt heaven and earth,
Your holy wishes check'd by love maternal;
Now would I know the course that you would steer
Between the two. We can arrange this point.
The church is generous, and she oft resigns
That she might claim in justice. Tell me, lady,
What do you proffer?

Inez. There is a fair domain of great extent
Water'd by the Guadalquiver's wave,
Whose blushing harvests each returning autumn
Yield the best vintage in our favour'd land.
Six hamlets tenanted by peaceful swains,
And dark-eyed maidens, portion'd to the soil,
Foster its increase. The fairest part of Spain

Which Heav'n hath made, I render back to Heav'n.

Sup. I know the land, and will accept the gift:—
But to it must be added sums of gold
To pay for holy rites to be perform'd
For years, to purify our monastery
Which has been desecrated.

Inez. That will I give, and freely. Now, good father,
Remember, in exchange for these you promise
To pardon all, and to obtain from Rome
A dispensation to my truant child.

Sup. I do!

Inez. Father, I'll send him to you. You'll
Rebuke him, but not harshly, for his soul
Is with his new found prospects all on fire.

[*Exit Inez.*]

Sup. Now will our convent be the best endow'd
Of any in the land. This wild young hypocrite,
Who fears nor Heaven nor man, hath well assisted
My pious longing. More by the sins of men
Than their free gifts, our holy church doth prosper.

[*Enter Anselmo in cavalier's dress.*]

What do I see? One, that's in sanctity,
Who vow'd his service and his life to Heav'n,
In this attire. Heaven is most patient!

Ans. It is, good father, or this world of guilt
Had long been wither'd with the threaten'd fire.
My sins are monstrous, yet I am but one
Of many millions, erring as myself.
'Tis not for us to judge. He, who reads all
Our hearts, and knows how we've been tempted,
Alone can poise the even scale of justice.
If I'm to blame, good father, are not you?

Sup. How?

Ans. I had it from my mother, she reveal'd
To you her history, and did make known
The mark by which I might be recognised—
That mark, so oft the theme of idle wonder
In the convent. Before I took my vows
You therefore must have known my station,
The rank I held by birthright, and the name
Which I inherited. Why did you press me then
To take those vows? It was a rank injustice.

Sup. (aside). He argues boldly. (*Aloud*) 'Twere as well to say,
It were unjust to help you unto Heav'n—
I put you in the right path.

Ans. One too slippery. Father, I've stumbled.

Sup. You have. But that your fond and virtuous mother
Stretch'd forth her hand to save you, it had been
To your perdition.

Ans. I am so full of gratitude to Heaven,
I cannot cavil at the deeds of men.
Yet are we blind alike. You did intend
To serve me, and I thank you.

Sup. I'll serve you yet, my son. This very night
A message shall be forwarded to Rome.
Before a month is past you'll be absolved.
Till then return unto the monastery,
Resume your cowl, and bear yourself correctly.
A month will soon be o'er.

Ans. To one who is imprison'd, 'tis an age;
Yet is your counsel wise, and I obey you

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With all humility.

Sup. 'Tis well, my son.
Your follies are unknown but to ourselves.
I shall expect you ere the night be past.
[*Exit Superior.*]

Ans. "Stretch'd forth her hand to save me!" Well I trow,
Had it been stretch'd forth empty I had perish'd.
I've bought my freedom at no trifling price.
Most potent gold! all that the earth can offer,
Are at thy bidding. Nay, more powerful still—
Since it appears that holy men for thee
Will barter Heav'n. Still his advice is good.
Yet must I first behold my Isidora:
Whose startled innocence, like to a rose
When charged with dew and rudely shaken,
Relieves itself in sweet and sudden showers
From its oppressive load. My heavy guilt
Hath shock'd her purity—now, she rejects
The love of one who has been false to Heav'n.
She refused to see me; but I have gain'd,
By intercession of my dotting mother,
One meeting, to decide if my estate
Shall be more wretched than it was before.
If she, unheard, condemns me, mine will be
A wild career most perilous to the soul,—
That of a lion's whelp, breaking his chain
And prowling through the world in search of prey.
[*Exit.*]

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Scene II.

Isidora's Room in the Guzman Palace.

Isidora alone on her knees at a small oratory. Rises.

Isid. Yes, I would pray, but the o'erwhelming thought
Of vows made light—nay, mock'd by him, the guide,
Th' elected star of my too trusting soul,
Stops in my breast the heavenly aspiration.
And nought I utter but th' unconscious wail
Of broken-hearted love. Love—and for whom!—
How have I waken'd from a dream of bliss
To utter misery. Fond, foolish maid,
Thus to embark my heart, my happiness,
So inconsiderate—now the barque sinks,
And, with its freight, is left to widely toss
In seas of doubt, of horror, and despair.
Oh! Isidora, is thy virgin heart
Thus mated to a wild apostate monk?
The midnight reveller, and morning priest,
At e'en the gay guitar, at noon the cowl;
The holy mummer, tonsure and the missal,
The world, our blessed Church, and Heav'n defied.
To love this man, I surely have become
That which a Guzman ought to scorn to be.
Is he not, too, a Guzman, and my cousin?
Yet must he be renounced. Here let me kneel,
Nor rise till I be freed of love and him.

(Isidora kneels a short time in silence, and proceeds.)

Anselmo—Virgin holy, will no name
But his rise from my wretched heart in pray'r?
Then let me bind myself by sacred vows:
Record it, Heav'n!—Thus do I renounce—

Enter Anselmo.

Ans.—All sorrow, my beloved; for grief no more
Shall worm its canker in our budding bliss.

(Anselmo approaches her, she rises abruptly.)

Isid. Nay, touch me not—approach me not, Anselmo.

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Ans. (*looking earnestly at her*). Isidora!

Isid. Holy Virgin, to thee I trust for strength
In this my hour of peril. Anselmo,
That look has reft a heart too fondly thine—
But only thine, henceforth, in holy love.

Ans. And is not all love holy? that the holiest,
Which gushes from the springs of thy pure heart;
So pure, that, laved by it, my spotted breast
Shall shortly be as snow.

Isid. Hear me, Anselmo:
It is ordain'd we meet no more.

Ans. And canst thou say those words? (*Kneels.*) See, on the earth
I grovelling kneel—my straining eyes seek thine:
Turn, turn to me; say not those words again;
Thou canst not, dearest.

Isid. (*her eyes still averted*). We must meet no more.

Ans. I'll not believe thy voice: look on me now
One steady, one unflinching glance, and then
If thou'lt repeat those words—I must believe.
(*Pause.*) Averted still!—Oh, Isidora, who,
Who pour'd such cruel thoughts into thy breast?
Was it a female fiend, or some vile priest,
Some meddling, sin-absolving, canting priest?—
It was—that start declares it.—Curse him, curse him.
(*Rises.*)

Isid. (*coming forward with dignity and fronting Anselmo.*)
Anselmo, curse him not. Thou art that priest.
[*Anselmo covers his face with his hand.*]

My better angel hath my mind illumed—
Hath shown me thy past life. Thy heavy sins,
In black array, hath weigh'd before mine eyes;
That silent voice, which every bosom sways,
Hath spoken deeply—bidden me abjure
Him who mock'd all. That gentle voice hath said,
That of us twain, immortal bliss alone
Can crown the union; which to be obtain'd,
Must on this earth be won by penance strict,
Unceasing prayer, and thy resumed vows.
Is it not well, Anselmo—

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Ans. Isidora,
Are racking tortures well? is liquid fire
Rushing and bubbling through the burning veins,
Until they shrivel, well? And is it well
To find the angel, who hath borne your soul
Half o'er the flaming abyss of the damn'd,
Shake it away, and feel it whirling sink
To everlasting torments?—In bitter truth,
These are but nought compared to the fell pangs
Thy words have caused, which rack my tortured breast.

Isid. Anselmo, hear me!

Ans. Hear *me* now in turn,
By the soul I've perill'd, we must *not* part!
Cast me but off, and Heav'n may do so too:
Here stand I, Isidora, with one foot
Upon Heaven's threshold, thou within the gates:
Oh! call me to thee. I am Heaven's and thine:
But, loose thy hand, and I will seek that hell
Which lies beneath. The deed be on thy head.

Isid. Oh! horrible, Anselmo—horrible!

Ans. Question me, Isidora. Where's the sin
That, in thine eyes, demands such heavy penance?

Isid. The violated vow—

Ans. Was made long ere I
Knew its power or meaning, and was forced
By those who thrust it on me in deceit;
For well they knew it robb'd me of my birthright.
'Twas sin to make that vow; and were it not
God's 'gerent here on earth hath power more ample
To unloose, than monks to bind—thou'rt answer'd.

Isid. Answer'd, but not content—if false to vows
More sacred far;—yet surely not more sacred,—
For what should be more sacred than the vows
Which link the happiness of two in one
Till death dissolves the union?—If false
To Heav'n, Anselmo—

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Ans. Who made me false, then?

Isid. Touch not that chord—treat me not as woman,
Easy to flattery, boastful of her charms:
You know me not, Anselmo; but till late
I scarcely knew myself.
Talk not to me of Heaven's vicegerent:
Can man absolve from compact made with God?

Ans. Isidora, it is now my duty
T' assume the monitor, and point out to thee
How e'en the purest of us, in our frailty,
May haply slide. A maiden in her pride,
But scarce in womanhood, dare to dispute
The tenets of our faith, strikes at the head
Of our religion; and what, for ages,
Holy men have revered and believed,
Hath been by her denounced as not her creed.

Isid. 'Tis true—'tis true. The sin of unbelief,
'Gainst which I've rail'd, I fall into myself,
Swayed by my foolish pride. (*Turns to Anselmo.*) But still, as yet
Thou'rt bound, Anselmo—e'en this discourse,
Methinks, is sacrilege.

Ans. Nay, Isidora,
Does not the father, he whose spiritual sway
I yet acknowledge, grant me this sweet bliss?
And is the tender sanction of that saint,
Our more than mother, nothing? As monk,—
And now I scarce am one,—it would seem
I am an object of your utter hate.

Isid. Not hate, Anselmo—'tis a bitter word;
Say rather fear—of what belongs to Heav'n.
Was there no crime, Anselmo, when thou stol'st,
Like a disguised thief, this trusting heart?
What sophistry can'st thou put forth to show
Thou should'st retain thy base, dishonest theft?

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Ans. Not words, but deeds, my Isidora,
Shall prove me worthy of the stolen treasure:
The first are due to God. This very night
With penance strict, I'll cleanse my tainted soul;
Deep in contrition, on my knees I'll wait
My dispensation from the sovereign pontiff;
Then—

Isid. And then—dear, dear Anselmo.

Ans. And then
Shall sneering cavalier or flaunting dame
Say, when a Guzman shall a Guzman wed,
The monk parades it boldly, and the bride
Hath cull'd the cloister for her wedded lord?
No, no; they never shall, my Isidora.
Then will I clad me in the warrior's steel:
Thou shalt receive me from the crimson'd field,

A laurel'd hero, or shall mourn me slain;
I will not steal to thee from cloister'd sloth,
But at thy portal light from battle steed.
Spain hath around and that within, shall make
The monk—a hero. Dost thou not think
The plumed helm will better fit this head,
Than the dull friar's cowl? My Isidora,
Now for a space—a brief one, fare thee well!
Once more I'll meet thee, and on bended knee,
As soldier should, I'll claim from my betroth'd
Some token that shall cheer me in the fight.
I must be worthy of you.

Isid. Thou art so. (*Embrace.*)
Anselmo, fare thee well! may Heav'n bless thee! [*Exit.*]

Ans. All powerful virtue, unto thy shrine
I bow. Sweet maid, whose great perfection
Hath as a glass display'd to me my crimes;
Oh may'st thou ever keep me in the path
Where peace and happiness attend my steps!
Now must I to the monast'ry repair,
There to remain until I'm freed;—but then,
To-night it is I meet the brave Don Felix:
I had forgotten it. Most willingly
Would I avoid this foolish rash dispute;
And yet I must not. When I was friendless,
Reckless of life,—a life not worth preserving,—
I could have pass'd whole days in mortal strife. [*Exit.*]

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Scene III.

A Part of Garden of Serafina's House.

Enter Antonio.

Ant. This friar's gown, which I have borrowed from my master, has proved most valuable. I never could have reached this spot, if I had not been thus disguised. (*Opens his gown, and shows his face and clothes smeared with blood.*) Here's blood enough. Noble, for all I know. I begged it from the barber. Thank Heaven, 'tis not mine own. Sancho will never know me. I see them coming in the distance. (*Takes off the gown, and puts it behind the trees, and then lies down.*) Now for self-murder. Lopez is no more.

Enter Sancho and Nina.

San. 'Tis here that we fought, and hereabouts should be the body.

Nina. (*fearfully pointing to the body.*) What's that? Sancho, it is—it is my husband! (*Bursts into tears.*)

San. Why do you grieve? Did you not wish him dead?

Nina. Alas! we often wish what we do not really want, prompted by the anger of the moment. What, in our selfish views, seems nothing at the time, becomes most horrible in the reality. Alas, poor Lopez! (*Weeps.*)

San. Why, Nina, did he not basely leave you? Forgot his vow to love and cherish you? Holy Saint Petronila! why, then, do you love and cherish him? Come, dry your eyes, Nina; he's not worth a tear. (*Kisses her hand.*)

Nina. From no one, I will grant, except from me. But there's a feeling in the heart of woman, you cannot comprehend. Even when it is breaking from ill-treatment, it yearns towards her husband. I must go away, Sancho; I cannot bear to see him—nor you; for you did slay him.

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San. Where are you going?

Nina. I'll meet you in the further walk. [*Exit Nina, sobbing.*]

San. Here's a pretty mess! Women are never of one mind: change, and change, and change for ever. This rascal deserted her at Toledo, took all her money, and her very clothes—and yet she grieves for him. I should not wonder if she rejected me now, believing that I killed him. (*Going up to Antonio.*) How bloody he is! Thou filthy carcase of a filthy knave! I've a great mind to have a thrust at thee, that I may swear my sword went through thy body. Saint Petronila bless the idea! (*Half drawing his sword.*) There's some one coming; and if I am found here, with my naked sword, near this bloody corpse, I shall be apprehended for his murder. [*Exit hastily.*]

(*Antonio looks up and then lies down.*)

Enter Beppa.

Bep. I cannot find my mistress. She came with me into the garden, worked up to desperation against Don Gaspar, and earnest for his death. Alas! the tide is turned, and now, in some sequestered spot, she weeps his falsehood. I must go seek her, and steel her heart by praising Isidora. What's here? the body of a man (*going to Antonio*). Why! 'tis Antonio, my worthless husband; alas! and called away without repentance, full of misdeeds and roguery. Heaven pardon him! Whose deed was this? that villain Garcias'?—if so, he hath but gained the sin; for I would sooner hug an adder, than listen to his wooing. I must seek my mistress; then will I return to give him honest burial, and pay for masses for his guilty soul. [*Exit.*]

[*Antonio rises slowly, resumes his friar's dress, and comes forward.*]

Ant. That cowardly rascal, Sancho, had nearly brought me to life again, instead of having killed me, as he said he had. Pitiful scoundrel, to thrust at a dead man! He'll never kill one living. Nina, I respect thee; yet must we part, for 'tis evident thou lov'st another. I'll meet them in this grove, and persuade them to marry. As for Beppa, if I am missing, 'tis clear she'll never look for me. [*Exit.*]

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Scene IV.

Another Part of the Garden.

Enter Nina and Sancho.

Nina. Nay, no more, Sancho. To me there's something dreadful in such a hasty fresh espousal. My husband's body yet uninterred, still would you have me enter into fresh bonds.

San. He was no husband to you, Nina, but a worthless wretch, who deceived you. Remember, it is for years that I have loved you. Saint Petronila be my witness.

Nina. I know it, Sancho, and wish I had never married Lopez. Why did you leave me?

San. I could but leave you, when I followed my master: but remember, when we parted, I offered you my troth. You have been unjust to me, and owe some reparation; by Saint Petronila, you do!

Nina. And in good time I'll make it, Sancho.

San. The present is good time; now we are together, and my master is no more. Come, Nina, keep your promise, and the Saint will reward you.

Nina. Nay, Sancho, do not thus persuade me. Were I to yield to your wish, you would hate me after we were married.

San. Never; by this kiss (*kisses her*), I swear. I have you now, and will not part with you.

[*Nina throws herself into his arms.*]

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Enter Antonio in friar's gown and hood.

Ant. (*in a feigned voice*). Good hugging people, are you man and wife?

San. We are not yet, but soon we hope to be.

Ant. The sooner it were better, for this dalliance
In the ev'ning, in a sequester'd grove,
Is most unseemly, if not dangerous.
Woman, lovest thou this man?—

Nina. I do, most holy father.

Ant. And I must tell thee, maiden, it were better
That you delay no longer. I have witness'd
Your stolen embraces; and, by Holy Church!
I think it right that you be married straight,
Ere vice usurps the throne that should be held
By virtue only. Children, not far from hence
There is a chapel, where attending priests
Chant holy masses for a soul's repose.
There may you join your hands, and there receive
The nuptial benediction.

San. Nina, you must obey this holy friar, and make me happy; Saint Petronila sent him.

Nina. It is against my wish that I consent; yet, father, you know best, although you know not all.

Ant. (*aside*). Indeed I do! (*Aloud*) Come with me, my children,
I'll point you out the path, to where you may,
By holy rites pronounced, become one flesh. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Serafina and Beppa.

Ser. My distracted mind, like some wild spendthrift,
Has drawn upon my heart till it is bankrupt.
God, how my soul is weary! I fear the sword
Of that Don Felix may prevail against him.
He is a man well knit in sinewy strength;
Gaspar a boy. O spare him, gracious Heaven!

Bep. To wed with Isidora, and with gibes
Mock at the tears of Donna Serafina!
Madam, you've not the lofty soul of woman,
Or you would act, and not thus vainly talk.
He's lost to you for ever! I've discover'd,
That since this noon he hath not left her house,
And all's in preparation for their union.

Ser. Have they been left together? Then, perchance,
She hath been foolish too, and much too fond.
Then will he quit her soon. Truant Gaspar,
These arms shall win thee back!

Bep. Oh, no!
She is too wise, too prudent, and too good.
Such charms of mind and body she possesses,
That all do worship her; but not as one
Of us mere mortals. He dare not think of it.
She is too perfect. Gaspar is hers alone,
And you—are thrown aside for ever!

Ser. Is it so?
Don Gaspar hers! Never, never! by Heav'n,
If I lose him, he shall be lost to her!
If I must weep, her tears shall fall with mine!
If my heart breaks, hers shall be riven too!
If I must die,—and that I shall, I feel,
Loves she as I do, they may dig her grave.
Don Felix, may thy practised sword prove true!—
And it will save me from a deed of horror.

Bep. Now do you speak as a wrong'd woman should.
Keep up this spirit—you will be avenged.
We must retire; for soon they will appear. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.

Another part of the Garden attached to the House of Donna Serafina.

Enter Anselmo.

I would that it were o'er! A heavy gloom
Hangs on my spirits, like some threat'ning cloud
O'erspreading the wide firmament, without
One speck of blue, like hope, to cheer th' horizon.
Yet, from what cause it springs, I cannot tell.
His sword I fear not. It is mine estate,
So promising. He that hath nought to lose,
Is spurr'd to action with the hope of gain.
He that is wealthy, and 'gainst fortune plays,
Is like the gambler, who will risk his means
With those who nothing have.

Enter Felix.

Felix. If you have waited for me long, Don Gaspar,
It was against my will. I'm most impatient
To bring this meeting to a speedy issue.

Ans. At your request, Don Felix, I am here;
And if you please there should be strife between us,
You'll find me not unnerved. To be sincere,—
I do not wish this needless controversy.
Recall your words, offensive, as untrue,
And take my proffer'd hand. Then will I prove,
And not till then, how greatly you have wrong'd me.

Felix. That which is said, is said. I'll not retract.

But were it false, which I cannot believe,
You've slain my bosom friend, the brave Don Perez.

Ans. He wrong'd me much. Upon my soul he did.
I must not prove it now.

Felix. Then prove yourself, and draw.
For see, the sun is down, and daylight flies;
We have no time for parley. (*Draws.*)

[*Beppa and Serafina pass behind from r. to l.*

Ans. (*drawing*). Then, whether you or I, Don Felix, live
To hail that glorious orb, must now be tried.
Don Felix, to your guard. Whate'er the issue,
You will repent this most ungovern'd haste.

[*They fight. Don Felix is disarmed and he falls.*
Anselmo stands over him with his sword pointed to his breast.]

Ans. You question'd if I'd manhood in my frame;
Allow, Don Felix, that the question's answer'd.
You call'd me an impostor,—name for those
Who clothe themselves in borrow'd plumes, t'appear
Greater, not less, than what they are. Then know,
He you upbraided as of no parentage,
Whose sword, impatient, waits its master's bidding,
T'avenge the affront, is heir to Guzman's house,
To which, in ancestry, thine own is nothing.
This truth, Don Felix, I could not reveal,

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[*Serafina and Beppa appear behind in the wood.*]

Till we had measured swords. Honour forbade it.
Now manifest. I give you life, and proffer,
If that you please, my hand in amity.

[*Felix rising, Anselmo presents him his sword.*]

Felix. Your actions prove that you are truly noble.
I do regret the language which I used,
And cheerfully retract what proves so false.
Don Gaspar, are you satisfied? (*offering hand*).

Ans. (*taking Don Felix's hand*). And happy.
Now, Isidora, thou art surely mine;
Vistas of bliss are opening to my view;
My heart expands with gratitude to Heav'n,
And tears would flow of penitence and joy,
That one so little worthy, thus is bless'd.
O, may my life be long, that I may prove
To gracious Heav'n, I'm worthy Isidora.
Joy! joy! with lightning's speed, I fly—

[*Serafina, who has advanced, stabs Anselmo in the back.*]

Ser. To death! (*Then wishing to rush to him, she holds out
her arms and exclaims*) Gaspar! Gaspar!

[*Serafina is borne off fainting by Beppa and Garcias, who have entered. Anselmo leans against
Don Felix, who supports him, and then gradually sinks out of his arms to the ground.*]

Ans. I felt the blow would come. From whom, or where,
Was hid in the obscure. 'Twas Serafina!
I knew the voice, the knell—

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Felix. Where are you hurt?

Ans. Don Felix, by that friendship we have pledged
So newly, one kind office I request.

Felix. Curs'd be the infuriate jealous wretch,
That one so noble should so basely fall!

Ans. Nay, curse her not, she is too curs'd already.

Her future life will be a constant shower
Of curses on herself. I do forgive her.
And yet to die so young, and late so happy.
More painful still to part from Isidora.
Would she were here, that I might comfort her!
My mother, too! O God! 'twill break her heart!

Enter Superior, Inez, Isidora, Nina, and Sancho. Inez and Isidora run to Anselmo and kneel down by him.

Inez. (to Felix). Wretch! that hath done this bloody, hateful deed,
Receive a frantic mother's bitter curse!

Ans. You are deceived, my mother; 'twas not he
Who dealt the fatal blow. It was a woman.

Inez. A woman! say you;
Who was this treach'rous woman? Let me know her,
That I may work on her a woman's vengeance.

Isid. I ne'er have learn'd to curse—I wish I had:
I can but weep. Look, mother, at his blood!
Oh, staunch it, or he'll bleed to death.

Inez. Are you much hurt, Anselmo?

Ans. Mother, to death.
'Tis useless to deceive you. You scarcely found me
But I am lost again: 'twill soon be over.
(*Faintly*) E'en now the blood's collecting in my heart
For its last rally;—Isidora, I would tell thee
What pain it is to part, but my strength fails,
And my parch'd tongue cannot perform its duty.

Isid. To part, Anselmo? Dost thou say to part?
No, no; thou shalt not die,—we must not part.
What false, already! How could'st thou utter
That which, to me, must be the knell of death?

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(Bursts into tears and embraces him.)

Ans. Would that your gentle power o'er me was the same
In death, as life: then should I live for ever.
But—mother—fare you well—farewell—my Isidora.

[Groans and falls dead. Donna Inez faints, and is supported by Don Felix and Nina. Isidora, whose face was hidden in Anselmo's breast, lifts up her head and looks wildly at the body.]

Isid. Anselmo! (*More loudly*) Anselmo! (*Shrieks. Throws herself on the body. The rest of the characters group round the body, and the curtain falls.*)

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THE GIPSY;

OR,

"WHOSE SON AM I?"

A COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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Men.

SIR GILBERT ETHERIDGE, *An old Admiral.*

CAPTAIN ETHERIDGE, *His son; grave.*

CAPTAIN MERTOUN; *gay.*

OLD BARGROVE.

YOUNG PETER BARGROVE, *His son.*

WILLIAM, *The Admiral's sailor-footman.*

BILL, }
 } *Gipsies.*
DICK, }

Women.

LADY ETHERIDGE, *The Admiral's wife.*

AGNES, *Her daughter.*

LUCY, *The daughter of Bargrove.*

MRS BARGROVE.

NELLY, *The gipsy.*

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The Gipsy

Scene.—The Hall, the residence of Sir Gilbert, and the vicinity. Time that of acting.

Act I. Scene I.

A Room in a respectable country inn.—Enter Captain Etheridge and Captain Mertoun, ushered in by the Landlord.

Land. Will you be pleased to take anything, gentlemen?

Capt. Eth. I can answer for myself, nothing.

Capt. Mer. I agree, and disagree, with you; that is, I coincide with you in—nothing.

Capt. Eth. Then I trust, Mr Harness, that you will coincide with us in expediting the greasing of that radical wheel as soon as possible, and let us know when the horses are put to.

Land. Most certainly, Captain Etheridge; I will superintend it myself. [*Exit Landlord.*]

Capt. Eth. An old butler of my father's, who set up many years ago with a few hundred pounds, and the Etheridge Arms as a sign. He has done well.

Capt. Mer. That is to say, the Etheridge Arms have put him on his legs, and drawing corks for your father has enabled him to draw beer for himself and his customers. Of course he married the lady's maid.

Capt. Eth. No, he did more wisely; he married the cook.

Capt. Mer. With a good fat portion of kitchen stuff, and a life interest of culinary knowledge. I have no doubt but that he had a further benefit from your liberal father and mother.

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Capt. Eth. By-the-bye, I have spoken to you of my father repeatedly, Edward; but you have not yet heard any remarks relative to my mother.

Capt. Mer. I take it for granted, from your report of your father, and my knowledge (*bowing*) of the offspring, that she must be equally amiable.

Capt. Eth. Had she been so, I should not have been silent; but as I have no secrets from you, I must say, she is not the—the very paragon of perfection.

Capt. Mer. I am sorry for it.

Capt. Eth. My father, disgusted with the matrimonial traps that were set for the post-captain, and baronet of ten thousand a year, resolved, as he imagined wisely, to marry a woman in inferior life; who, having no pretensions of her own, would be humble and domestic. He chose one of his tenant's daughters, who was demure to an excess. The soft paw of the cat conceals her talons. My mother turned out the very antipodes of his expectations.

Capt. Mer. Hum!

Capt. Eth. Without any advantages, excepting her alliance with my father, and a tolerable share

of rural beauty, she is as proud as if descended from the house of Hapsburg—insults her equals, tramples on her inferiors, and—what is worse than all—treats my father very ill.

Capt. Mer. Treats him ill! what! he that was such a martinet, such a disciplinarian on board! She does not beat him?

Capt. Eth. No, not exactly; but so completely has she gained the upper hand, that the Admiral is as subdued as a dancing bear, obeying her orders with a growl, but still obeying them. At her command he goads himself into a passion with whomsoever she may point as the object of his violence.

Capt. Mer. How completely she must have mastered him! How can he submit to it?

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Capt. Eth. Habit, my dear Mertoun, reconciles us too much; and he, at whose frown hundreds of gallant fellows trembled, is now afraid to meet the eye of a woman. To avoid anger with her, he affects anger with every one else. This I mention to you, that you may guide your conduct towards her. Aware of your partiality to my sister, it may be as well—

Capt. Mer. To hold the candle to the devil, you mean. Your pardon, Etheridge, for the grossness of the proverb.

Capt. Eth. No apology, my dear fellow. Hold the candle when you will, it will not burn before a saint, and that's the truth. Follow my advice, and I will insure you success. I only wish that my amatory concerns had so promising an appearance.

Capt. Mer. Why, I never knew that you were stricken.

Capt. Eth. The fact is, that I am not satisfied with myself; and when I am away from my Circe, I strive all I can to drive her from my memory. By change of scene, absence, and occupation, I contrive to forget her indifferent well. Add to all this, I have not committed myself by word or deed. I have now been three years in this way; but the moment I find myself within two miles of my fair one, as the towers of my home rise upon my sight, so rises the passion in my bosom; and what I supposed I had reasoned away to a mere dwarfish penchant, becomes at once a mighty sentiment.

Capt. Mer. That looks very like attachment. Three years, did you say? My dear brother in affliction, make me your confidant.

Capt. Eth. I intended to do so, or I should not have originated the subject. My father brought up the daughter of our steward, Bargrove, with my sister Agnes. I have therefore known Lucy from her infancy; and ought I to be ashamed to say, how much I am in love with her?

Capt. Mer. Etheridge, this is a point on which, I am afraid, my advice would not be well received.

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Capt. Eth. Of course you would imply that she must be renounced.

Capt. Mer. Most assuredly; that is my opinion on a *primâ facie* view of the case. You have your father's example.

Capt. Eth. I have, but still there are many points in my favour. Bargrove is of a very old, though decayed family. Indeed, much more ancient than our own.

Capt. Mer. I grant you, there is one difficulty removed. But still your relative position. He is now your father's steward.

Capt. Eth. That is certainly a great obstacle; but on the other hand, she has been really well educated.

Capt. Mer. Another point in your favour, I grant.

Capt. Eth. With respect to Lucy herself, she is—

Capt. Mer. As your father thought your mother—perfection. Recollect, the soft paw of the cat conceals the talons.

Capt. Eth. Judge for yourself when you see and converse with her. I presume I am to consider myself blind. At all events, I have decided upon nothing; and have neither, by word or deed, allowed her to suppose an attachment on my part: still it is a source of great anxiety. I almost wish that she were happily married. By-the-bye, my mother hates her.

Capt. Mer. That's not in your favour, though it is in hers.

Capt. Eth. And my father doats upon her.

Capt. Mer. That's in favour of you both.

Capt. Eth. Now, you have the whole story, you may advise me as you please: but remember, I still preserve my veto.

Capt. Mer. My dear Etheridge, with your permission, I will not advise at all. Your father tried in the same lottery and drew a blank; you may gain the highest prize; but my hopes with your sister render it a most delicate subject for my opinion. Your own sense must guide you.

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Capt. Eth. Unfortunately it often happens, that when a man takes his feelings for a guide, he

walks too fast for good sense to keep pace with him.

Capt. Mer. At all events, be not precipitate; and do not advance one step, which, as a man of honour, you may not retrace.

Capt. Eth. I will not, if I can help it. But here comes Mr Harness.

Enter Landlord.

Land. The horses are to, Captain Etheridge, and the wheel is in order.

Capt. Eth. Come then, Edward, we shall not be long getting over these last eight miles. The boys know me well.

Capt. Mer. (Going out). Yes, and the length of your purse, I suspect, my dear fellow. (*Exeunt ambo.*)

Scene II.

A Wood in the back-ground, Gipsies' tents, etc. Gipsies come forward, group themselves, and sing.

The king will have his tax,
Tithes to parsons fall,
For rent the landlord racks,
The tenant cheats them all;
But the gipsy's claim'd right is more ancient yet,
And that right he still gains by the help of his wit.

Chorus (joining hands).

Then your hands right and left, see saw,

(All turn.)

Turn your backs on the church and the law;
Search all the world through,
From the king on his throne,
To the beggar—you'll own
There are none like the gipsy crew.
Wherever we rove,
We're sure to find home;
In field, lane, or grove,
Then roam, boys, roam!
'Tis only when walls his poor body surround,
That homeless a free roving gipsy is found.

(Chorus as before.)

[Exeunt all the gipsies except Nelly, who, with Bill, comes forward; Bill, with a bundle on a pitchfork, over his shoulder. Throws down the bundle, and takes out a turkey.]

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Nelly. Is that all that thou hast gathered?

Bill. All! Enough too, did ye know the sarcumstances. Travelled last night good twelve miles before I could light on this here cretur. Never seed such a scarcity o' fowl. Farmers above tending sich like things now-a-days, dom pride! says I.

Nelly. But what kept ye out till morning?

Bill. 'Cause why I was kept in. Lock'd up, by gosh! Why, arter dark, I'd just nabbed this here, when out pops on me the farmer's wife; and so she twists her scraggy neck round like a weathercock in a whirlwind, till at last she hears where Master Redcap wor a gobbling. I'd just time to creep under a cart, when up she comes; so down goes I on all fours and growls like a strange dog.

Nelly. And one day thou wilt be hung like one.

Bill. Every one gets his promotion in time. In goes the woman and calls her husband; and though on all fours, I warn't a match for two; so I slinks into a barn and twists the neck of the hanimal, that a might not peach. Well; farmer comes out, and seeing nought but barn door open, curses his man for a lazy hound and locks it, then walks home, leaving I fixed. Warn't that a good un?

Nelly. How did'st thou contrive to escape?

Bill. I burrowed into the back of the wheat. Two jockies came in at daylight to thrash—

Nelly. And they would have done well to have begun upon the rogue in grain.

Bill. Thank ye, mistress. But, howsomdever, the farmer came wi 'um, and a waundy big dog that stagg'd me, and barked like fury. "There be summut there," says farmer; so I squealed like a

dozen rats in the wheat. "Rats agen," says he. "Tummus, go fetch the ferrets; and Bob, be you arter the terriers. I'll go get my breakfast, and then we'll rout un out. Come, Bully." But Bully wouldn't, till farmer gave un a kick that set un howling; and then out they all went, and about a minute arter I makes a bolt. Terrible fuss about a turkey; warn't it, Nell?

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Nelly. Hast thou seen Richard?

Bill. Never put eyes on him since we parted last night; but, as his tongue is as well hung as he will be himself, he'll gie ye a triple bob major, for here he comes.

Enter Dick, pulls out two geese, and flings them down.

Dick. Ah, missus, I sha'n't last long. I shall soon be scragged. I'm growing honest. Out of a flock of forty, I've only prigged two. To make amends, I did gnaw off the heads of two more, and so the foxes will have the credit of the job.

Bill. That was well thought of, my pal.

Dick. May I one day grow honest, if I don't make up for last night's paltry prig. Come, let's have one roasted, missus—I prefers roast goose. Honest hanimal! only fit to be plucked and eaten. I say, missus, I stumbled on a cove this morning, that I thinks will prove a bleeding cull,—honest hanimal, only fit to be plucked—

Bill. And eaten, Dick?

Dick. Yes, with your dom'd jaw, and so cly it. This here cove sits him down under a tree, with his head a-one side, like a fowl with the pip, and, with a book in his hand talks a mortal deal of stuff about shaking spears and the moon. So, when I had spied enow, I gets up and walks straight to him, and axes him, could he tell where the great fortin-telling woman were to be found in the wood; she as knew the past, the present, and the future. Laid a coil for him, my girl. He be the son of the great Squire's steward, that lives at the Hall, and he says that he be mightily anxious to have his fortin told. He seems to be mortal simple.

Nelly. What didst thou hear him mouth about?

Dick. May I grow honest if I bees able to tell, 'twere sich outlandish gibberish. What have the rest done, missus?

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Nelly. Why, like you, Richard, they're growing honest.

Dick. Ah! ware o' that. My grandam, who was the real seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, said of I, in my cradle, "The moment this here child grows honest, he'll be hung." I've done my best, all my life, to keep my neck out of the halter.

Nelly. So you have, Richard. I went up to the Hall to beg for the fragments off the rich man's table. Lady Bountiful, who was bountiful in nought but reviling, was the person whom I met. Bridewell and the stocks was the tune, and the big dog sang the chorus at my heels. But I'll be more than even with her. If I have the heart to feel an injury, she shall find that I've a head to help my heart to its revenge. Revenge—I love it!

Bill. That you do, missus; I'll answer for you there. If you be affronted, you be the most cantackerous hanimal that ever boiled a pot. Come, Dick, let's take the jacket off our customers, for fear of mischief. (*Dick and Bill retire with the poultry.*)

Nelly (assuming a more elevated manner). Heigho! how many things, long forgotten, come to my memory on this spot! Hard by I was brought up, and even from this place I can see where my father and mother lie buried. Here I was once innocent and happy. No, not happy, or I should have stayed, and still been innocent. But away with the useless thought! The steward's son—it must be young Bargrove. I did not meet him yesterday when I was at the village, but I saw and spoke to Lucy, his sister, who was nursed at this breast; and how I yearned to press her to it! Pretty creature, how she hath grown! Little did my lady think, when she drove me away, that I was the Nelly who used to be so much at the Hall, nursing Lucy, whilst Mrs Bargrove gave her breast to Miss Agnes. Little did Lucy, when she loaded my wallet with victuals, think that she had so long lain in these arms. Heigho! bye-gone is bye-gone! What a haughty woman is that Lady Etheridge! And yet, she was once a farmer's daughter, but little better than myself. Could I be revenged on her! Ah! I may; I know every particular connected with the family; but here comes the lad. [*Nelly retires*]

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Enter Peter Bargrove, book in his hand.

Peter. O solitude—solitude! what a quiet thing is solitude! especially when you hold your tongue. I only wish that I had a dozen of my old schoolfellows here to enjoy it with me, for, as this divine Shakespeare says, it is so sweet to be alone. I wonder whether, if I were to take to study, if I could not in time write a Shakespeare myself? I'm blessed if I couldn't! How proud father ought to be of such a son! But father wouldn't care if I did: he thinks of nothing but the harvest: what a difference there is between father and me! I can't account for it. O, here comes the woman of fate. What a gaunt-looking body! What eyes! She can see through a post! Her looks go through me already.

Nelly (advancing). There is a bright leaf in the book of your fate, young sir, that waits only for my finger to turn it.

Peter. Then wet your thumb, good woman, and let's have the news in a twinkling.

Nelly. Not so fast, thou youth of lustrous fortunes! The time is not yet come. Time was, time is, and time shall be!

Peter. Bless me! how very prophetic!

Nelly. Meet me here, three hours hence; I shall then have communed with the astral influences!

Peter. Astral influences! I know of no such people hereabouts.

Nelly. The stars—the noonday stars!

Peter. The noonday stars! who can see the stars at noonday?

Nelly. The gifted.

Peter (looking up). Well, then, I ar'n't one of the gifted.

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Nelly. Yes; but you might be, if you had but faith.

Peter. Well, I'm sure I've got plenty—try it.

Nelly. Very well; stand thus. Now wave your hands thus high in the air, then shade the sight, and close the left eye; look up, and tell me what thou seest there.

Peter. Three carrion crows.

Nelly. Nought else?

Peter. No.

Nelly. Not all the heavenly hosts?

Peter. Not a star as big as a sparkle from a red-hot horse-shoe.

Nelly (pointing up). Seest thou not those two bright stars, Castor and Pollux?

Peter. No, I can't, upon my honour.

Nelly. Not Copernicus, so fiery red? not the Great Bear?

Peter. Why, I don't know; I really think I do see something. No I don't, after all.

Nelly. Ah! then you want faith—you want faith. I, who see them all, must read them for you. Away; in three hours hence, you'll meet me here. (*Turns away.*)

Peter. Well, you might at least be civil; but that's not the custom of great people. What a wonderful woman, to see the stars at noonday! Well, I'll put my faith in her, at all events.

(*Exit Peter. Dick and Bill come forward with the poultry picked.*)

Dick. Well, missus, ban't he a soft cove?

Nelly. I have not done with him yet.

Bill. Now let's get our dinner ready. The fowls be a axing for the pot.

Dick. And goose to be roasted.

Bill. No, I say; they'd smell us a mile. Your liquorice chops will transport you yet.

Dick. Tell ye, Bill, goose shall be roasted. May I grow honest, but it shall. I'll give up a pint—I'll sacrifice sage and innions. Eh, missus?

Nelly. The sooner they are out of sight the better. [*They retire; the scene closes.*]

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Scene III.

A Drawing-Room in the Hall.

Enter Admiral and Lady Etheridge.

Lady Eth. Indeed, Admiral, I insist upon it, that you give the brutal seaman warning; or, to avoid such a plebeian mode of expression, advertise him to depart.

Adm. My dear, old Barnstaple has served me afloat and ashore these four-and-twenty years, and he's a little the worse for wear and tear. In a cutting-out affair his sword warded off the blow that would have sacrificed my life. We must overlook a little—

Lady Eth. Yes, that's always your way; always excusing. A serving man to appear fuddled in the presence of Lady Etheridge! faugh! And yet, not immediately to have his coat stripped off his back, and be kicked out of doors; or, to avoid the plebeian, expatriated from the portals.

Adm. Expatriated!

Lady Eth. How you take one up, Admiral. You know I meant to say expatriated.

Adm. Ah! that is mending the phrase, indeed. I grant that he was a little so so; but then, recollect, it was I who gave them the ale.

Lady Eth. Yes, that's your way, Sir Gilbert; you spoil them all. I shall never get a servant to show me proper respect. I may scold, scold, scold; or, to speak more aristocratically, vituperate, from morning till night.

Adm. Well, then, my dear, why trouble yourself to vituperate at all, as you call it? Keep them at a distance, and leave scolding to the housekeeper.

Lady Eth. Housekeeper, indeed! No, Sir Gilbert; she's just as bad as the rest. Once give her way, and she would treat me with disrespect, and cheat you in the bargain; or, less plebeianly, nefariously depredate—

Adm. Appropriate, you mean, my dear.

Lady Eth. And appropriate I said, Admiral, did I not?

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Adm. Why, really—

Lady Eth. (*raising her voice*). Did I not, Sir Gilbert?

Adm. Why, my dear, I suppose it was a mistake of mine. Well, my love, let them appropriate a little—I can afford it.

Lady Eth. You can't afford it, Sir Gilbert.

Adm. My dear Lady Etheridge, money can but buy us luxuries; and as I don't know a greater luxury than quiet, I am very willing to pay for it.

Lady Eth. You may be so, Admiral, but my duty as a wife will not permit me to suffer you to squander away your money so foolishly. Buy quiet, indeed! I would have you to know, Sir Gilbert, you must first consult your wife before you can make a purchase.

Adm. Yes, my lady, it is a fatal necessity.

Lady Eth. Fatal fal, lal. But, Sir Gilbert, you were always a spendthrift; witness the bringing up of the steward's children with your own, mixing the aristocratic streams with plebeian dregs! Sir Gilbert, the Bargroves are constantly intruding in our house, and Agnes will be no gainer by keeping such company.

Adm. Whose company, my dear? Do you mean Lucy Bargrove's? I wish all our fashionable acquaintance were only half so modest and so well-informed. She is a sweet girl, and an ornament to any society.

Lady Eth. Indeed, Sir Gilbert! Perhaps you intend to wear the ornament yourself. A second Lady Etheridge,—he, he, he! When you have vexed me to death, or, to speak more like a lady, when you have inurned my mortal remains.

Adm. Indeed, my lady, I have no idea of the kind. I don't want to break the fixed resolution that I have long since made, never to marry a second wife.

Lady Eth. I presume you mean to imply that you have had sufficient torment in the first?

Adm. I said not so, my dear; I only meant to remark, that I should not again venture on matrimony.

Lady Eth. I can take a hint, Sir Gilbert, though I don't believe you. All husbands tell their wives they'll never marry again; but, as dead men tell no tales, so dead wives—

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Adm. (*Aside*). Don't scold.

Lady Eth. What's that, Sir Gilbert?

Adm. Nothing—not worth repeating. But to revert to the Bargroves; I think, my dear, when you consider their father's long and faithful services, some gratitude on my part—

Lady Eth. Which they may live not to thank you for.

Adm. Recollect, my dear, that the Bargroves are a very old, though decayed family. One half of this estate was, at one time, the property of their ancestors. It was lost by a suit in chancery.

Lady Eth. Then it never was rightfully theirs.

Adm. I beg your pardon there, my dear; chancery will as often take the property from, as give it to, the rightful owner. Bargrove is of a good old family, and has some money to leave to his children.

Lady Eth. Out of your pocket, Sir Gilbert.

Adm. Not so; Bargrove has a property of his own, nearly three hundred acres, which has been in the family for many years.

Lady Eth. Ever since you afforded him the means of purchasing it.

Adm. I said many years, long before my name was added to the baronetage.

Lady Eth. Well, Admiral, it may be the case; but still there is no excuse for your folly: and mark me, Sir Gilbert, I will not have that pert minx, Lucy Bargrove, closeted with my daughter Agnes. As to the boy, it is a downright puppy and fool, or, to speak less plebeianly, is a *non composite mentus*.

Adm. Peter is not clever, but, without education, he would have been worse. It is not our fault if we are not blessed with talent. Lucy has wit enough for both.

Lady Eth. Lucy again! I declare, Admiral, my nerves are lacerated; or, to descend to your meanness of expression, it is quite shocking in a person of your age to become so infatuated with an artful hussy. Now, Sir Gilbert, am I to be protected, or am I to submit to insult? Is that sea-brute to remain, or am I to quit the house? [Pg 100]

Adm. (Aside.) I should prefer the latter. *(Aloud.)* Why, my lady, if he must go—

Lady Eth. Must go? *(rings the bell)*. Yes, Sir Gilbert, and with a proper lecture from you.

Enter William; Lady Etheridge sits down with a wave of her hand.

Lady Eth. Now, Admiral.

Adm. William, you—you ought to be ashamed of yourself, getting half-seas over, and behaving in that manner—but—to be sure, I sent you the ale.

Will. Yes, your honour, famous stuff it was!

Lady Eth. Sir Gilbert!

Adm. And that's no excuse. I did not tell you to get drunk, and the consequence is, that that, without a proper apology—

Will. Beg your pardon, Admiral, and yours too, my lady.

Lady Eth. Sir Gilbert!

Adm. The fact is, that without the apology, in one word, you, you *(looking round at Lady Etheridge)* must take warning, sir, you leave this house, sir.

Will. Leave, yer honour, arter twenty-five years' sarvitude!

Lady Eth. Sir Gilbert!

Adm. Yes, sir, leave the house—damme!

Will. If yer honour hadn't given the ale, I shouldn't have got into trouble.

Lady Eth. (Rising, and as she is leaving the room). Sir Gilbert, I am glad to perceive that you have a proper respect for me and for yourself. *[Exit]*.

Adm. William, William, you must be aware that I cannot permit you to remain, when Lady Etheridge is displeas'd with you. [Pg 101]

Will. First offence, yer honour.

Adm. But, however, I'll try and get you another place, as your general conduct has been correct.

Will. Thank you. I little thought, that after twenty-five years' sarvitude *(wipes his eyes)*. I can always get a ship, Admiral.

Adm. Why, yes, and I only wish that I had one, in which to give you a good rating, my good fellow; but William, you must be aware—

Will. Yes, yer honour, I see how the cat jumps.

Adm. What do you mean?

Will. I sees that yer honour is no longer in command of your own ship.

Adm. You scoundrel! What do you mean?

Will. Lord, Sir Gilbert, we all knows how the matter be, and as how you can't call your soul your own. It warn't so in the *Menelaus*, when your little finger was enough to make every man jump out of his shoes. You *were* a bit of a tartar, that's sartin,—and, now you've cotched a tartar.

Adm. You insolent scoundrel!

Will. Your honour arn't angry, I hope, but we all pities ye, we do indeed!

Adm. Unbearable!

Will. And we says in the servants' hall—and we be all agreed *there*—that you be the kindest master in the world—but, that as for my lady—

Adm. Silence, sir; what insolence is this? Out of the room immediately; now, if I had you on board, you scoundrel, I'd give you as good a four dozen as ever a fellow had in his life. I was just going to pension the blackguard, now I'll see him hanged first.

(The Admiral walks up and down the room in a rage, William still remains behind.)

Well, well, even my servants laugh at, pity me. Here I am, cooled down into the quietest man in the world, yet obliged to put myself in a passion whenever my wife pleases. It is very hard to lose my temper and my character at her bidding; but if I don't she would put herself into such a rage with me, that I should be even worse off;—of the two evils I must choose the least; but in falling in love, I was a great fool, and that's the truth.

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Will. So you was, Admiral, that's sartin.

[The Admiral runs at him with a stick. William runs off.]

Adm. Scoundrel! Well, it is the truth.

Enter Lady Etheridge, O.P.

Lady Eth. What is the truth, Sir Gilbert?

Adm. Truth, my lady? why, that when a man's intoxicated, he commits great folly.

Lady Eth. Yes, and ought to be punished for it.

Adm. (Aside.) I am sure that I have been.

Enter Agnes, who runs up and kisses her father.

Adm. Well, Agnes, my little clipper, where are you going this morning?

Agnes. Down to the homestead, papa, with Lucy Bargrove.

Lady Eth. I must request, Miss Etheridge, that you will be more select in your company. A steward's daughter is not the proper companion for the house of Etheridge.

Agnes. Indeed, mamma, the society of Lucy Bargrove will never be prejudicial to me. I wish you knew what an unassuming girl she is, and yet so clever and well informed. Besides, mamma, have we not been playmates since we have been children? It would be cruel to break with her now, even if we felt so inclined. I could not do it.

Lady Eth. There, Admiral, you feel the effect of your want of prudence, of your ridiculous good-nature. An unequal friendship insisted upon, and a mother treated with disrespect.

Agnes. Indeed, mamma, I had no such intention. I only pleaded my own cause. If my father and you insist upon it, much as I regret it, it will be my duty to obey you.

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Lady Eth. Miss Etheridge, we insist upon it.

Adm. Nay, Lady Etheridge, I do not,—that is exactly—*(Lady Etheridge looks astonished and bounces out of the room.)* My dearest Agnes, I must defend poor Lucy against the prejudices of your mother, if I can; but I'm afraid,—very much afraid. Your mother is an excellent woman, but her over anxiety for your welfare—

Agnes. There was no occasion to remind me of my mother's kindness. When a daughter looks into a parent's heart through the medium of her duty, she should see there no error, and believe no wrong.

Adm. That's a good girl. Now let us take a turn in the garden before dinner.

Agnes. Shall I ask mamma to accompany us?

Adm. No, no, my love, she's busy, depend upon it. *[Exeunt ambo.]*

Scene IV.

The Hall of an old-fashioned farming house.

Old Bar. (outside.) Don't take the saddle off her, boy, I'll be out again in ten minutes.

(Enter Bargrove.) Poof—this is, indeed, fine weather for the harvest. We can't cut fast enough—and such crops! *(Seats himself.)* My dear, where are you?

Mrs Bar. (outside.) I'm coming. *[Enters.]*

Bar. Is dinner ready? No time, my dear, to wait. We are carrying at North Breck and Fifteen Acre. Good three miles off; the people will have dined before I'm back.

Mrs Bar. Lord bless you, Bargrove! don't fuss—can't they go on without you?

Bar. Yes, my dear, they can; but the question is, if they will. This fine weather mustn't be lost.

Mrs Bar. Nor your dinner either. It will be ready in five minutes.

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Bar. Well, well,—where's Lucy?

Mrs Bar. Upstairs, with Miss Agnes. She's a sweet young lady.

Bar. Yes, and so mild, and so good-tempered.

Mrs Bar. That sweet temper of hers don't come from her mother, but from me.

Bar. From you?

Mrs Bar. Didn't I suckle her as well as Master Edward? 'Tis the milk makes the nature.

Bar. Good-natured you are, my dear, that's certain. There may be something in it, for look at Peter. He was nursed by that foolish woman, Sally Stone, when you put him away for Master Edward. I can make nothing of Peter, dame.

Mrs Bar. Well, really Mr Bargrove, I can't find much fault in him. Bating that he's idle, and extravagant, and won't mind what's said to him, and don't try to please you, and talks foolishly, I see no harm in the boy.

Bar. No harm—heh?

Mrs Bar. All this may appear improper in another, but somehow, it does not appear so very bad in one's own child.

Bar. He's his mother's child, that's plain; but I say (striking his stick upon the ground), he's a foolish, ungrateful, wicked boy.

Mrs Bar. Not wicked, Bargrove, don't say that. He is a little foolish, I grant, but then he's young; and, by-and-bye, he'll grow tired of being idle.

Bar. That's what no one was ever tired of, when he once took a liking to it. But, however, I will try if I can't bring him to his senses. Where is he now?

Mrs Bar. Heaven knows! He was up very early for him this morning, and took a book with him, so you see there are some signs of amendment.

Bar. Well, well,—we shall see. But I think dinner must be ready by this time. Come, my dear, time's precious.

[*Exeunt ambo.*

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Enter Agnes, in a walking dress, with Lucy.

Agnes. Now, Lucy dear, I will stay no longer, for your dinner is ready.

Lucy. Indeed, Miss Agnes, I beg that you will not go so soon. Of what consequence is it when I dine? I dine every day, but every day I am not honoured with your company.

Agnes. Nonsense—honoured. How you have altered in your behaviour to me lately—so formal, and so stiff, now, I quite hate you.

Lucy. Indeed my heart is neither formal nor stiff; but when I was familiar with you, I was young, and knew not the difference of our situations. I do now, and only pay respect to whom respect is due.

Agnes. Then you have become very stupid, and I shall detest you. That's all your knowledge will have gained you, Miss Lucy; nay more, I will not come here so often if you do not treat me as you used to do, and call me Agnes.

Lucy. Rather than that you should stay away, I will obey you, but I still think that it is not right. Consider, when we used to learn and play together, I called your brother "Edward," but how improper it would be if I were to call him so now.

Agnes. I don't think that his objections would be very decided, Lucy, as you happen to be such a pretty girl: however, I'll ask him, when he comes home to-day.

Lucy. Ah, Miss Agnes, pray, pray, don't mention it.

Agnes. Well, you are pretty enough without blushing so much. I'll let you off, provided you speak to me as I wish. But now, Miss Gravity, I've a secret to tell you.

Lucy. A secret?

Agnes. I have found out that there's a gang of gipsies in the wood.

Lucy. Is that your secret? Then dame Fowler was let into it last night, for she lost her best turkey, and she frets about it very much. It was the one that she intended to send to the Hall on Christmas Day.

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Agnes. But that is not the secret, Lucy. The real secret is—that I wish to have my fortune told; and you must contrive with me how to manage it.

Lucy. Shall I send the woman up to the Hall; she was here yesterday.

Agnes. No, no, you stupid thing. Lady Etheridge hates the very name of a gipsy. One was at the Hall yesterday, and she threatened her with Bridewell.

Lucy. Well then, shall I find out where they are? and we can go together.

Agnes. That's exactly what I wish, Lucy; but it must be soon, as we expect my brother and his friend belonging to the same regiment, and I must not be out of the way when they arrive.

Lucy. Who is this friend?

Agnes. A Captain Mertoun. (*Sighs.*) I have seen him before.

Lucy. He is then acquainted with your family?

Agnes. Not with my father and mother. When I was at Cheltenham with my aunt, I met him very often. There is a little secret there, too, Lucy.

Lucy. Another?

Agnes. Yes, another. Don't you long to hear it?

Lucy. (*Smiling.*) If you long to tell it?

Agnes. How provoking you are! You know I do. Well, then, this Captain Mertoun is—a very handsome man.

Lucy. Is that all?

Agnes. No; but it's something to the point, because he says he is very much in love with me.

Lucy. I'll believe that. Who is not?

Agnes. Don't be silly, Lucy; but the last part of the secret is the most important. I think, Lucy, that I like him—that is—a little—a very little. Now, since my father has told me he was coming down with my brother, I've been in a perfect fever, I don't know why—and so—and so—that is the reason why I wish to have my fortune told. I know that it's very silly, and all nonsense; but still nonsense is very agreeable sometimes.

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Lucy. But you will not believe a word that you are told.

Agnes. No, not one word, unless it happens to meet with my own wishes; and then you know.—But I really must be gone. Good-bye, Lucy. Remember our meeting in the wood. [*Exit Agnes.*]

Lucy. God bless thee, dearest Agnes; yet would that I had never seen either you or your brother! What is intended in kindness is, too often, cruelty. The kiss of affection that is implanted on the lips, may take so deep a root, as to entwine the heart. Heigho! What an elegant young man is Captain Etheridge! I recollect, when we used to romp, and quarrel, and kiss; then, I had no fear of him: and now, if he but speaks to me, I tremble, and feel my face burn with blushes. Heigho!—this world demands more philosophy than is usually possessed by a girl of nineteen.

Scene V.

The Gipsy encampment.—Enter Nelly.

Nelly. I have been plotting my revenge on Lady Etheridge; and I have a scheme which may succeed. I must, however, be guided by circumstances; yet, by the means of this senseless fool, I hope to make much mischief. O, here he comes.

Enter Peter.

Good day, again. I have been waiting for you. The stars are in the ascendant.

Peter. I thought they were up in the sky.

Nelly. Exactly. Now let me read the lines on your face. The finest gentleman in the land would give half his fortune for those lines.

Peter. Then pray, what is my fortune, good woman?

Nelly. One that requires gold, with which to cross my hand; and then it would be too cheap.

Peter. Gold! Won't a shilling do?

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Nelly. I wish you good-day, Sir; I thought you were a gentleman.

Peter. Well, so I am; but gentlemen are not always very flush of guineas. However, I have one here, and it shall go for my fortune. [*Gives money.*]

Nelly. The planet, Georgium Sidum, says, that you are the son of the steward, and your name is Bargrove.

Peter. Now, that is surprising!

Nelly. But Georgium Sidum tells not the truth.

Peter. Do the stars ever lie?

Nelly. O, the new ones do. They have not been long in the business. But the old ones never fail.

Peter. Astonishing! and only supposed to be Bargrove's son. Go on, good woman, go on. What do the old planets say?

Nelly. Nay, I must stop a little. That is all I can see just now; but more will be revealed to me by-and-bye. What does Artemidorus say in his ninety-ninth chapter, written in double Chaldean

before letters were invented?

Peter. I don't know. What does he say?

Nelly. That you must gain great truths by little ones. So you must tell me all you know about yourself, and I shall be able to find out more.

Peter. I was educated with Mr Edward Etheridge; and, when our education was completed, he went into the army and I was sent home to my father's—that is—to Mr Bargrove's.

Nelly. I understand.

Peter. This Mr Bargrove proposed that I should accompany him every day to obtain a knowledge of agriculture, and employ my evenings in keeping the accounts, that I might be able to succeed him in his office of steward.

Nelly. Exactly—but the stars tell me that you did not like it.

Peter. Couldn't bear it. Why, my boots, which I am so particular in having well polished, were so loaded with clay the very first time, that I could hardly lift my legs, and I stumbled into a ditch filled with stinging nettles; so I gave it up, and the old gentleman constantly swears that I am no son of his.

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Nelly. Did not I, the priestess of the stars, tell you so?

Peter. But if I am no son of his, the question is, "Whose son am I?"

Nelly. A gentleman's son, no doubt. But I shall discover more when I consult the stars anon. You must return.

Peter. That I surely will. Consult the old stars, if you please.

Nelly. I always do, sir; no dependence upon the others. In fact, we've quarrelled. I am hardly on speaking terms with them.

Peter. Speaking terms with the stars! How intimate you must be!

Nelly. You'll have to cross my hand again. Golden truths will not come out without gold.

Peter. What! gold again?

Nelly. Yes, another guinea. One for telling you who you are not, and another for telling you who you are. Don't you see?

Peter. One for telling me who I am not. Yes, that's told; I am not my father's son. They say it's a wise man who knows his own father.

Nelly. Wisely said.

Peter. And another for telling me who I am. Well, I think that is as well worth a guinea as the other.

Nelly. Better, I should imagine.

Peter. Yes, better. Well, good-bye, good woman. I'll be sure to be here.

Nelly. Fail not, or you'll repent it. (*Exit Peter.*) The gudgeon takes the bait kindly. Peter, Peter, you had always an immense swallow. When Sally Stone nursed him, she was forced to feed the little cormorant with a tablespoon. As far as I can see, notwithstanding his partnership education with the young Squire, I think the grown babe should be fed with spoon-meat still. But what dainty lasses are these that come this way? Lucy and Miss Etheridge—how fortunate!

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Enter Agnes and Lucy.

Lucy. There is the woman; so, if you are inclined to hear her nonsense, you must wait the Sibyl's pleasure.

Agnes. I hope she will not keep us long, or my brother will arrive before we return. (*Nelly advances.*)

Nelly. Save you, fair lady! which of you will first look into futurity?

Lucy. This young lady. (*Pointing to Agnes.*)

Nelly. Then you must retire out of hearing.

Agnes. No, no; I have no secrets from her. She must stay.

Nelly. That cannot be, my art will be useless, and I decline the task.

Lucy. Yield to her mummery, it can make no difference.

Agnes. Well, then, Lucy, don't go far away.

Lucy. I'll be out of hearing, but not out of sight.

[*Lucy retires, and amuses herself in collecting flowers.*]

Nelly. Your name is Agnes.

Agnes. (laughing). I know that; and I am the daughter of Sir Gilbert of the Hall. Come, I'll help you, good woman.

Nelly. I did not say the last.

Agnes. What do you mean?

Nelly. I only said that your name was Agnes.

Agnes. Well, and I told you more than you knew.

Nelly. The stars reveal not what you assert.

Agnes. Well, then, I do; so I know more than the stars.

Nelly. You are wrong. You know not so much. You are not what you think you are.

Agnes. In the name of wonder, what do you mean?

Nelly. I have said it. Let me see your hand. Your fate is a dark one! Poor young lady! You will be crossed in everything.

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Agnes. (laughing faintly). Love included, I suppose. Shall I not marry the man of my affections?

Nelly. If he is more generous than men usually are.

Agnes. I cannot understand you.

Nelly. There is a dark cloud hanging over your fate. The storm will soon rage. Poor young lady!

Agnes. You almost frighten me. Speak more intelligibly.

Nelly. I have said enough. Agnes *Bargrove*, fare thee well!

Agnes. (astonished). Agnes *Bargrove*! what can she mean? Good woman, will you not tell me more?

Nelly. Go home, you will soon hear more from others. (*Aside.*) The wound is given; let it fester. (*Nelly retires.*)

Agnes. Lucy, Lucy! (*Lucy advances.*)

Lucy. Dear Agnes, how confused you are! What can be the matter?

Agnes. (much flurried). I can hardly tell. The woman was so strange. I was a little surprised—that's all. (*Recovering herself.*) Now, Lucy, it's your turn. (*Nelly comes forward.*) There, good woman, is your money. (*Nelly shakes her head, and refuses it.*) How very strange! Come, Lucy, let her tell your fortune, and then we'll go home.

Lucy. Nay, Agnes, I have no curiosity.

Agnes. I insist upon it, Lucy. I will not be the only foolish one. I shall retire until you call me.

Lucy. Well, then, as you please. I know my fortune but too well. (*Sighs.*) [*Agnes retires.*]

Nelly. (looking Lucy earnestly in the face for a time). You are perhaps come here for amusement. In olden times there were many false prophets; but still, some of them were true; so, in these days, there are many who pretend to our art, but really few who do possess it. Do you take this for a mocking matter?

Lucy. Why, really, good woman, I will not promise to believe all you may say, but I shall be glad to listen to it.

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Nelly. I thought as much. But were I to tell you what is known only to yourself, would you then credit my asserted powers?

Lucy. I should certainly feel more inclined.

Nelly. There are marks upon your person known but to yourself.

Lucy. 'Tis very possible.

Nelly. Can you recollect them?

Lucy. (smiling incredulously). Can you describe them?

Nelly. To prove my power before I read your destiny, I will. You have a large mole beneath your right shoulder. (*Lucy starts.*) You have a scar on your instep by falling over a sickle in your infancy. Nay, more. (*Nelly whispers her.*)

Lucy. Merciful heavens!

Nelly. Are you satisfied?

Lucy. I'm a little frightened.

Nelly. So much to prove that I am no impostor. Now, let me see your hand. (*Lucy holds out her hand trembling.*) You have lost your fortune, and your rank in society—but you will soon regain them. The cloud is dispersing from before the sun of your happiness. Sweet girl, I wish thee joy!

Lucy. What mean you?

Nelly. Others will tell you soon. There are two in the secret, Nelly Armstrong and Martha Bargrove.

Lucy. My mother!

Nelly. No, not your mother. I said, Martha Bargrove. (*Lets go her hand.*) Lucy Etheridge, fare thee well. [*Exit Nelly.*]

Lucy. O God! Agnes, Agnes! (*Agnes runs up to her.*)

Agnes. My dear Lucy, has she frightened you too?

Lucy. O yes! indeed she has. Let us go home, Miss Agnes, I am so unhappy.

Agnes. So am I, Lucy. I wish we had never seen the odious woman.

[*Exeunt ambo, arm in arm, crying.*]

Act II. Scene I.

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A Drawing-room in the Hall.

Enter Captain Etheridge, Captain Mertoun, and William.

Will. Sir Gilbert be within gunshot, Captain Edward, and I'll make sail after him. I think he have the gardener in tow.

Capt. Eth. You will oblige me, William. How are you, my good fellow? You look dull; what's the news here?

Will. Why, Mr Edward, mortal bad. There be a misfortune happened in the family this morning.

Capt. Eth. Not to my father, I trust?

Capt. Mer. Not to Miss Etheridge?

Will. No; it be, Mr Edward, that Sir Gilbert have given me warning, and I have a month's law to find another berth.

(*Captain Etheridge and Mertoun look at each other, and laugh.*)

Capt. Eth. Well, William, I think I can doctor that.

Will. I'se afraid not, Mr Edward, for the Admiral be superseded—has hauled down his flag, and I'd as soon have my discharge as not. (*Putting his finger to his nose.*) A woman be at the bottom of all mischief.

Capt. Eth. You observe, Mertoun, how things are managed here. Now if any difference or dispute arise between my father and mother, do you immediately espouse the cause of the lady. Recollect, I'll bear you harmless.

Capt. Mer. I am guided by you; but I'm going to observe—

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Adm. My dear Edward, welcome again to your inheritance!

Capt. Eth. Thanks, my dear father. Allow me to introduce to you my most particular friend, Captain Mertoun, of our regiment.

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Adm. Sir, you have the welcome of a father who loves all whom his children love.

Capt. Mer. Sir Gilbert, I am indeed flattered by your kind expressions.

Enter Lady Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. My dear mother, permit me to renew my duty.

Lady Eth. Edward, I have been a martyr to painful anxiety and maternal sentiment; but my sighs are accomplished now that I embrace my only son. (*Turning to Mertoun, and curtseying haughtily.*) Your friend?

Capt. Eth. My friend is Captain Mertoun, who is most anxious to pay his homage, and I trust will find favour in the sight of Lady Etheridge.

Capt. Mer. That were indeed anticipating bliss. (*Bowing very low.*)

Lady Eth. Captain Mertoun, you may approximate our kindly feelings.

Capt. Mer. Lady Etheridge, I duly appreciate the distinction. (*Aside to Etheridge.*) Why don't you ask after your sister?

Capt. Eth. Where is my sister Agnes, my dear mother? How is it that she is not here to receive her brother?

Lady Eth. Indeed, Edward, I am ashamed to say that, forgetful of her aristocratic birth, she has permitted herself to be seduced by bad company.

Adm. (aside). Whew! now for a breeze!

Capt. Eth. Bad company. Did I hear rightly? Surely, my lady—

Lady Eth. I have said it, Edward; and I am sorry to add, that the admiral eggs her on. O pardon, Captain Mertoun, the plebeian slip of the tongue! I mean to say corroborates the mésalliance.

Capt. Mer. (aside to Etheridge) For Heaven's sake, ask her to explain.

Capt. Eth. What would you infer, my lady? Surely my sister cannot so far forget herself, much less my father approve of such conduct.

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Adm. Edward, this bad company is—Lucy Bargrove.

Lady Eth. Yes, Sir Gilbert, I am sorry to retort before strangers; but just as you have confessed, it is even so. My daughter has formed an unequal connection, and, and dissipates her rank among unequal associates.

Capt. Eth. I am truly glad that it is no worse, my lady.

Lady Eth. What can be worse, sir? Rank is rank; but your father has absorbed notions which disgrace his baronetage.

Adm. Lady Etheridge, if I never disgrace my title by any other act, I shall be proud of the manner in which I have supported it. (*Aside.*) I won't give up this point if I can help it.

Lady Eth. You hear, Edward—I am quite cagged—I am all confusion—stigmatised, I mean, by his conduct. His infatuation is quite adulterous!

Capt. Eth. (aside). Now, Mertoun, coincide with her. Never mind me or my father.

Lady Eth. Did you speak, Captain Mertoun?

Capt. Mer. I did, my lady, but venture to express to Captain Etheridge my admiration of the elegance and elevation of your sentiments.

Adm. (aside). What the devil does he interfere for? confounded puppy.

Lady Eth. Captain Mertoun, I conceive at once that you are of *Oh tone*. I am sorry that family squabbles—pardon the low word—Captain Mertoun, we cannot touch pitch without being defiled—(*looking at Sir Gilbert.*)

Adm. Sorry you ever meddled with a *tar*.

Lady Eth. I am grieved, Captain Mertoun, that domestic fractions should be promulgated on our first meeting, and feel much prepossession for your corroboration of the Admiral's folly.

Capt. Mer. I cannot but assert that his conduct is most indefensible. Sir Gilbert, allow me to take the privilege of an early friend, and to express my regret at your infatuation, and my hope that you will be swayed by superior judgment.

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Adm. Sir, I am much obliged to you for your friendly and polite interference. Does your friend stay dinner, Edward?

Lady Eth. Admiral, assuredly. I trust that Captain Mertoun will do us the honour of taking many dinners with us. At present, Captain Mertoun, you will excuse me; but when you are at leisure, I do not say that I will show you the grounds, as Sir Gilbert would have expressed himself; but I shall, as we of the *Oh tone* say, be most happy to be your cicero. [*Exit Lady Etheridge.*]

Adm. (angrily to Captain Mertoun.) And pray, sir, what do you mean by offering your opinion so confounded freely, and disapproving of my conduct?

Capt. Eth. My dear father, you must blame me, and not him. Let us retire to your library, and I will explain everything. You will find that Captain Mertoun has no other object in view than the happiness of all parties.

Adm. Then I can tell Captain Mertoun, that interfering between man and wife is not the way to secure his own.

Capt. Mer. Your son will soon offer a satisfactory explanation. It is most true that the liberty I have taken with you is most essential to my happiness.

Adm. (going up and lifting his cane). The devil it is! but not to all parties, Captain Mertoun; and I am sorry to say this to any friend of my son's—but you are a d—d impudent puppy, and I expect satisfaction.

Capt. Eth. That you shall have, sir, from me, who requested Captain Mertoun to follow that line of conduct. Do me the favour to retire to the library.

Adm. You requested him to insult your father? I am not so old as to be insulted with impunity; and I hope, as you are a party, that the explanation will be satisfactory. (*Walks about in a rage.*) Captain Mertoun, you'll excuse us. There are the grounds, and as you have been so very assiduous to fall out with me, you may be equally so to fall in with Lady Etheridge. (*Bowing in derision very low, then exit, attended by Captain Etheridge.*)

Capt. Mer. Well, this is excellent, that a man, who is henpecked till he has not a decent feather left, should be jealous about such a woman. But I feel assured that Etheridge will make all right. I shall take the advice of the old gentleman, and walk about the grounds, perhaps, as he says, I may fall in with Lady Etheridge and improve my acquaintance. [*Exit.*]

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Scene II.

The Gipsy encampment in the wood.

Nelly comes forward.

Nelly. Lady Etheridge, you spurned me! you chased me from your doors! what! shall humanity in any shape be worried by your pampered dogs? when youth was fresh upon our brows, our steps light upon the green, and our hearts still more light with innocence, had then the Lady Etheridge more admirers than the poor outcast gipsy, Nelly Armstrong? Have you forgotten your origin, proud lady of the Hall? Had his partial eyes fallen upon me when Sir Gilbert chose his wife from among the cottage maidens, and you, proud lady, had come hungry and in rags to my door, should I have unslipped the hounds upon your cry for charity? No, no, no! You have given insult—expect retaliation. But here comes one of my instruments. Unbend, Eleanor Armstrong, from this lofty carriage, and be again the miserable—the cheating gipsy.

Enter young Bargrove.

Nelly. A fine morning, most fortunate sir.

Peter. Well, my good woman, have you found it out?

Nelly. What, youth of a brilliant horoscope, do you mean the starlit mystery? It is revealed, but the planets have been very cross. I watched—and watched—and watched—

Peter. Well, and what did you discover?

Nelly. The discovery, sir, is precious. Golden, sir, golden! A guinea! it is worth twenty!

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Peter. A bargain's a bargain. There's your guinea (*Takes out his purse and gives money.*) And now, let me have my value for it.

Nelly. I cast a trine through the rays of Saturn, and placing a quadrature upon his seventh house, I travelled wearily through the heavens; and, at last, this afternoon, at about thirty-five minutes, forty-nine seconds, after the hour of three, I discovered that your mother was wet nurse to both Sir Gilbert's children.

Peter. Miraculous! and so indeed she was!

Nelly. You were born at nearly the same time as Captain Etheridge, and was put out to nurse to one Sally Stone. I discovered all about this nursing and suckling in the milky way.

Peter. Did the stars there tell you all this? wonderful!

Nelly. Yes, and a great deal more. But first promise me, if your fate is no sordid one, you will not yourself be sordid; for now comes the great secret. Money, sir, money for the prophets. Suppose, now, I should prove you a gentleman of ten thousand a year; what would you give me then?

Peter. Give you! another guinea—perhaps two. (*Holding up his purse.*) Ten thousand a year! I would give you the whole purse.

Nelly. (*laying hold of one end of the purse.*) Then listen to me—you were changed at nurse. You are the son of Sir Gilbert Etheridge of the Hall!

Peter. The son of Sir Gilbert Etheridge! and changed by the nurse!

Nelly. Why don't you clasp your hands, turn up your eyes, and thank the stars, that have gained for you your patrimony?

Peter. So I will (*Clasps his hands, and lets the purse go, Nelly pockets it.*) But what nurse changed me?

Nelly. Why, Mrs Bargrove to be sure, who nursed you, and put her own son in your place.

Peter. Infamous old woman! but how is this possible?

Nelly. The stars have said it.

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Peter. My stars?

Nelly. Yes, yours.

Peter. But how am I to prove this?

Nelly. There again I can assist you. Did you never hear of a girl called Nelly Armstrong?

Peter. To be sure—she nursed my sister, that is, she nursed Lucy Bargrove. A sad reprobate was Nelly—

Nelly. Reprobate in your teeth, young man! Speak of that person with the utmost respect; for 'tis she that will appear and divulge the whole. She was the accomplice of Mrs Bargrove; but you must lose no time; challenge Mrs Bargrove, and she may confess all. Then hasten to Lady Etheridge, and flinging yourself into her arms, sob out upon her bosom that she is your mother.

Peter. Excellent! it will be quite moving. I think a white handkerchief looks most interesting.

Nelly. I hope, when your honour comes to your property, you won't forget the gipsy woman.

Peter. Forget you, good woman! no, that I won't. You shall have a right of encampment here, and permission to rob any tenants upon the estate. Leave me.

[*Exit Nelly, curtsying several times to the ground.*]

Peter solus (strutting up and down). Well, I knew that I was a gentleman born, I knew I was (*rubbing his hands*). Why, what a shameful trick of the old woman. But I'll make her confess directly. And then—and then—I'll pardon her; for she has been very kind to me, that's certain. Sir Peter Etheridge with ten thousand a year! O! it will sound well. "Pray," says the traveller from London to one of my tenants, "whose superb mansion is that?" "Sir Peter's." Ha! ha! ha! "And that fine equipage?" "Sir Peter's." He! he! he! "And that beautiful lady all over jewels?" "Sir Peter's." Ho! ho! ho! Lucky, lucky Sir Peter! Hum! ha! I'll turn old Bargrove off for his impudence—that's decided; and I must cease to be cheerful and familiar. Melancholy—melancholy is your only gentlemanlike bearing, as Shakespeare says. [*Exit.*]

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Scene III.

A room in the Hall.

Enter Agnes, with her bonnet in her hand. She sits down, musing.

Agnes. I never was so unhappy before; for that gipsy woman has raised doubts and fears which overwhelm me. Lucy, too, has been told something that affects her deeply. She never spoke during the whole way home, and seemed glad to get rid of me as she ran into her father's house. If this should be true (and why raise such a report without foundation? no one could be so wicked), what a discovery. At all events, until the truth be ascertained, I shall be miserable. Heigho! I anticipated so much pleasure in meeting my brother and Captain Mertoun. Now, what am I to do? If he were to—to—offer to—(*cries*). It would be so unhandsome, knowing this report, to say "Yes" (*sobs*), and so unkind to say "No!" O dear! I'm very miserable.

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Adm. Why, Agnes, the servants have been out everywhere seeking you. For shame! to be out of the way when you know that your brother was coming. Edward is much hurt at your indifference. Why, what's the matter, child? You appear to have been crying! My dear girl, what has vexed you? See, here they both come.

Enter Captain Etheridge and Mertoun.

Capt. Eth. My dear Agnes! (*Agnes runs up to him, embraces him, and then bursts into tears*). Why, what is the matter, my dear sister?

Agnes (hanging on her brother's neck). O! I am so rejoiced to see you!

Capt. Eth. (kisses her). You look the personification of joy! But, Agnes, here is one whom you have met before. Is it necessary to introduce Mertoun? (*Captain Mertoun advances.*)

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Agnes. O no! (*curtsying formally to Captain Mertoun, who offers his hand.*)

Capt. Mer. (confused, and apart to Captain Etheridge). Good heavens! I must have displeased her!

Capt. Eth. (aside). Impossible. I do not comprehend it.

Capt. Mer. I am most happy to renew our acquaintance, Miss Etheridge, under the sanction of your parents' roof.

Agnes (inclining her head). I shall always be most happy to receive my brother's friends.

Adm. Agnes, my love, the heat has overpowered you. You have hastened home too fast. Come out with me. You'll be better soon. [*Exeunt Sir Gilbert and Agnes.*]

Capt. Eth. What can it be? She is certainly distressed.

Capt. Mer. Her reception of me is, indeed, very different from what I had anticipated from the manner in which we parted. I must say, that either her conduct is very inconsistent, or her memory very treacherous.

Capt. Eth. Nay, Mertoun, it is some time since you met; and then, not under the auspices of her father's roof. Make some allowances for maidenly reserve.

Capt. Mer. Still I must say I am both mortified and disappointed.

Capt. Eth. I can feel for you; but knowing her generous character, I do not hesitate to take up her defence. Something presses heavily on her mind; what, I cannot surmise. But I will see her and find it out. Till then, wear your willow as gracefully as you do your laurels, and construe nothing to your disadvantage. This I ask in justice.

Capt. Mer. You may with confidence.

Capt. Eth. But here comes Lady Etheridge; now will I hasten to Agnes, and leave you to pay your court. Though you have already made a sufficiently favourable impression, yet still remember my injunctions.

Enter Lady Etheridge.

Lady Etheridge, my sister has just quitted the room far from well. If you will permit me, I will inquire after her, leaving Captain Mertoun to cultivate your acquaintance. [*Exit Capt. Etheridge.*] [Pg 122]

Capt. Mer. An honour, madam, I have long courted.

Lady Eth. O sir! if your leisure is now, as it were, unoccupied, I should be most happy to be your cicero. There are such grounds—

Capt. Mer. (ogling Lady Etheridge). For admiration, when I cast my eyes that way.

Lady Eth. The quintessence of politeness, I declare. This way, sir.

Capt. Mer. The arm of the humblest of your slaves.

(*Offering his arm.*)

Lady Eth. Infinitely honoured.

[*Exeunt ambo, ceremoniously, and mutually complimenting each other in dumb show.*]

Scene IV.

A Drawing-Room at the Hall.

Enter Sir Gilbert and Captain Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. Well, my dear father, where is Agnes?

Adm. She has been here just now; she appears to be much distressed about something. She will return directly.

Capt. Eth. What can have annoyed her?

Adm. That I don't know. Perhaps my Lady Etheridge. She wishes her to break off with Lucy Bargrove, but that I will resist—that is—that is—as much as I can.

Capt. Eth. My dear father, why do you submit to such tyranny? You, that have led fleets to victory, to be governed by a woman! A little firmness on your part would soon relieve you from your thralldom, and bring my mother to a proper sense of her duties.

Adm. (shaking his head). Too late—too late, Edward.

Capt. Eth. Never too late, sir. Take courage for once, and I'll answer for the success. With all respect to my mother, bullies are always cowards. [Pg 123]

Adm. Why, really, Edward, your advice is good; and, as I must always keep up a running fight, I don't see why we shouldn't have a general action.

Capt. Eth. Bravo, sir, a decisive engagement to your honour, if you only bring decision into play. I agree with you, in respect to Lucy Bargrove, heartily.

Adm. Edward, this girl has been so long with me, and has so entwined herself about my heart, that I cannot bear that she should be used ill. Your sister is fond of her, and I dote upon her.

Capt. Eth. Why, yes, sir, I acknowledge that she is a nice girl, but still, there is a line to be drawn. You would not, for instance, like to see her my wife.

Adm. Indeed but I would, Edward, for your own sake. You would have a fair prospect of matrimonial bliss. Talking about marriage, Edward, I again repeat, if, as you say, the happiness of Agnes depends upon her union with Mertoun, from the character you have given him, I shall raise no objections; but, as I do think in the disposal of her children, the mother has some claim to be consulted, I suppose he must be permitted to follow up your plan, rather a novel one, of bearding the father to gain the daughter.

Capt. Eth. You forget, sir, that you are to have a general action, and then it will be no longer necessary.

Enter Captain Mertoun.

Here comes Mertoun.

Adm. True, true, I forgot that. Well Captain Mertoun, I hope you have found amusement.

Capt. Mer. I have, sir, been walking with my lady, who has just gone into her room to take off her bonnet.

Enter Lady Etheridge and Agnes.

Lady Eth. I am quite exhausted with my pedestrian performance. (*Captain Mertoun hands a chair, she sits.*) Sir Gilbert, I am sorry to request that you will reprove your daughter for disobedience, for, notwithstanding my command of this morning, I find that she has again visited Lucy Bargrove. You say that you have no objection, but I tell you it shall not be, so there is an end of the matter, and of the discussion; and I insist upon it, Admiral, I insist that you give her a proper lecture in my presence. Now, Sir Gilbert.

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Capt. Eth. (aside). Now, sir, this is your time, we'll support you.

Adm. My dear Lucy is concerned—I don't feel that I want any support. Agnes, your mother has expressed her disapprobation at your visit to Lucy Bargrove.

Agnes. My dear father!

Adm. And I don't agree with your mother.

Lady Eth. Sir Gilbert!

Adm. I consider Lucy Bargrove a very amiable, good girl. I am partial to her, and have no objection to your visiting her whenever you please.

Lady Eth. (more loudly). Sir Gilbert!

Capt. Eth. (aside). Excellent, Sir Gilbert.

Adm. I repeat again, Agnes, that so far from agreeing with, I totally disagree with Lady, and, in this matter, I will not allow her to interfere in future. I intend to be *master of my own house!*

Lady Eth. (screaming). Sir Gilbert!!!

Capt. Eth. (aside). The day's our own.

Adm. (angrily). Yes, my lady, master of my own house! and expect humility and submission on your part. (*Softening.*) Although I never shall forget that I have advanced you to the dignity of Lady Etheridge.

Lady Eth. Captain Mertoun! Captain Mertoun! Oh! Oh! will nobody assist me? Oh! lead me to my room.

Adm. Edward, help your mother to her room, Captain Mertoun will assist you. [*Exeunt Lady Etheridge, Captains Mertoun and Etheridge.*]

Manent, Sir Gilbert and Agnes.

Adm. I have, my dear Agnes, as you perceive, made a resolution to be no longer second in my own house, but your good sense will point out to you, that your mother deserves your respect.

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Agnes. My dear father, I have never believed otherwise; but still I must rejoice at what has taken place, as I am convinced it is for her happiness, as well as for your own.

Adm. Come, dear, let us take a walk; I feel rather excited. No wonder, this being firm is one of the most unsteady feelings imaginable, for I have no sooner come to a resolution of making a stand, than I find my head running round consumedly. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.

A parlour in the homestead. Enter Dame Bargrove.

Mrs Bar. Well, I wonder whether Mr Bargrove intends to come home to-day. I never knew a man work so hard for his employer. He is an honest man, I will say that, and there are not many wives who are in their husband's secrets can say the same. Aye, and he's no poor man either. His own property to nurse, and twenty years' service with a liberal master have made him independent, and our boy and girl will be none the worse for it. Well, it has been fairly and honourably earned, and there are few who can count so much and say the same. I wish Peter were not so idle and thoughtless. It frets his father very much. Here he comes, and I'll try if I can't reason with him.

Enter Peter Bargrove with great consequence.

Mrs Bar. Well, Peter, have you seen your father?

Peter. I have not yet communicated the important intelligence.

Mrs Bar. Why, what's the matter with the boy? important intelligence!

Peter. I had forgot. She is still unaware of my discovery. Hem! (*walking up to his mother.*) good woman! look me full in the face.

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Mrs Bar. Good woman! Mercy on us, Peter! Is it thus you address your mother?

Peter. My mother! I tell you to look in my face.

Mrs Bar. Look in your face? Well, sir, I do look in your face; and a very foolish face you're making of it. Are you mad?

Peter. Mad! no, Mrs Bargrove, I'm not mad, but I've discovered all.

Mrs Bar. All!

Peter. Yes, all. Down on your knees and confess.

Mrs Bar. Confess! confess what? Down on my knees too? Why, you ungracious boy, what do you mean?

Enter Mr Bargrove, unperceived, who stands aside.

Peter. What do I mean? Confess your enormous guilt—the wicked trick that you played me in my infancy.

Mrs Bar. Dear me, dear me, my child is out of his senses.

Peter. Madam, I am in my senses, but I am not your child. Woman, you know it.

Mrs Bar. (*weeping*). O dear, O dear!

Peter. Tell me, will you confess at once, thou infamous—

[*Old Bargrove comes forward, and knocks Peter down with his cudgel.*]

Old Bar. I can't stand it any longer. What do you mean, you rascal, by calling your mother infamous?

Peter (*rubbing his head, and getting up slowly*). 'Tis well—'tis very well I had resolved before to turn you away; now you may expect the severest chastisement. Take warning this moment, you old—

Old Bar. (*lifting up his cudgel*). You old what?

Peter. I'll swear the peace against you. Take care what you are about. This is a violent assault, you know; and you don't know him you are beating.

Old Bar. Don't I?

Peter. No, you don't—but I'll tell you. This woman changed me at nurse, and I can prove it. I—yes —I, humble as I stand here, with my head broken also—am no less than Peter Etheridge—the young Squire!

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Old Bar. Look at the almanac, dame. Is the harvest moon at full? He's mad, indeed!

Peter. I am not. Mrs Bargrove, where is your accomplice, Nelly Armstrong? You see I know all. (*Mrs Bargrove weeps, but makes no answer.*) I say again confess all, and then, perhaps, I may pardon you, and let your husband keep his place.

Old Bar. Keep my place, and so you are Peter Etheridge, are you?

Peter. I am, and she knows it well.

Old Bar. Well, but I don't. I only know you as my foolish son, Peter Bargrove, and so long as you are so supposed to be, I shall not permit you to insult your mother. So, Mr Peter, I'll just take the liberty of giving you a little wholesome chastisement, which I hope may prove beneficial.

[*Old Bargrove beats Peter round the room, while Mrs Bargrove tries to prevent him.*]

Peter. I'll tell my mother, Lady Etheridge! that I will. I'll go directly.

[*Peter runs off. Mr and Mrs Bargrove sit down. Mrs Bargrove sobbing.*]

Old Bar. (*panting*). The scoundrel!

Enter Lucy, in her bonnet, from walking.

Lucy. Good Heavens, father, what was all that noise? Mother, why, what *is* the matter?

Old Bar. Matter enough; here's your brother Peter gone out of his senses. But I have rubbed him well down with this cudgel.

Mrs Bar. (*crying*). He's mad, Lucy, quite mad! Called me an infamous old woman, and said that I changed him at nurse. He will have it, that he is Peter Etheridge.

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Lucy (*confounded*). Good heavens! how strange! (*Aside*) I hardly know what to think. That gipsy's

knowledge—and now my brother—where could he have obtained similar information?—yet it cannot be, she is too good a woman.

Old Bar. What do you say, Lucy?

Lucy. Nothing, father.

Old Bar. Did you ever hear of such conduct?

Lucy. He must have been told so, or he never would have been so violent.

Old Bar. So violent! who could have told him such a falsehood? or who would have believed it for a moment, but a fool like him?

Mrs Bar. How could he have known anything about Nelly Armstrong?

Lucy. Nelly Armstrong! Did he mention her name?

Mrs Bar. Yes; he asked me where she was, and says, that she was my accomplice.

[*Lucy remains in thought.*]

Old Bar. Lucy, why don't you comfort your mother? One would think you were leagued with Peter.

Lucy. I, father!

Old Bar. Yes, you—you are not yourself. Pray have you heard anything of this before? (*Lucy silent.*) Answer me, girl, I say, have you before heard anything of this?

Lucy. I have.

Old Bar. And pray from whom?

Lucy. From a strange quarter, and most strangely told. I am not well, father. [*Lucy bursts into tears, and Exit.*]

Old Bar. (*after a pause, looking his wife earnestly in the face.*) Why, Dame Bargrove, how is this? Lucy is not a fool, and she is evidently of the same opinion as Peter. (*Walks up and down the room, and betrays much agitation.*) Dame, dame, if, for foolish love of thine own children, and I see that thou lovest the other two, as well, if not better than, these—if, I say, thou hast done this great wrong, down on thy knees, and confess it! Guilt can never prosper, and reparation must be made. [Pg 129]

Mrs Bar. (*throwing herself on her knees before her husband.*) On my knees, husband, I swear to you, before God, that these children, Peter and Lucy, were born to me, and are the fruits of our marriage. May I never prosper in this world, and lose all hope of mercy in the next, if I speak not now the truth.

Old Bar. (*taking up his wife and kissing her.*) I do believe thee, dame, thou hast ever been honest; but there is mischief brewing, and we must find out who are the authors of this report. Come, cheer up! All will be discovered, and all will be well.

[*Exeunt ambo; Old Bargrove leading off and caressing Mrs Bargrove.*]

Act III. Scene I.

A wood.—Enter Bill and Dick.

Dick. Well, Bill, what do ye say to it—will it do?

Bill. Can't tell—been thinking on it all night. Don't much like the consarn. There be too many on 'en.

Dick. Yes, and there be a mortal lot of plate, Bill, all kept in the butler's pantry. I met a servant at a public-house, who is going away, a sea chap, drinking malt like a fish, and I wormed all out of him. I think it be an easy job. The butler be fat and purse. The Admiral be old and toothless.

Bill. That's all right, so far, Dick; but then there be the two young officers just come down.

Dick. Yes, but I finds that they sleep quite t'other end of the house altogether; and d'ye see, Bill, the plate be only left out because they be come to the Hall. When they're off, the best of the pewter will be all locked up again; so, it's no use to wait till they start off. Come, what d'ye say, Bill? Jack and Nim be both of my mind. I see'd them this morning. [Pg 130]

Bill. (*thoughtfully.*) It be hanging matter, Dick.

Dick. Why, yes—so it be, if so be as we be found out first, and caught arterwards—and then go to 'sises—and then a true bill be given—and then we be found guilty, and arter all, gets no reprieve; but there be as many a slip between the noose and the neck, as there be 'tween the cup and the lip.

Bill. Well, Dick, I tell ye what, I've no objection to stand outside, and help carry off.

Dick. That be all we wants. One must look to the nag and cart, and that one must be you. Gie's your hand on it. [*They shake hands.*]

Bill. But I say, Dick, does Nelly know the business in hand?

Dick. Not yet.

Bill. I've an idea she won't allow it. I heard her talk summit about conscience—or the like of it.

Dick. Talk about fiddlesticks. Show her the pewter and she'll snap her fingers. Here she comes. I'll let her into the gammon.

Enter Nelly.

Nelly. Well, lads; what's in the wind?

Dick. Summit worth sneezing at, Nell. We are up to a rig to-night. Got a bit of a frolic for pewter.

Nelly. Aye, boys, where?

Dick. At the Hall here.

Nelly. It won't do.

Dick. Yes, but it will though.

Nelly. Yes it will do for you (*pointing to her neck*). I know the Hall well. It must not be thought of.

Dick. But we *have* thought on it, and *will* think on it. We be all determined, so there be an end of the matter, and an end of your palaver.

Nelly. I say no!

Dick. None o' your gammon—pewter arn't to be picked up in the highways. The thing be settled.

Nelly. Think no more on it.

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Dick. You mind your own business, missus. Go and tell fortunes to fools and women; leave men alone.

Nelly. I can tell your fortune. A dance in the air till you are out of breath.

Dick. Didn't require a wise woman to find out that. (*Aside.*) But we must keep our eyes upon her—she's queer. (*Aloud.*) Come Bill. [*Exeunt Bill and Dick.*]

Nelly sola.

Am I so fallen, never to recover? Must I sink deeper and deeper with these villains? Since I joined them they have never yet attempted anything like this. Petty theft, to support existence, I have participated in, but nothing more. Can I retreat? Ah, when I look upon these hills, and remember the time when I roved here, careless, innocent, and happy, how often do I wish that I could retrace my steps! Yonder is the church where I used to pray. How long is it now since I have dared perform that sacred duty? Yet, how often, since I have returned to this spot, have I longed to fall upon my knees! But I am an outcast. Pride and vanity have made me so, and pride has reduced me so to remain, although I loathe myself, and those connected with me. This intention of theirs has, however, resolved me. The deed shall not take place. I will, by some means, warn them at the Hall—a letter, but how to get it there? It shall be done, and done directly. They can but murder me if I am discovered, and what is my life now?—a burden to myself. [*Exit.*]

Scene II.

An Ornamental Shrubbery near the Lodge of the Hall.

Enter Peter Bargrove.

Peter. What a stupid old woman not to confess, after the stars had told the truth! As to old Bargrove, I will have my revenge upon him. Beat me! me, Sir Peter's heir to the property! How confounded strong he is! the old brute! Out of respect to his age, I did not strike him again; but I should like to see, just like to see the next man who will venture to lay his stick across *my* back. Now I'll to the Hall, and make myself known to Lady Etheridge. How affected she will be! I'll lay my life there will be a scene. Who comes here? O, the fictitious heir to the property, Captain Bargrove, as he will find himself in a very short time. I must hold myself rather high; it will prepare him, as it were, for the bad news. Poor fellow!

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Enter Captain Etheridge and Mertoun, from the gates of the Lodge.

Capt. Eth. (holding out his hand). Hail! Peter, my good fellow! how are you all at home?

Peter. (turning away, and folding his arms). Pretty well, Captain.

Capt. Mer. (aside). I say, Etheridge, that's a dead cut; who is your friend?

Capt. Eth. (astonished). What's the matter now? I think, Mr Peter, when I offer my hand, it is not

very courteous in you to refuse it.

Peter. (ostentatiously). Property, Captain, is property. You'll allow that. My hand is my own, and I have it in possession. You'll allow that. But there is other property, which at present is not in my possession, but which you will allow to be hereafter. (*Aside.*) That's a hard hit.

Capt. Mer. Property is property, Etheridge, and to judge by his manners, your friend must have an excess of it in possession.

Capt. Eth. Property is property, but I doubt if my friend has much of it in possession.

Peter. No, but I hope to have.

Capt. Eth. Well, I hope so too. But what's the matter with you, Peter?

Peter. Excessively familiar!

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Capt. Mer. Upon my word, Etheridge I wonder at your patience. Who is the brute?

Peter. Brute, sir, did you say brute?

Capt. Mer. Yes, sir, I did.

Peter. Then, sir, if you say brute, I beg to observe to you, sir, that—that—

Capt. Mer. What? Well, sir!

Peter. That, sir, a brute is a beast, sir—

Capt. Mer. Exactly.

Peter. And if that's what you meant, there's no offence. Now, if you say brute beast—

Capt. Mer. Well, sir, I do say so.

Peter. You do—you do say so? Well, then, sir, allow me to tell you, in very positive terms, sir, that you have been guilty of—of tautology.

Capt. Mer. Your friend is very harmless, Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. I am aware of that; but still I was not prepared for this impertinence, considering the obligations he is under to my family.

Peter. Obligations, sir, what obligations? Do you refer to the advantages that you had in being educated with me?

Capt. Eth. I have ever considered the reverse; and that it was you who had the advantages, had you had sense enough to profit by them.

Peter. Now, observe, there's your mistake.

Capt. Eth. to Capt. Mer. The fool is mad.

Peter. Mad, Captain what's your name?

Capt. Eth. Captain what's-your-name, Peter, don't stand insult.

Peter. There is no insult. I repeat again, Captain what's-your-name. Do you know your name?

Capt. Eth. to Capt. Mer. Why, he's as mad as a March hare.

Capt. Mer. Yes, but not so hot as a Welsh rabbit.

Peter. A rabbit—that's a boroughmonger! Now I ought to take that up, it is a downright insult; but perhaps he did not mean it. Captain what's-your-name, I tell you a secret; you don't know your own name, no, nor you don't know your station in life.

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Capt. Eth. I'm sure you forget yours, Mr Peter. How long has this change taken place?

Peter. Ask your nurse. (*Aside.*) That was a hard hit; he must smell a rat now.

Capt. Eth. Ask my nurse!

Capt. Mer. Ask your granny, Etheridge; upon my soul, it's as good as a play.

Capt. Eth. To the audience, perhaps; but I feel rather inclined to be in earnest. Hark you, Mr Peter, do you know I am very particular in payment, and always give every man his due.

Peter. That's it exactly. All that I wish is, that you would give me mine; but if you don't—I shall oblige you, depend upon it.

Capt. Mer. I rather expect he will, Etheridge, if he goes on much longer.

Peter. Thank you for taking my part. That's handsome. Perhaps you will persuade him to do me justice.

Capt. Mer. If you had been in my hands, I should have done you justice long before this.

Peter. "There's virtue still extant," as the play has it. Sir, as you have joined my side, I'll permit

you to shake hands with me.

Capt. Mer. O certainly! we always do preparatory to a set-to. Now, then, take my advice—on your guard!

Peter (aside). Now I don't fear him. (*Aloud.*) Captain what's-your-name, shall I tell you your fortune?

Capt. Eth. O certainly! you look like a conjuror.

Peter. It is your fortune, sir, to be under the baleful influence of the stars, Georgium Sidum and Copernicum. In a few days you will find your name to be *Bargrove*, and you will have to change situations with me.

Capt. Eth. Indeed!

Peter. Yes, Captain Bargrove, so it is. A wicked woman changed us in our cradles; but the secret is come out, and evidence is at hand. You must return to obscurity, whilst I emerge from mine. The stars will have it so. Your fortune's told. [Pg 135]

Capt. Eth. Nonsense! the fool has been imposed upon. Now, Mr Peter, I'll tell your fortune.

Peter. I thank you. It has been already told to my satisfaction.

Capt. Eth. Nevertheless, it must be told again, although, perhaps, not to your satisfaction. Mr Peter, I can put up with folly, but never with impertinence. Mars and Saturn are about to be in strong opposition, and heavy Saturn will soon jump about like Mercury. The stars will have it so.

Peter. I don't comprehend that.

Capt. Eth. It shall be explained. You, Peter Bargrove, have been excessively insolent to me, Edward Etheridge; in consequence, I shall now take the liberty of giving you a little wholesome correction. [*Seizes Peter by the collar.*]

Capt. Mer. Don't use violence to the natural. He offends more in ignorance than malice.

Peter. Thank you, sir. I see that you are a well-behaved gentleman. O sir! sir! 'tis a vile, ungrateful world. I intended to do something for that young man. (*Captain Etheridge shakes him.*) Why, yes, I did. I not only intended to allow you forty pounds a year, but to do what would be more agreeable to your sister Agnes.

Capt. Eth. Agreeable to Miss Etheridge! What do you mean, sir?

Peter. Mean—why, I'm not quite sure—recollect, I don't promise; but I was thinking of marrying her. (*Captain Mertoun flies at him, and seizes him by the collar on the other side. They both shake him violently.*)

Capt. Eth. { my sister, }
} You marry { you scoundrel!
Capt. Mer. { Miss Etheridge, }

Capt. Mer. (letting him go). I am sorry that I was provoked to lay hands on him. Etheridge, I'll leave his chastisement entirely to you.

Peter. Thank you, sir; I always thought ye were on my side. I suppose that was a mistake just now. [Pg 136]

Capt. Mer. I certainly had no right to interfere between you and Captain Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. (still holding Peter by the collar). But, Mr Peter, we do not part yet. You may have made your peace with Captain Mertoun, but not with me. How dare you insult me thus?

Peter. I insult you! (*To Captain Mertoun.*) Arn't you of my side?

Capt. Mer. (laughing). Yes; if you are knocked down, I, as your second, will help you up again, no more.

Peter. Well—but I'm not a nine-pin. Why not prevent him from knocking me down?

Capt. Mer. The stars won't permit that.

Capt. Eth. And the stars ordain this. (*Lifting his cane.*)

Peter. Captain Etheridge, one word; let go my collar, behave like a reasonable man, and I now promise, upon my word of honour, that I will elevate your sister to my—nuptial bed. (*Captain Mertoun shakes his cane, and makes signs to Captain Etheridge to thrash him.*)

Capt. Eth. I can bear no more. (*Beats Peter round the stage.*)

Peter. Oh! oh! My stars again. Why don't you help me, sir?

Capt. Mer. You are not down yet, Peter. (*Captain Etheridge continues striking.*)

Peter (throwing himself down, and panting). Now I am.

Capt. Mer. Yes, and now I may help you up. Then you may go at it again.

Peter. What! am I to have more of it if I am up?

Capt. Mer. I rather suspect so.

Peter. Then I prefer lying here. You need not wait, Captain Bargrove. I sha'n't get up this half-hour. (*Rubbing his shoulders.*)

Capt. Eth. You observe, Peter, I told you your fortune correctly. The stars would have it so. I hope, when next we meet, you will be a little more reasonable, and also a little more respectful. If not, I hold your fortune in my hands. (*Holding up his cane.*)

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Peter. Didn't I tell you that you did? Why don't you return it like an honest man? As I said before, I'll make you an allowance.

Capt. Eth. That's more than I will for you, if I have any more impertinence. Come, Mertoun, he'll not come to time, that's clear.

Capt. Mer. No, nor to his fortune or title either, I'm afraid. Good morning, Peter. Ha! ha! ha!

Capt. Eth. Farewell, Sir Peter! Ha! ha! ha! [*Exeunt Captains Mertoun and Etheridge.*]

Peter (sitting up). *Come to time*—nor to my title and fortune. Well, I hope they'll both come to the gallows. I thought of that as a repartee when they were here, but it was too good to be thrown away upon them. (*Rises.*) It *is* very odd that nobody will believe me when the facts are so plain. As Shakespeare says, the "ladder of my ambition is so hard to climb." I presume these are all the sticks I am to get up by. I'm almost tired of it already; but, however, after two misses comes a hit; and I'll try the last. Now to Lady Etheridge, discover myself to her, sob upon her bosom, as the gipsy foretold I should; and then if she is but on my side, why I defy all the men in the family. [*Exit.*]

Scene III.

A parlour in the homestead.

Enter Old Bargrove and Mrs Bargrove.

Old Bar. Why, dame, I can make nothing out of it. I have questioned Lucy as closely as possible, and it appears that it was a gipsy woman who told their fortunes. But still, as Lucy told me the story, there is something very strange about it.

Mrs Bar. Lucy appears to take it very much to heart, poor thing!

Old Bar. She does, dame, but in the right way. She thinks of others, and not of herself. I tell you this, dame, if I thought that Lucy was not my daughter, it would almost break my heart.

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Mrs Bar. She's a good girl, and content with her father and mother. I only wish that Peter was the same.

Old Bar. Peter was born a fool, dame, and he'll never be anything else. But I hope this may prove of service to him. I hear that he has already been up to the Hall.

Mrs Bar. Had we not better go there, too, Bargrove, and see Sir Gilbert, or they may suppose we be parties to the report.

Old Bar. Why should they, and who knows the report as yet?

Mrs Bar. O, everybody! I was told of it ten minutes back by Mrs Benson. She heard it of the footman, William. He says, that Captain Etheridge has given Peter a sound thrashing.

Old Bar. Did he? Then I am very much indebted to him. I'll tell you what, dame, I'll to the wood and find out this gipsy woman; and if threatening her with the stocks and Bridewell won't make her confess, I have a warrant in my pocket, just made out by the magistrates' clerk, for the apprehension of the gang, on suspicion of their stealing Mrs Fowler's turkey, and Farmer Groves' geese. We'll first see what can be done there; and then I'll come back, and we'll walk up to the Hall.

Mrs Bar. Do so, Bargrove; let us show that we've a clear conscience, at all events.

Old Bar. I'll be back in an hour, dame; I must go down to Wilson, the constable. [*Exit old Bar.*]

Mrs Bar. I never was so put out in my life. That boy Peter's folly worries me to death. Who comes here? why, it's Captain Etheridge, I do declare. I am almost afraid to see one of the family now.

Enter Captain Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. My dear Mrs Bargrove, with your permission. (*Kissing her.*) I can't leave off my old habit of kissing my nurse. How are you, and your husband, and how is pretty Lucy?

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Mrs Bar. Quite well, thank you, Mr Edward. Dear me, what a man you do grow!

Capt. Eth. If I am not a man at five-and-twenty, dame, I never shall be.

Mrs Bar. Five-and-twenty! dear heart! so it is—but time does fly fast! It appears to me but the other day that I had you in my arms. How does Miss Agnes to-day?

Capt. Eth. Not very well, dame, she has something to vex her. Indeed, there's a rumour flying about, and I've come down to speak with you and Lucy on the subject.

Mrs Bar. I know it all; but it's all false, Mr Edward, all stuff and nonsense from beginning to end. Bargrove has now gone to sift the matter. I'm sure I ought to know. A pretty trouble I've had about it; what with foolish Peter, even Bargrove himself spoke to me as if I could have been guilty of such an act.

Capt. Eth. What does Lucy think of it?

Mrs Bar. Lucy is more vexed than any of us. I really think, if she thought it true, that she would make away with herself.

Capt. Eth. What! at the idea of being Miss Etheridge! no cause that for suicide either.

Mrs Bar. No, not that, Captain Etheridge; but at the idea of rising in the world at the expense of those to whom she owes both love and gratitude. She's a good girl, Captain Etheridge.

Capt. Eth. I agree with you, dame, she's a very sweet girl. I wish to speak to her. Will you send her to me?

Mrs Bar. To be sure I will, Master Edward. She'll be glad to see you. She's always asking after you when you be away. [*Exit Mrs Bargrove.*]

Capt. Eth. I did but say a few words to her on my arrival. I dared not trust myself with more. She looked so beautiful. I have not been able to drive her from my thoughts ever since. Heigho! the conflict between love and pride is well contested: nothing but opportunity can give the victory to the one, and absence to the other. The more I know of her, the more deserving she appears. I often try to find faults in her, but I cannot discover them. I suppose that I inherit all my pride from my mother; that I cherish it in preference to my happiness is clear. But should this report prove true. Such things have occurred, and this may have been done without the knowledge of Mrs Bargrove. Agnes and Lucy then change situations; and I with that cub, Peter Bargrove. Very pleasant indeed! the former is not of much consequence but to be jostled out of my supposed birthright by a booby!

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Enter Lucy.

Capt. Eth. (going up to her and taking her by the hand). I took the liberty to request a few minutes' interview.

Lucy (smiling). Surely not a very great liberty with one whom you have known so long, and who is so very much indebted to your father.

Capt. Eth. Not so much as his children are indebted to your mother. But the object of my visit is, Lucy, to request that you will give me some information relative to a ridiculous report.

Lucy. I can, and I can assure you, Captain Etheridge, that I believe it to be without the shadow of a foundation. That Agnes and I were both taken by surprise at the moment, you must not wonder at; but on reflection, I am convinced that it is a fabrication. Indeed, the very idea is most injurious to the character of my mother.

Capt. Eth. I grant this; but the change may have taken place without the knowledge of your mother.

Lucy. It is possible, but barely possible, who but a foolish mother, blinded by partiality, would ever have been guilty of an act which never could benefit herself?

Capt. Eth. You are not well acquainted with the knavery of the world. To prove a fact like this, in a court of justice, would, in most instances, be rewarded liberally. Your brother, for instance, seems to view the affair in a very different light.

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Lucy. Captain Etheridge, I can honestly assert, that the rumour has occasioned to me the greatest uneasiness; and were it to prove true, I should be still more unhappy.

Capt. Eth. I cannot understand you. You would find yourself raised to a position in society which you did not expect; courted by those who at present disregard you, and moving in a circle to which, I must say, your beauty and your other natural gifts would contribute to adorn.

Lucy. Do not flatter me. I have a great dislike to it. I am, I trust, satisfied in my present situation; and, were I weak enough to indulge a transient feeling of vanity, the reminiscence which would instantly intrude, that my advancement was founded on the misery of those I love better than myself, would render it a source of deep and unceasing regret.

Capt. Eth. Those you love better than yourself, Lucy; who are they?

Lucy (confused). I referred to your sister Agnes, and to your father.

Capt. Eth. O, not to me!—then I am an *exclusion*.

Lucy. My gratitude to your father for his kindness, and our intimacy from childhood, ought to assure you, Captain Etheridge, that—I must ever wish for your happiness.

Capt. Eth. But suppose, my dear Lucy, this should prove to be true.

Lucy. I have already stated my sentiments.

Capt. Eth. You have, Lucy, generally, and much to your honour; but I am just putting the case for my amusement. Suppose it were proved true, you would not look down upon me as the child of your inferiors?

Lucy. Captain Etheridge, the very observation, for your amusement, is both ungenerous and unkind. I acknowledge our present inferiority, but not perhaps to the extent which would be exacted from your family. But oblige me by not carrying your suppositions any further. (*Tremulously.*) I am not very happy—as it is.

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Capt. Eth. Forgive me, Lucy, I did not intend to inflict pain. I am much too fond of you for that.

Lucy. Then why do you come here to make me miserable?

Capt. Eth. To make you miserable, my dear Lucy? I should, indeed, be a wretch, when my own happiness depends upon you. (*Lucy starts.*) (*Aside.*) It is out at last. Now there's no retreat in honour, and I thank heaven for it. (*Aloud.*) Did you hear me, Lucy? (*Lucy appears fainting, Etheridge supports her.*) Are you angry with me, Lucy? (*She weeps.*) I will confess to you honestly, that I have long struggled with my passion, but pride, ridiculous pride, has severely punished me for listening to its selfish dictates. Believe me, when I assert, that never was man more attached than I am to you. Answer me, Lucy, am I then indifferent to you?

Lucy. (separating herself gently from Captain Etheridge). I will be as candid as you have been. (*Remains for a little time silent.*) Whether you are indifferent to me or not, I must leave you to judge, from the effects of your communication; but I have also pride, and that pride never will allow me to enter a family against the wishes of those who have a right to be consulted on a question of such serious importance.

Capt. Eth. Only one question, Lucy. If my father consents to our union, will you be satisfied, without the concurrence of my mother?

Lucy. I should abide by the decision of my own father and mother; but, to confess the truth, I should not be satisfied.

Capt. Eth. Am I then to consider this as a mere act of duty, Lucy? Is there no feeling towards me?

Lucy. O yes! Why should I deny it? Indeed, Edward, if you could have read my heart for some time back, you would have found—

Capt. Eth. What, my dear Lucy?

Lucy. That your image has long occupied it—to its unhappiness.

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Capt. Eth. As yours has mine. Now I trust they will cherish their inmates with delight. Farewell, my dearest Lucy; I hasten to my father, and I've an idea in my brain which may procure the completion of our wishes.

[*They embrace. Exit Captain Etheridge.*]

Lucy. God give me strength, and make me sufficiently grateful! This was so unexpected. O Edward! Edward! you have opened such a vista of delight through the dark clouds that surrounded me, that I tremble as I gaze. How dreadful will be this suspense! Now am I arrived at the crisis of my fate. Either I am blessed beyond all hope, and all desert—or else—I die. [*Exit.*]

Scene IV.

A room in the Hall. Enter William, showing in Peter Bargrove.

Will. Step in this room, Mr Peter, and I'll let my lady know that you are here. I say, Mr Peter, what can you want with my lady?

Peter (consequentially). That cannot concern you, sir, I should think.

Will. What's the matter now? Why, you used to be civil and genteel. I say, I suppose you have found a mare's nest.

Peter. Don't be saucy, sir; go and deliver your message to my lady.

Will. And if it warn't for my own sake, I wouldn't now. [*Exit William.*]

Peter. We shall see some difference, I flatter myself, in their behaviour when they know who's who. How shall I address her? I never before dare speak to her, she is so haughty and proud. But she won't be so when she knows that I am her son. Pooh! I don't care for her now.

Re-enter William.

Will. My lady desires you to wait in the servants' hall till she sends for you. This way.

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Peter. Indeed, I will not—I'll wait here.

Will. O, very well—just as you please; but you'll take the consequences. Recollect, I have delivered my lady's message.

Peter. You have—and you may go.

Will. Well, I suspect you be got a cloth in the wind, Mr Peter. [*Exit William.*]

Peter. Means I'm drunk! Insolent fellow! I'll give him warning. I daresay my lady will be very angry till she knows the circumstances. Then the sooner I let it out the better (*walks about*). What care I. I'll be as brave as brass.

Lady Eth. (*without*). I'll be back directly.

Peter (*fanning himself with his hat*). O lud! here she comes. (*Recovering himself*). Who cares! Let her come.

Enter Lady Etheridge.

Lady Eth. You here, sir! I desired you to wait in the servants' hall.

Peter. Yes, my lady, you did—but—but—that is not a fit place for me.

Lady Eth. I am sure this room is not. Well, sir—what do you want?

Peter. Lady Etheridge, I have most important intelligence to communicate.

Lady Eth. Well, sir, let me hear it.

Peter. Lady Etheridge, prepare yourself for most unthought-of news.

Lady Eth. Will you speak out, fool?

Peter (*aside*). Fool! very maternal indeed. (*Aloud*.) If I am a fool, Lady Etheridge, why, all the worse for you.

Lady Eth. How, sir?

Peter. Yes, my lady, I think you'll treat me with more respect very soon.

Lady Eth. I shall order the servants to show you the door very soon.

Peter. If you do, my lady, I sha'n't go out of it.

Lady Eth. Insolent fellow, leave the room directly.

Peter. No, can't, upon my honour. (*Aside*.) How she'll beg my pardon for all this by-and-bye! It's really very pleasant. (*Aloud*.) I come, my lady, to communicate most important intelligence, but I want to break it to you carefully, lest you should be too much overcome with joy. Prepare yourself, my lady, for astounding news. You have a son! [Pg 145]

Lady Eth. (*Aside*.) The fellow's mad. (*Aloud*.) Well, sir, what's that to you?

Peter. A great deal, my lady; you don't know him.

Lady Eth. What does the fool mean?

Peter. No, my lady, you don't know him. Him whom you suppose to be your son—is—not your son.

Lady Eth. (*Startled*.) Indeed!

Peter. Yes, my lady, but your son is not far off.

Lady Eth. Are you deranged?

Peter. No; quite sensible—hear me out. Dame Bargrove nursed that son.

Lady Eth. Well, sir!

Peter. And, Lady Etheridge, we have proof positive, that the wicked woman changed him.

Lady Eth. (*screaming*.) Changed him!

Peter. Yes, changed him for her own. Edward Etheridge is Edward Bargrove, and Peter Bargrove Peter Etheridge. My dear, dear mother! (*Runs into her arms and kisses her repeatedly, notwithstanding her endeavours to prevent him.*)

Lady Eth. (*screaming*.) Oh! oh!

[*Peter leads her to a chair, and she goes into hysterics.*]

Peter. How very affecting.

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Adm. What's all this! Is Lady Etheridge ill?

Peter. A little overcome with joy, Sir Gilbert. It will be your turn next.

Adm. (*Going to Lady Etheridge, who recovers.*) What's the matter, my love?

Lady Eth. (*spitting*). O the wretch—the brute! He has taken liberties!

Adm. Taken liberties, the scoundrel! Pray, sir, what liberties have you taken with Lady Etheridge?

Peter. I only smothered her with kisses.

Adm. What do you mean, sir? Are you mad? Smothering her with kisses!

Peter. (*smiling*). I certainly did assume that privilege, Sir Gilbert.

Adm. Did you, you rascal? then I'll just assume another. (*Thrashes Peter round the room.*)

Peter. My father! O my honoured parent! Oh! your own son! Oh, your affectionate—

[*Exit Peter, pursued by the Admiral.*]

Adm. (*returning, puffing and blowing*). Why, positively, the fellow is stark, staring mad.

Enter Agnes, Captains Etheridge and Mertoun.

Capt. Eth. What is all this disturbance, my dear father?

Adm. What is it, why, I hardly can tell. There has been an impudent scoundrel—that young Bargrove—kissing your mother till she has fainted, and swearing that he is my son. Called me his honoured parent—but I cudgelled the rascal!

Agnes. (*leaning on Captain Etheridge's shoulder*). O heavens!

Capt. Eth. The fellow himself has just now been trying to elbow me out of my birthright. However, I met his pretensions with the same argument as you did. Who could have put all this nonsense into his addled head so firmly, that two good cudgellings cannot beat it out?

Capt. Mer. Etheridge, your sister is unwell.

Capt. Eth. Don't be alarmed, my dear Agnes.

Agnes. Oh! but indeed I am—I expected this.

Adm. Expected this! Have you, then, heard anything, my love?

Agnes. Yes, I have indeed; just before my brother arrived I was told that my real name was Agnes Bargrove.

Adm. How very extraordinary! Who told you so?

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Agnes. A very strange woman; but she appeared to know all about it. It has made me very unhappy ever since.

Adm. This must be inquired into. Where did you meet with her?

Agnes. In the lower wood. But Lucy can tell you more. Speak to her.

Lady Eth. I'm very ill. Lead me to my room.

[*Exeunt Sir Gilbert and Lady Etheridge.*]

Cap. Eth. And I must away to unravel this deep-laid plot. Mertoun, I must leave you to take care of Agnes.

[*Exit Capt. Etheridge.*]

Capt. Mer. A pleasing change, if I am not unwelcome. May I be permitted, Miss Etheridge, from a very great interest which I must ever take in the prosperity of your family—may I ask if you imagine there is any truth in this report?

Agnes. It is impossible for me to answer, Captain Mertoun. Why should such a report be raised without some foundation. True or not, I have ever since felt in a situation so awkward, that I fear my conduct may have appeared strange to others.

Capt. Mer. I must confess that your evident restraint towards me, so different from what perhaps my vanity induced me to hope, has been to me a source of wonder as well as regret. May I flatter myself that this rumour has been the occasion of an apparent caprice, which I never could have imagined that Miss Etheridge would have indulged in?

Agnes. You must be aware, Captain Mertoun, that I could not receive you as Agnes Etheridge until those doubts upon my parentage were removed. It would not have been honest.

Capt. Mer. And was this the only cause for your change of behaviour towards me, Agnes?

Agnes. Why—yes,—I believe so.

Capt. Mer. Now, then, let me declare that, whether you prove to be Agnes Etheridge, or Agnes Bargrove, those sentiments which I have felt towards you, and which have not hitherto been revealed excepting to your brother, must ever remain the same. For your own sake, and for the sake of Sir Gilbert and Lady Etheridge, who would deeply regret the loss of such a daughter, I trust that the report is without foundation. For my own part, I rather rejoice at this opportunity of proving the sincerity of my attachment. Let me but find favour in the sight of Agnes, and the

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surname will be immaterial.

Agnes. Immaterial, Captain Mertoun!

Capt. Mer. Yes, quite so; for I shall persuade you to change it as soon as possible, for my own.
(*Kneels.*) Tell me, dearest Agnes—

Agnes. Tell you what?

Capt. Mer. Something that will make me happy.

Agnes. (smiling). Shall I tell you what the gipsy woman said when she told me my fortune?

Capt. Mer. Nay, do not trifle with me.

Agnes. (archly). I asked whether I should marry the person that I loved.

Capt. Mer. A very natural question.

Agnes. She replied, "Yes, if he is more generous than the generality of his sex." (*Gives her hand.*) Captain Mertoun, you have proved yourself so to be, and, since you offer to take Agnes, truly speaking, for "better or for worse," I will not keep you in suspense by disguising my real sentiments.

Capt. Mer. Dearest Agnes, you have indeed made me happy. (*Embraces her.*) I accompanied your brother, with the sole view of pleading my own cause. Imagine then my misery at your cruel reception.

Agnes. That you may not think me interested by my accepting your generous offer during this state of uncertainty, I will own how often I have thought of you, and how eagerly I looked for your arrival. Let us go now, Mertoun, and see whether Lady Etheridge is recovered.

[*Exeunt arm in arm.*]

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Scene V.

The wood. Enter Nelly.

Nelly. I have tried in vain to dissuade them to abandon their projects. They are preparing their instruments and their weapons. They have determined to attempt the Hall to-night. I have written this letter to Sir Gilbert, and, if I can find any one to convey it, the scoundrels will be taken and punished. If I cannot, I must contrive some means to escape to the Hall; but they suspect me, and watch me so narrowly, that it is almost impossible. What shall I do? There is somebody coming; it is that fool, Peter Bargrove. Then all is right. I will make use of him.

Enter Peter.

Your servant, fortunate sir!

Peter. Fortunate! why now ar'n't you an infamous hussy? Hav'n't you taken my purse and my money, for your intelligence that I was changed in my cradle,—and what has been the consequence?

Nelly. That everybody has been astonished.

Peter. I have been astonished, at all events. I have had so many cudgellings that I must count them with my fingers. First, a huge one from old Bargrove; secondly, a smart one from Captain Etheridge; and thirdly, a severe one from Sir Gilbert. What is the value of your good news if no one will believe it?

Nelly. Very true—but how could you expect they would?

Peter. Then what's the good of knowing it?

Nelly. You must know a fact before you attempt to prove it. You only bought the knowledge of me, you never paid for the proof.

Peter. No; but I've paid for the knowledge. (*Rubbing his shoulders.*) But didn't you say that Mrs Bargrove would confess?

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Nelly. I thought it likely—but, if she won't, we must make her.

Peter. How?

Nelly. Bring evidence against her that will convict her, so that she will find it useless denying it.

Peter. But where is it?

Nelly. Here (*holding out the letter*).

Peter. Give it me.

Nelly. Stop, stop; you've not paid for it.

Peter. Upon my honour, I've not got a farthing in the world. I durst not ask either father or

mother after the bobbery we've had. Indeed, I hardly know whether I dare go home and get my victuals, Won't you trust me?

Nelly. When will you pay me?

Peter. When I come to my title and estate.

Nelly. Well then, as I think you are a gentleman, I will trust you. Now observe, this letter is addressed to Sir Gilbert. It contains a statement of facts that will astonish and convince him. You must not trust it into other hands, but deliver it yourself.

Peter. He'll cudgel me.

Nelly. No, he will not. But, even if he did, would you mind a few blows for the certainty of being one day Sir Peter Etheridge?

Peter. No, hang me if I do. They might all cudgel me together, if they could cudgel me into the only son of a baronet of ten thousand a year.

Nelly. Well, then, as soon as you can, go boldly up to the Hall, and say to Sir Gilbert, "Sir Gilbert, in justice to yourself, read this letter, and do not despise the caution, as it is all true." You will then see the effect of it.

Peter. See—not feel. You are certain he won't be angry. Well, then, I will—in this case I'm in a great hurry as anybody. I can promise. So good-bye. [*Exit.*]

Nelly. Now I think all is safe; but I must quit the gang or my life will be in danger.

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Enter Old Bargrove, with Constable.

Oh, that I could recall the last twenty years! How wicked, how infamous have I become.

[*Covers her face with her hands. Old Bargrove advances and taps her on the shoulder. Nelly starts.*]

Mercy on me!

Old Bar. You must not expect much. I believe you tell fortunes, my good woman!

Nelly. (*curtseying.*) Yes, sir, sometimes.

Old Bar. And steal geese and turkeys?

Nelly. No, sir, indeed.

Old Bar. Well, you help to eat them afterwards, and the receiver is just as bad as the thief. You must come along with me.

Nelly. Along with you, sir!

Old Bar. Do you see this little bit of paper? But, now I look at you, haven't we met before?

Nelly. Met before, sir!

Old Bar. Yes—hold your head up a little, either my eyes deceive me, or you—yes, I'll swear to it—you are Nelly Armstrong. Not quite so good-looking as you were when we parted. Now I understand all. Come, take her along to the Hall at once.

Nelly. Indeed, sir—

Old Bar. Not a word. Away with her, slanderous, lying, mischievous— [Exeunt omnes.]

Scene VI.

A Drawing-Room in the Hall.

Enter Sir Gilbert and Captain Etheridge.

Adm. I love Lucy as my own daughter, and it often occurred to me how delighted I should be to receive her as such. But your mother's dislike to her is most unaccountable.

Capt. Eth. There is the difficulty which I am most anxious to surmount. I am afraid that, without my mother's concurrence, Lucy will never consent to enter into the family. She has pride as well as Lady Etheridge.

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Adm. Yes, but of a very different quality; a proper pride, Edward; a respect for herself, added to a little feeling, to which she adheres in the decayed state of her family, which once was superior to ours.

Capt. Eth. If my mother could but once be induced to suppose that this rumour is correct, we might obtain her unwilling consent.

Adm. The report I believe to be wholly without foundation, and so I would, even if it were given against us in a court of justice.

Capt. Eth. My opinion coincides with yours. But my happiness is at stake, and I, therefore, shall

not pause at a trifling deception, which may be productive of so much good. Will you assist me?

Adm. Why, Edward, can't you manage without me?

Capt. Eth. Not very well. Let me entreat you. I hear my mother coming.

Adm. Well, well—she is always asserting I deceive her when I don't—for once, I'll not be accused without a cause.

Enter Lady Etheridge; they pretend not to see her.

Capt. Eth. (Aside.) Now, sir. *(Aloud.)* The proofs are, indeed, too strong, my dear sir, to hope for any other issue, and I regret that we have all been so long and so cruelly deceived.

Adm. Well, Edward, I can only say, if you are not really my son, you will always be considered as such; for, whether your name be Etheridge or Bargrove, you must still look upon me as your father.

Capt. Eth. I thank you, sir; but there are circumstances over which you have no control. The title and estate must descend to the lawful heir; and that silly fellow, Peter, will in future claim the affections of yourself, and of my dear Lady Etheridge. It is on her account, more than my own, that I feel so much distressed. [Pg 153]

Lady Eth. (coming forward). What is this that I hear? Is there then any foundation for that vile report? that hideous tale that turned the brain of that silly wretch? *(The Admiral shakes his head in mournful silence.)* Edward, will you not answer me?

Capt. Eth. I'm afraid that my answer will be most unsatisfactory. Madam, I had my doubts: indeed, I spurned the idea, until I called upon Lucy Etheridge—I believe I must call her now—and the proofs which she can bring forward.

Lady Eth. The hussy!

Capt. Eth. Nay, my lady, I must do justice to her. She is more inclined to conceal the facts than to disclose them. Her regard for my father, her profound respect for you, and a certain feeling of good-will towards me—

Lady Eth. Well, I am glad to see a little good sense in the girl; indeed, if the Admiral had not spoilt her—

Adm. Lady Etheridge, I have always felt towards that girl as my own daughter. It's very odd. Do you think, Edward, that this matter could not be hushed up?

Capt. Eth. I know but of one way, sir, which is, to sacrifice myself for the welfare of the family. I will do it—I may say, almost willingly.

Adm. How is that, Edward?

Capt. Eth. By a marriage with Lucy.

Lady Eth. Never!

Capt. Eth. Who will then, for her own sake, keep the proofs in her possession.

Lady Eth. Never! never! I cannot consent to it.

Capt. Eth. May I ask, my dear Lady Etheridge, if you refuse me as your son, or is Lucy refused to me as your daughter?

Lady Eth. Oh!

Capt. Eth. And again, my dear madam, when you reflect, on the establishment of these facts by undoubted proofs, that booby, Peter, will have a right to claim your maternal kindness. [Pg 154]

Lady Eth. Odious wretch!

Capt. Eth. To occupy that place in your affections which, hitherto, I have so proudly held, and must surrender with such deep regret.

Lady Eth. I would consent to—submit to anything, rather than that monster should dare to call me mother.

Capt. Eth. Yet so he will, madam, without your consent to the proposed arrangement. Lucy has always treated you with respect, and expressed the warmest gratitude for your protection; but, as for Peter, he will be more bearish and insolent than ever, again smother you with his nauseous kisses, and claim them as an offspring's right.

Lady Eth. I really feel quite ill again at the very idea. Save me from that, and I'll consent to anything.

Capt. Eth. Well, then, madam, have I your permission?

Enter William.

Will. Please, Sir Gilbert, here be Mr Bargrove, and Madam Bargrove and Miss Lucy, and the constables, and the malefactors, coming up to prove the whole truth of the consarn, to your's and

my lady's satisfaction.

Lady Eth. I'll not see them. I must leave you.

Capt. Eth. Nay, madam, stay but one moment, and acquaint Lucy that you give your consent. She may not believe me.

Enter Old Bargrove, Lucy, Constables, and Nelly.

Old Bar. Your servant, my lady; your servant, Sir Gilbert. I've got the whole story out at last. I have brought up Lucy, who will prove the facts. My son Peter, I have sent after, and I took the liberty to tell the servant that Miss Agnes would be necessary.

Capt. Eth. (leading up Lucy to Lady Etheridge). Lady Etheridge, will you honour us so far as to give your consent? (*Lady Etheridge hesitates.*) My dear madam, recollect the circumstances. [Pg 155]

Enter Peter.

Adm. Come, Lady Etheridge, they have mine, and your's must not be refused.

Peter. Sir Gilbert, I am your's (*seeing Nelly*). Oh, you're here—then all's right, and so I don't care. (*Advancing towards Lady Etheridge.*) Lady Etheridge, my dear mamma, with your permission—

Lady Eth. (hastily joining the hands of Captain Etheridge and Lucy). Yes, Lucy, I consent. [*Exit hastily.*]

Capt. Eth. Thank you, Peter, you never did me so good a turn in your life.

Peter. Sir Gilbert, in justice to yourself, read this, and do not despise the caution, for it is all true. (*Gives the letter.*)

Adm. How do you know? (*Reads.*) "Your house will be robbed this night—the parties are well armed and resolute. Take immediate precautions, and despise not this warning from one who has a sincere regard for you, and for your family."

Capt. Eth. A friendly caution, sir. It must be attended to. The favour is intended us by the gang of gipsies in the wood. Perhaps this woman may know something about it.

Old Bar. Like enough, for we have an old acquaintance here, who knows every part of the Hall. This is Nelly Armstrong, who nursed Lucy.

Mrs Bar. I'll swear to her, and it is she who has been the occasion of all this mischief.

Enter Agnes and Capt. Mertoun.

Agnes. My dear Lucy! I did not know that you were here. (*Turning to Nelly.*)

Nelly. Yes, Miss Agnes, the gipsy woman that told you your fortune, and, as Mrs Bargrove states, nursed you, Miss Lucy, at her breast. Sir Gilbert, I will save you trouble by confessing, that all I told these young people was from a feeling of revenge towards Lady Etheridge, who spurned me from her door. My long residence in the family enabled me to give a show of truth to what has occasioned so much uneasiness. [Pg 156]

Peter. What! ar'n't it all true, then?

Nelly. Not one word, Mr Peter.

Old Bar. Then we must have you to Bridewell.

Nelly. I trust, Sir Gilbert, you will be merciful, for I have proved my strong regard to your family.

Adm. What, by making us all miserable?

Nelly. Sir Gilbert, by that letter in your hand, that I wrote, little expecting that I should ever appear before you.

Peter. O, the letter is true, then!

Adm. (holding up his cane). Silence, sir!

Old Bar. (holding up his stick). Yes, silence, sir!

Nelly. I know, Sir Gilbert, that you have too kind a heart to injure any one; and, if repentance for my folly and wickedness can—if you, Miss Lucy, will plead for me—and my letter, Sir Gilbert, ought to plead for me too—all I beg is, that you will place me in a situation to keep my good resolutions.

Capt. Eth. Lucy will plead for her, sir, and so do I, for to her I owe my present happiness.

Adm. Well, well, woman, it shall be your own fault if you do wrong again.

Nelly (curtseying). Then let me beg pardon of all those to whom I have occasioned uneasiness.

Adm. Well, it's all settled now, except the affair of the letter, which we must attend to, Bargrove.

Capt. Mer. Not quite all, sir; here are two who wish for your sanction.

Adm. Hah! Is it so, Agnes? In this instance I may safely join your hands for your mother, for this morning she expressed a wish that it might be so. At the same time, Mr and Mrs Bargrove, I must request your sanction for the choice that my son has made. He has already secured mine and that of Lady Etheridge.

Mrs Bar. (*wiping her eyes.*) This is indeed a joyous end to all my vexations.

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Nelly (*with emotion.*) May heaven bless your union, my dear Miss Lucy!

Old Bar. God bless you both! Now, with your permission, Sir Gilbert, I will resign my office of steward. For many years I have filled it through gratitude, and not from any wish of emolument. I have enough to portion my daughter, and even to make that foolish boy a gentleman, according to his notions of gentility.

Peter. Have you, my dear father? Then I am glad that I was not changed. But I say, Etheridge, I'm your brother-in-law. Indeed you've a strong hand, brother Edward.

Capt. Eth. There, Peter, take it in friendship. (*Shake hands.*)

Adm. And mine.

Capt. Mer. Peter, mine.

Old Bar. Well, I suppose, Peter, I must do the same, and forget and forgive.

Mrs Bar. And me, Peter. (*Peter jumps up, clasps her round the neck, and gives her a hearty kiss.*) The boy's heart is right after all.

Adm. Thus, then, do all our vexations end in happiness, and may we be allowed to indulge the hope that the same may prove the case with all the parties (*bowing to the audience*) who have honoured us with their presence.

[*Curtain falls.*]

ILL-WILL:

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AN ACTING CHARADE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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MR CADAVEROUS, *An old miser, very rich and very ill.*

EDWARD, *A young lawyer without a brief.*

MR HAUSTUS GUMARABIC, *Apothecary.*

SEEDY, *Solicitor.*

THOMAS MONTAGU, }
} *Nephews to Mr Cadaverous.*

JOHN MONTAGU, }

JAMES STERLING, }
} *Nephews twice removed to Mr Cadaverous.*

WILLIAM STERLING, }

CLEMENTINA MONTAGU, *Niece to Mr Cadaverous.*

MRS JELLYBAGS, *Housekeeper and nurse.*

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Ill-Will

Act I.

Scene.—A sick room.—Mr Cadaverous in an easy chair asleep, supported by cushions, wrapped up in his dressing-gown, a nightcap on his head.—A small table with phials, gallipots, &c.—Mrs Jellybags seated on a chair close to the table.

Mrs Jellybags (looks at Mr Cadaverous, and then comes forward). He sleeps yet—the odious old miser! Mercy on me, how I do hate him,—almost as much as he loves his money! Well, there's one comfort, he cannot take his money-bags with him, and the doctor says that he cannot last much longer. Ten years have I been his slave—ten years have I been engaged to be married to Sergeant-Major O'Callaghan of the Blues—ten years has he kept me waiting at the porch of Hymen,—and what thousands of couples have I seen enter during the time! Oh dear! it's enough to drive a widow mad. I think I have managed it;—he has now quarrelled with all his relations, and Doctor Gumarabic intends this day to suggest the propriety of his making his last will and testament. [*Mr Cadaverous, still asleep, coughs.*] He is waking. (*Looks at him.*) No, he is not. Well, then, I shall wake him, and give him a draught, for, after such a comfortable sleep as he is now in, he might last a whole week longer. (*Goes up to Mr Cadaverous, and shakes him.*)

Mr Cad. (starting up.) Ugh! ugh! ugh! (*coughs violently.*) Oh! Mrs Jellybags, I'm so ill. Ugh! ugh!

Jel. My dear, dear sir! now don't say so. I was in hopes, after such a nice long sleep you would have found yourself so much better.

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Cad. Long sleep! oh dear!—I'm sure I've not slept ten minutes.

Jel. (Aside.) I know that. (*Aloud.*) Indeed, my dear sir, you are mistaken. Time passes very quick when we are fast asleep. I have been watching you and keeping the flies off. But you must now take your draught, my dear sir, and your pill first.

Cad. What! more pills and more draughts! Why, there's no end to them.

Jel. Yes, there will be, by-and-bye, my dear sir. You know Doctor Gumarabic has ordered you to take one pill and one draught every half-hour.

Cad. And so I have—never missed one for the last six weeks—woke up for them day and night. I feel very weak—very weak, indeed! Don't you think I might eat something, my dear Mrs Jellybags?

Jel. Eat, my dear Mr Cadaverous!—how can you ask me, when you know that Doctor Gumarabic says that it would be the death of you?

Cad. Only the wing of a chicken,—or a bit of the breast—

Jel. Impossible!

Cad. A bit of dry toast, then; anything, my dear Mrs Jellybags. I've such a gnawing. Ugh! ugh!

Jel. My dear sir, you would die if you swallowed the least thing that's nourishing.

Cad. I'm sure I shall die if I do not. Well, then, a little soup—I should like that very much indeed.

Jel. Soup! it would be poison, my dear sir! No, no. You must take your pill and your draught.

Cad. Oh dear! oh dear!—Forty-eight pills and forty-eight draughts every twenty-four hours!—not a wink of sleep day or night.

Jel. (soothingly.) But it's to make you well, you know, my dear Mr Cadaverous. Come, now. (*Hands him a pill and some water in a tumbler.*)

Cad. The last one is hardly down yet;—I feel it sticking half-way. Ugh! ugh!

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Jel. Then wash them both down at once. Come, now, 'tis to make you well, you know.

[*Cadaverous takes the pill with a wry face, and coughs it up again.*]

Cad. Ugh! ugh! There—it's up again. Oh dear! oh dear!

Jel. You must take it, my dear sir. Come, now, try again.

Cad. (coughing.) My cough is so bad. (*Takes the pill.*) Oh, my poor head! Now I'll lie down again.

Jel. Not yet, my dear Mr Cadaverous. You must take your draught;—it's to make you well, you know.

Cad. What! another draught? I'm sure I must have twenty draughts in my inside, besides two boxes of pills!

Jel. Come, now—it will be down in a minute.

[*Cadaverous takes the wine-glass in his hand, and looks at it with abhorrence.*]

Jel. Come, now.

[*Cadaverous swallows the draught, and feels very sick, puts his handkerchief to his mouth, and, after a time, sinks back in the chair quite exhausted, and shuts his eyes.*]

Jel. (Aside.) I wish the doctor would come. It's high time that he made his will.

Cad. (drawing up his leg.) Oh! oh! oh!

Jel. What's the matter, my dear Mr Cadaverous?

Cad. Oh! such pain!—oh! rub it, Mrs Jellybags.

Jel. What, here, my dear sir? (*Rubs his knee.*)

Cad. No, no!—not there!—Oh, my hip!

Jel. What, here? (*Rubs his hip.*)

Cad. No, no!—higher—higher! Oh, my side!

Jel. What, here? (*Rubs his side.*)

Cad. No!—lower!

Jel. Here? (*Rubbing.*)

Cad. No!—higher!—Oh, my chest!—my stomach! Oh dear!—oh dear!

Jel. Are you better now, my dear sir?

Cad. Oh dear! oh! I do believe that I shall die! I've been a very wicked man, I'm afraid.

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Jel. Don't say so, Mr Cadaverous. Every one but your nephews and nieces say that you are the best man in the world.

Cad. Do they? I was afraid that I had not been quite so good as they think I am.

Jel. I'd like to hear any one say to the contrary. I'd tear their eyes out,—that I would.

Cad. You are a good woman, Mrs Jellybags; and I shall not forget you in my will.

Jel. Don't mention wills, my dear sir. You make me so miserable. (*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

Cad. Don't cry, Mrs Jellybags. I wo'n't talk any more about it. (*Sinks back exhausted.*)

Jel. (*wiping her eyes.*) Here comes Doctor Gumarabic.

Enter Gumarabic.

Gum. Good morning, Mistress Jellybags. Well, how's our patient?—better?—heh? [*Mrs Jellybags shakes her head.*]

Gum. No: well, that's odd. (*Goes up to Mr Cadaverous.*) Not better, my dear sir?—don't you feel stronger?

Cad. (*faintly.*) Oh, no!

Gum. Not stronger! Let us feel the pulse. [*Mrs Jellybags hands a chair, and Gumarabic sits down, pulls out his watch, and counts.*] Intermittent—135—well, now—that's very odd! Mrs Jellybags, have you adhered punctually to my prescriptions?

Jel. Oh yes, sir, exactly.

Gum. He has eaten nothing?

Cad. Nothing at all.

Gum. And don't feel stronger? Odd—very odd! Pray, has he had anything in the way of drink? Come, Mrs Jellybags, no disguise,—tell the truth;—no soup—warm jelly—heh?

Jel. No, sir; upon my word, he has had nothing.

Gum. Humph!—and yet feels no stronger? Well, that's odd!—Has he taken the pill every half-hour?

Jel. Yes, sir, regularly.

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Gum. And feels no better! Are you sure that he has had his draught with his pill?

Jel. Every time, sir.

Gum. And feels no better! Well, that's odd!—very odd, indeed! (*Rises and comes forward with Mrs Jellybags.*) We must throw in some more draughts, Mrs Jellybags; there is no time to be lost.

Jel. I'm afraid he's much worse, sir.

Gum. I am not at all afraid of it, Mrs Jellybags,—I am sure of it;—it's very odd,—but the fact is, that all the physic in the world won't save him; but still he must take it,—because—physic was made to be taken.

Jel. Very true, sir. (*Whispers to Gumarabic.*)

Gum. Ah! yes;—very proper. (*Going to Mr Cadaverous.*) My dear sir, I have done my best; nevertheless, you are ill,—very ill,—which is odd,—very odd! It is not pleasant,—I may say, very unpleasant,—but if you have any little worldly affairs to settle,—will to make,—or a codicil to add, in favour of your good nurse, your doctor, or so on,—it might be as well to send for your lawyer;—there is no saying, but, during my practice, I have sometimes found that people die. After all the

physic you have taken, it certainly is odd—very odd—very odd, indeed;—but you might die to-morrow.

Cad. Oh dear!—I'm very ill.

Jel. (sobbing.) Oh dear! oh dear!—he's very ill.

Gum. (comes forward, shrugging up his shoulders.) Yes; he is ill—very ill;—to-morrow, dead as mutton! At all events he has not died for WANT of physic. We must throw in some more draughts immediately;—no time to be lost. Life is short,—but my bill will be long—very long! [*Exit as scene closes.*]

Act II. Scene I.

Enter Clementina, with a letter in her hand.

Clem. I have just received a letter from my dear Edward: he knows of my uncle's danger, and is anxious to see me. I expect him immediately. I hope he will not be seen by Mrs Jellybags as he comes in, for she would try to make more mischief than she has already. Dear Edward! how he loves me! (*Kisses the letter.*)

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Enter Edward.

Edw. My lovely, my beautiful, my adored Clementina! I have called upon Mr Gumarabic, who tells me that your uncle cannot live through the twenty-four hours, and I have flown here, my sweetest, dearest, to—to—

Clem. To see me, Edward: surely there needs no excuse for coming?

Edw. To reiterate my ardent, pure, and unchangeable affection, my dearest Clementina; to assure you, that in sickness or in health, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, as they say in the marriage ceremony, I am yours till death us do part.

Clem. I accept the vow, dearest Edward. You know too well my heart for me to say more.

Edw. I do know your heart, Clementina, as it is,—nor do I think it possible that you could change;—still, sometimes—that is for a moment when I call to mind that, by your uncle's death, as his favourite niece, living with him for so many years, you may soon find yourself in the possession of thousands,—and that titled men may lay their coronets at your feet,—then, Clementina—

Clem. Ungenerous and unkind!—Edward, I almost hate you. Is a little money, then, to sway my affections? Shame, Edward, shame on you! Is such your opinion of my constancy? (*Weeps.*) You must judge me by your own heart.

Edw. Clementina! dearest Clementina!—I did!—but rather—that is,—I was not in earnest;—but when we value any object as I value you,—it may be forgiven, if I feel at times a little jealous;—yes, dearest, jealous!

Clem. 'Twas jealousy then, Edward, which made you so unkind? Well, then, I can forgive *that*.

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Edw. Nothing but jealousy, dearest! I cannot help, at times, representing you surrounded by noble admirers,—all of them suing to you,—not for yourself, but for your money,—tempting you with their rank;—and it makes me jealous, horribly jealous! I cannot compete with lords, Clementina,—a poor barrister without a brief.

Clem. I have loved you for yourself, Edward. I trust you have done the same toward me.

Edw. Yes; upon my soul, my Clementina!

Clem. Then my uncle's disposition of his property will make no difference in me. For your sake, my dear Edward, I hope he will not forget me. What's that? Mrs Jellybags is coming out of the room. Haste, Edward;—you must not be seen here. Away, dearest!—and may God bless you.

Edw. (kisses her hand.) Heaven preserve my adored, my matchless, ever-to-be-loved Clementina. [*Exeunt separately.*]

Scene II.

The sick-room—Mr Cadaverous, lying on a sofa-bed—Mr Seedy, the lawyer, sitting by his side, with papers on the table before him.

Seedy. I believe now, sir, that everything is arranged in your will according to your instructions. Shall I read it over again; for although signed and witnessed, you may make any alteration you please by a codicil.

Cad. No, no. You have read it twice, Mr Seedy, and you may leave me now. I am ill, very ill, and wish to be alone.

Seedy (folds up his papers and rises.) I take my leave, Mr Cadaverous, trusting to be long

employed as your solicitor.

Cad. Afraid not, Mr Seedy. Lawyers have no great interest in heaven. Your being my solicitor will not help me there.

Seedy (coming forward as he goes out.) Not a sixpence to his legal adviser! Well, well! I know how to make out a bill for the executors. [*Exit Seedy, and enter Mrs Jellybags.*] [Pg 168]

Jel. (with her handkerchief to her eyes.) Oh dear! oh dear! oh, Mr Cadaverous, how can you fatigue and annoy yourself with such things as wills?

Cad. (faintly.) Don't cry, Mrs Jellybags. I've not forgotten you.

Jel. (sobbing.) I can't—help—crying. And there's Miss Clementina,—now that you are dying,—who insists upon coming in to see you.

Cad. Clementina, my niece, let her come in, Mrs Jellybags; I feel I'm going fast,—I may as well take leave of everybody.

Jel. (sobbing.) Oh dear! oh dear! You may come in, Miss.

Enter Clementina.

Clem. My dear uncle, why have you, for so many days, refused me admittance? Every morning have I asked to be allowed to come and nurse you, and for more than three weeks have received a positive refusal.

Cad. Refusal! Why I never had a message from you.

Clem. No message! Every day I have sent, and every day did Mrs Jellybags reply that you would not see me.

Cad. (faintly.) Mrs Jellybags,—Mrs Jellybags—

Clem. Yes, uncle; it is true as I stand here;—and my brother Thomas has called almost every day, and John every Sunday, the only day he can leave the banking house; and cousins William and James have both been here very often.

Cad. Nobody told me! I thought everyone had forgotten me. Why was I not informed, Mrs Jellybags?

Jel. (in a rage.) Why, you little story-telling creature, coming here to impose upon your good uncle! You know that no one has been here—not a soul;—and as for yourself, you have been too busy looking after a certain gentleman ever to think of your poor uncle;—that you have;—taking advantage of his illness to behave in so indecorous a manner. I would have told him everything, but I was afraid of making him worse. [Pg 169]

Clem. You are a false, wicked woman!

Jel. Little impudent creature,—trying to make mischief between me and my kind master, but it won't do. (*To Clementina aside.*) The will is signed, and I'll take care he does not alter it;—so do your worst.

Cad. (faintly.) Give me the mixture, Mrs—

Clem. I will, dear uncle. (*Pours out the restorative mixture in a glass.*)

Jel. (going back.) You will, Miss!—indeed! but you shan't.

Clem. Be quiet, Mrs Jellybags;—allow me at least to do something for my poor uncle.

Cad. Give me the mix—

Jel. (prevents Clementina from giving it, and tries to take it from her.) You shan't, Miss!—You never shall.

Cad. Give me the—

[*Mrs Jellybags and Clementina scuffle, at last Clementina throws the contents of the glass into Mrs Jellybags's face.*]

Clem. There, then!—since you will have it.

Jel. (in a rage.) You little minx!—I'll be revenged for that. Wait a little till the will is read,—that's all!—See if I don't bundle you out of doors,—that I will.

Clem. As you please, Mrs Jellybags; but pray, give my poor uncle his restorative mixture.

Jel. To please you?—Not I! I'll not give him a drop till I think proper. Little, infamous, good-for-nothing—

Cad. Give me—oh!

Jel. Saucy—man-seeking—

Clem. Oh! as for that, Mrs Jellybags, the big sergeant was here last night—I know that. Talk of

men, indeed!

Jel. Very well, Miss!—very well! Stop till the breath is out of your uncle's body—and I'll beat you till yours is also.

Cad. Give—oh!

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Clem. My poor uncle! He will have no help till I leave the room—I must go. Infamous Woman! [*Exit.*]

Cad. Oh!

Jel. I'm in such a rage!—I could tear her to pieces!—the little!—the gnat! Oh, I'll be revenged! Stop till the will is read, and then I'll turn her out into the streets to starve. Yes! yes! the will!—the will! (*Pauses and pants for breath.*) Now, I recollect the old fellow called for his mixture. I must go and get some more. I'll teach her to throw physic in my face.

[*Goes out and returns with a phial—pours out a portion and goes up to Mr Cadaverous.*]

Jel. Here, my dear Mr Cadaverous. Mercy on me!—Mr Cadaverous!—why, he's fainted!—Mr Cadaverous! (*Screams*) Lord help us!—why he's dead! Well now, this sort of thing does give one a shock, even when one has longed for it. Yes, he's quite dead! (*Coming forward.*) So, there's an end of all his troubles—and, thank Heaven! of mine also. Now for Sergeant-Major O'Callaghan, and—love! Now for Miss Clementina, and—revenge! But first the will!—the will! [*Curtain drops.*]

Act III.

Mrs Jellybags.

Oh dear!—this is a very long morning. I feel such suspense—such anxiety; and poor Sergeant-Major O'Callaghan is quite in a perspiration! He is drinking and smoking down in the kitchen to pass away the time, and if the lawyer don't come soon, the dear man will be quite fuddled. He talks of buying a farm in the country. Well, we shall see; but if the Sergeant thinks that he will make ducks and drakes of my money, he is mistaken. I have not been three times a widow for nothing—I will have it all settled upon myself; that must and shall be, or else—no Sergeant O'Callaghan for me!

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Enter Clementina.

So, here you are, Miss. Well, we'll wait till the will is read, and then we shall see who is mistress here.

Clem. I am as anxious as you, Mrs Jellybags. You may have wheedled my poor uncle to make the will in your favour; if so, depend upon it, I shall expect nothing from your hands.

Jel. I should rather think not, Miss. If I recollect right, you threw the carminative mixture in my face.

Clem. And made you blush for the first time in your life.

Jel. I shall not blush to slam the door in your face.

Clem. Rather than be indebted to you, I would beg my bread from door to door.

Jel. I expect that you very soon will.

Enter Edward.

Edw. My dearest Clementina, I have come to support you on this trying occasion.

Jel. And ascertain how matters stand, before you decide upon marrying, I presume, Mr Edward.

Edw. Madam, I am above all pecuniary considerations.

Jel. So everybody says, when they think themselves sure of money.

Edw. You judge of others by yourself.

Jel. Perhaps I do—I certainly do expect to be rewarded for my long and faithful services.

Clem. Do not waste words upon her, my dear. You have my solemn promise, nothing shall change my feelings towards you.

Jel. That may be; but did it never occur to you, Miss, that the gentleman's feelings might alter?

Edw. Detestable wretch!

[*Hands Clementina to a chair on the right, and sits by her.*]

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Enter Nephews John, Thomas, William, and James, all with white pocket-handkerchiefs in their hand—they take their seats two right and two left.

Jel. (*Aside.*) Here they all come, like crows that smell carrion. How odious is the selfishness of

this world! But here is Mr Gumarabic. How do you do, sir? (*Curtsies with a grave air.*)

Gum. Very well, I thank you, Mrs Jellybags. Can't say the same of all my patients. Just happened to pass by—thought I would step in and hear the will read—odd, that I should pop in at the time—very odd. Pray, may I ask, my dear Mrs Jellybags, were you present at the making of the will?

Jel. No, my dear sir; my nerves would not permit me.

Gum. Nerves!—odd, very odd! Then you don't know how things are settled?

Jel. No more than the man in the moon, my dear sir.

Gum. Man in the moon!—odd comparison that from a woman!—very odd! Hope my chance won't prove all moonshine.

Jel. I should think not, my dear sir; but here comes Mr Seedy, and we shall soon know all about it.

Enter Mr Seedy—Mrs Jellybags, all courtesy, waves her hand to a chair in the centre, with a table before it. Mr Seedy sits down, pulls the will out of his pocket, lays it on the table, takes out his snuff-box, takes a pinch, then his handkerchief, blows his nose, snuffs the candles, takes his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, puts them on, breaks the seals, and bows to the company; Mrs Jellybags has taken her seat on the left next to him, and Doctor Gumarabic by her side. Mrs Jellybags sobs very loud, with her handkerchief to her face.

Seedy. Silence, if you please.

Mrs Jellybags stops sobbing immediately.

Edw. (*putting his arm round Clementina's waist.*) My dearest Clementina!

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Mr Seedy hems twice, and then reads.

"The Last Will and Testament of Christopher Cadaverous, Gentleman, of Copse Horton, in the county of Cumberland.

"I, Christopher Cadaverous, being at this time in sound mind, do hereby make my last will and testament.

"First, I pray that I may be forgiven all my manifold sins and wickedness, and I do beg forgiveness of all those whom I may have injured unintentionally or otherwise; and at the same time do pardon all those who may have done me wrong, even to John Jones, the turnpike man, who unjustly made me pay the threepenny toll twice over on Easter last, when I went up to receive my dividends.

"My property, personal and real, I devise to my two friends Solomon Lazarus, residing at No. 3 Lower Thames-street, and Hezekiah Flint, residing at No. 16 Lothbury, to have and to hold for the following uses and purposes:—

"First, to my dearly-beloved niece, Clementina Montagu, I leave the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, 3-1/2 per cent, consols, for her sole use and benefit, to be made over to her, both principal and interest, on the day of her marriage.

[Edwards withdraws his arm from Clementina's waist—turns half round from her, and falls back in his chair with a pish!]

"To my nephew, Thomas Montagu, I leave the sum of nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence—having deducted the other sixpence to avoid the legacy duty.

[Thomas turns from the lawyer with his face to the front of the stage, crossing his legs.]

"To my nephew, John Montagu, I leave also the sum of nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence.

[John turns away in the same manner.]

"To my nephew, once removed, James Stirling, I leave the sum of five pounds to purchase a suit of mourning.

[James turns away as the others.]

"To my nephew, once removed, William Stirling, I also leave the sum of five pounds to purchase a suit of mourning. *[William turns away as the others.]*

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"To my kind and affectionate housekeeper, Mrs Martha Jellybags——"

[Mrs Jellybags sobs loudly, and cries "Oh dear! Oh dear!"]

Mr Seedy. Silence, if your please. *[Reads.]*

"In return for all her attention to me during my illness, and her ten years' service, I leave the whole of my——

[Mr Seedy having come to the bottom of the page lays down the will, takes out his snuff-box, takes a pinch, blows his nose, snuffs the candles, and proceeds.]

—"I leave the whole of my wardrobe, for her entire use and disposal; and also my silver watch

with my key and seal hanging to it.

"And having thus provided for——"

[*Mrs Jellybags, who has been listening attentively, interrupts Mr Seedy in great agitation.*

Jel. Will you be pleased to read that part over again?

Seedy. Certainly, ma'am. "I leave the whole of my wardrobe, and also my silver watch, with the key and seal hanging to it.

[*Mrs Jellybags screams, and falls back in a swoon on her chair—no one assists her.*

"And having thus provided for all my relations, I do hereby devise the rest of my property to the said Solomon Lazarus and Hezekiah Flint, to have and to hold for the building and endowment of an hospital for diseases of the heart, lights, liver, and spleen, as set off by the provisions in the schedule annexed to my will as part and codicil to it."

Seedy. Would the relations like me to read the provisions?

Omnes. No! no! no!

(*Mr Seedy is about to fold up the papers.*)

Gum. I beg your pardon, sir, but is there no other codicil?

Seedy. I beg your pardon, Mr Gumarabic, I recollect now there is one relative to you.

Gum. (nods his head.) I thought so.

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(*Seedy reads.*)

"And whereas I consider that my apothecary, Mr Haustus Gumarabic, hath sent in much unnecessary physic, during my long illness—it is my earnest request that my executors will not fail to tax his bill."

Gum. (rises and comes forward.) Tax my bill!—well that is odd, very odd! I may as well go and look after my patients. [*Exit.*

(*James and William come forward.*)

James. I say, Bill, how are you off for a suit of mourning?

Will. Thanky for nothing, Jem. If the old gentleman don't go to heaven until I put it on, he will be in a very bad way. Come along, it's no use staying here.

(*John and Thomas come forward.*)

John. I say, Tom, how are you off for nineteen pounds nineteen and six? Heh!

Thos. Let's toss and see which shall have both legacies. Here goes—heads or tails?

John. Woman for ever.

Thos. You've won, so there's an end of not only my expectations but realities. Come along, Mrs Jellybags must be anxious to look over her wardrobe.

John. Yes, and also the silver watch and the key and seal hanging to it. Good-bye, Jemmy! Ha! ha!

[*Exeunt, laughing.*

Clem. For shame, John. (*Turns to Edward.*) My dear Edward, do not appear so downcast. I acknowledge that I am myself much mortified and disappointed—but we must submit to circumstances. What did I tell you before this will was read?—that nothing could alter my feelings towards you, did I not?

Edw. (with indifference.) Yes.

Clem. Why then annoy yourself, my dear Edward?

Edw. The confounded old junks!

Clem. Nay, Edward, recollect that he is dead—I can forgive him.

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Edw. But I won't. Has he not dashed my cup of bliss to the ground? Heavens! what delightful anticipations I had formed of possessing you and competence—all gone!

Clem. All gone, dear Edward?

[*Mrs Jellybags, who has been sitting very still, takes her handkerchief from her eyes and listens.*

Edw. Yes, gone!—gone for ever! Do you imagine, my ever dear Clementina, that I would be so base, so cruel, so regardless of you and your welfare, to entrap you into marriage with only one hundred and fifty pounds? No, no!—judge me better. I sacrifice myself—my happiness—all for you!—banish myself from your dear presence, and retire to pass the remainder of my existence in misery and regret, maddened with the feeling that some happier mortal will obtain that dear hand, and will rejoice in the possession of those charms which I had too fondly, too credulously,

imagined as certain to be mine.

[*Takes out his handkerchief, and covers his face; Clementina also puts her handkerchief to her face and weeps. Mrs Jellybags nods her head ironically.*]

Clem. Edward!

Edw. My dear, dear Clementina!

Clem. You won't have me?

Edw. My honour forbids it. If you knew my feelings—how this poor heart is racked!

Clem. Don't leave me, Edward. Did you not say that for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, you would be mine, till death did us part?

Edw. Did I?

Clem. You know you did, Edward.

Edw. It's astonishing how much nonsense we talk when in love. My dearest Clementina, let us be rational. We are almost without a sixpence. There is an old adage, that when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window. Shall I then make you miserable! No, no! Hear me, Clementina. I will be generous. I now absolve you from all your vows. You are free. Should the time ever come that prosperity shine upon me, and I find that I have sufficient for both of us of that dross which I despise, then will I return, and, should my Clementina not have entered into any other engagement, throw my fortune and my person at her feet. Till then, dearest Clementina, farewell!

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Clem. (sinking into a chair sobbing.) Cruel Edward! Oh, my heart will break!

Edw. I can bear it myself no longer. Farewell! farewell!

[*Exit.*]

Jel. (coming forward.) Well, this is some comfort. (*To Clementina.*) Did not I tell you, Miss, that if you did not change your mind, others might?

Clem. Leave me, leave me.

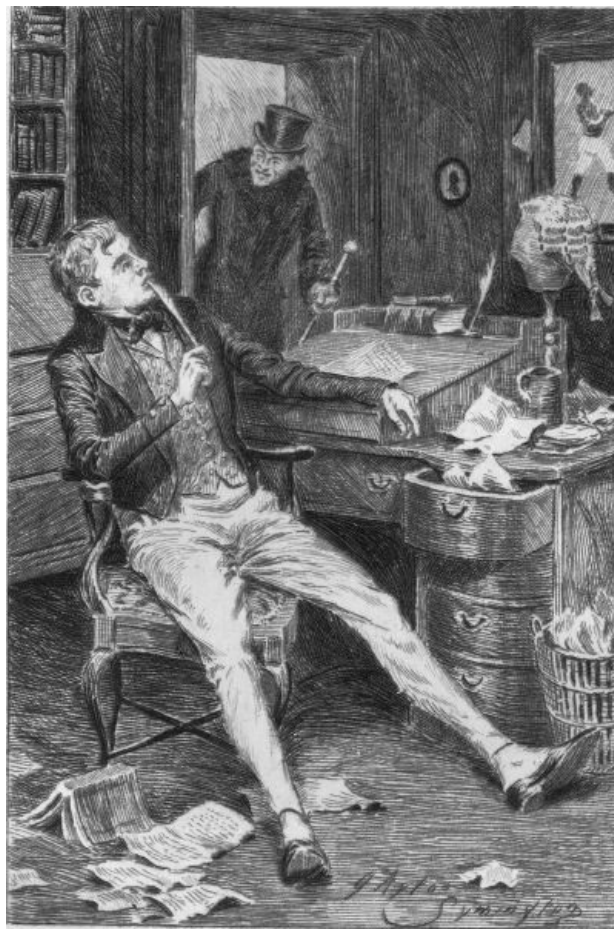
Jel. No, I shan't; I have as good a right here as you, at all events. I shall stay, Miss.

Clem. (rising.) Stay then—but I shall not. Oh, Edward! Edward!

[*Exit, weeping.*]

Jel. (alone.) Well, I really thought I should have burst—to be forced not to allow people to suppose that I cared, when I should like to tear the old wretch out of his coffin to beat him. *His* wardrobe! If people knew his wardrobe as well as I do, who have been patching at it these last ten years—not a shirt or a stocking that would fetch sixpence! And as for his other garments, why a Jew would hardly put them into his bag! (*Crying.*) Oh dear! oh dear! After all, I'm just like Miss Clementina; for Sergeant O'Callaghan, when he knows all this, will as surely walk off without beat of drum, as did Mr Edward—and that too with all the money I have lent him. Oh these men! these men!—whether they are living or dying there is nothing in them but treachery and disappointment! When they pretend to be in love, they only are trying for your money; and e'en when they make their wills, they leave to those behind them nothing but *ill-will!*

[*Exit, crying, off the stage as the curtain falls.*]



How to write a Fashionable Novel

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[Scene.—Chambers in Lincoln's Inn. Arthur Ansard at a briefless table, tête-à-tête with his wig on a block. A. casts a disconsolate look upon his companion, and soliloquises.]

Yes, there you stand, "partner of my toils, my feelings, and my fame." We do not *suit*, for we never gained a *suit* together. Well, what with reporting for the bar, writing for the Annuals and the Pocket-books, I shall be able to meet all demands, except those of my tailor; and, as his bill is most characteristically long, I think I shall be able to make it stretch over till next term, by which time I hope to fulfil my engagements with Mr C., who has given me an order for a fashionable novel, written by a "nobleman." But how I, who was never inside of an aristocratical mansion in my life, whose whole idea of Court is comprised in the Court of King's Bench, am to complete my engagement, I know no more than my companion opposite, who looks so placidly stupid under my venerable wig. As far as the street door, the footman and carriage, and the porter, are concerned, I can manage well enough; but as to what occurs within doors, I am quite abroad. I shall never get through the first chapter; yet that tailor's bill must be paid. (*Knocking outside.*) Come in, I pray.

Enter Barnstaple.

B. Merry Christmas to you, Arthur.

A. Sit down, my dear fellow; but don't mock me with merry Christmas. He emigrated long ago. Answer me seriously: do you think it possible for a man to describe what he never saw?

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B. (*putting his stick up to his chin.*) Why, 'tis possible; but I would not answer for the description being quite correct.

A. But suppose the parties who read it have never seen the thing described?

B. Why then it won't signify whether the description be correct or not.

A. You have taken a load off my mind; but still I am not quite at ease. I have engaged to furnish C. with a fashionable novel.

B. What do you mean to imply by a fashionable novel?

A. I really can hardly tell. His stipulations were, that it was to be a "fashionable novel in three volumes, each volume not less than three hundred pages."

B. That is to say, that you are to assist him in imposing on the public.

A. Something very like it, I'm afraid; as it is further agreed that it is to be puffed as coming from a highly talented nobleman.

B. You should not do it, Ansard.

A. So conscience tells me, but my tailor's bill says Yes; and that is a thing out of all conscience. Only look here.

[*Displays a long bill.*]

B. Why, I must acknowledge, Ansard, that there is some excuse. One needs must, when the devil drives; but you are capable of better things.

A. I certainly don't feel great capability in this instance. But what can I do? The man will have nothing else—he says the public will read nothing else.

B. That is to say, that because one talented author astonished the public by style and merits peculiarly his own, and established, as it were, a school for neophytes, his popularity is to be injured by contemptible imitators. It is sufficient to drive a man mad, to find that the tinsel of others, if to be purchased more cheaply, is to be pawned upon the public instead of his gold; and more annoying still, that the majority of the public cannot appreciate the difference between the metal and the alloy. Do you know, Ansard, that by getting up this work, you really injure the popularity of a man of great talent? [Pg 181]

A. Will he pay my tailor's bill?

B. No; I daresay he has enough to do to pay his own. What does your tailor say?

A. He is a staunch reformer, and on March the 1st he declares that he will have the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill—carried to my credit. Mr C., on the 10th of February, also expects the novel, the whole novel, and nothing but the novel, and that must be a fashionable novel. Look here, Barnstaple. (*Shows his tailor's bill.*)

B. I see how it is. He "pays your poverty, and not your will."

A. And, by your leave, I thus must pay my bill (*bowing.*)

B. Well, well, I can help you: nothing more difficult than to write a good novel, and nothing more easy than to write a bad one. If I were not above the temptation, I could pen you a dozen of the latter every ordinary year, and thirteen, perhaps, in the bissextile. So banish that Christmas cloud from your brow; leave off nibbling your pen at the wrong end, and clap a fresh nib to the right one. I have an hour to spare.

A. I thank you: that spare hour of yours may save me many a spare day. I'm all attention—proceed.

B. The first point to be considered is the *tempus*, or time; the next the *locus*, or place; and lastly, the *dramatis personæ*; and thus, chapter upon chapter, will you build a novel.

A. Build!

B. Yes, build; you have had your dimensions given, the interior is left to your own decoration. First, as to the opening. Suppose we introduce the hero in his dressing-room. We have something of the kind in Pelham; and if we can't copy his merits, we must his peculiarities. Besides, it always is effective: a dressing-room or boudoir of supposed great people, is admitting the vulgar into the arcana, which they delight in. [Pg 182]

A. Nothing can be better.

B. Then, as to time; as the hero is still in bed, suppose we say four o'clock in the afternoon?

A. In the morning, you mean.

B. No; the afternoon. I grant you that fashionable young men in real life get up much about the same time as other people; but in a fashionable novel your real exclusive never rises early. The very idea makes the tradesman's wife lift up her eyes. So begin. "It was about thirty-three minutes after four, *post meridian*—"

A. Minute—to a minute!

B. "That the Honourable Augustus Bouverie's finely chiselled—"

A. Chiselled!

B. Yes; great people are always chiselled; common people are only cast.—"Finely chiselled head was still recumbent upon his silk-encased pillow. His luxuriant and Antinous-like curls were now confined in *papillotes* of the finest satin paper, and the *tout ensemble* of his head—"

A. *Tout ensemble!*

B. Yes; go on.—"Was gently compressed by a caul of the finest net-work, composed of the threads spun from the beauteous production of the Italian worm."

A. Ah! now I perceive—a silk nightcap. But why can't I say at once a silk nightcap?

B. Because you are writing a fashionable novel.—"With the forefinger of his gloved left hand—"

A. But he's not coming in from a walk—he's not yet out of bed.

B. You don't understand it.—"Gloved left hand he applied a gentle friction to the portal of his

right eye, which unclosing at the silent summons, enabled him to perceive a repeater studded with brilliants, and ascertain the exact minute of time, which we have already made known to the reader, and at which our history opens."

A. A very grand opening indeed!

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B. Not more than it ought to be for a fashionable novel.—"At the sound of a silver *clochette*, his faithful Swiss valet Coridon, who had for some time been unperceived at the door, waiting for some notice of his master, having thrown off the empire of Somnus, in his light pumps, covered with beaver, moved with noiseless step up to the bedside, like the advance of eve stealing over the face of nature."

A. Rather an incongruous simile.

B. Not for a fashionable novel.—"There he stood, like Taciturnity bowing at the feet of proud Authority."

A. Indeed, Barnstaple, that is too *outré*.

B. Not a whit: I am in the true "Cambysis' vein."—"Coridon having softly withdrawn the rose-coloured gros de Naples bed-curtains, which by some might have been thought to have been rather too extravagantly fringed with the finest Mechlin lace, exclaimed with a tone of tremulous deference and affection, '*Monsieur a bien dormi?*' 'Coridon,' said the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, raising himself on his elbow in that eminently graceful attitude, for which he was so remarkable when reclining on the ottomans at Almack's—"

A. Are you sure they have ottomans there?

B. No; but your readers can't disprove it.—"Coridon,' said he, surveying his attendant from head to foot, and ultimately assuming a severity of countenance, 'Coridon, you are becoming gross, if not positively what the people call *fat*.' The Swiss attendant fell back in graceful astonishment three steps, and arching his eyebrows, extending his inverted palms forward, and raising his shoulders above the apex of his head, exclaimed, '*Pardon, mi lor, j'en aurois un horreur parfait*.' 'I tell you,' replied our gracefully recumbent hero, 'that it is so, Coridon; and I ascribe it to your partiality for that detestable wine called Port. Confine yourself to Hock and Moselle, sirrah: I fear me, you have a base hankering after mutton and beef. Restrict yourself to salads, and do not sin even with an omelette more than once a week. Coridon must be visionary and diaphanous, or he is no Coridon for me. Remove my night-gloves, and assist me to rise: it is past four o'clock, and the sun must have, by this time, sufficiently aired this terrestrial globe.'" [Pg 184]

A. I have it now; I feel I could go on for an hour.

B. Longer than that, before you get him out of his dressing-room. You must make at least five chapters before he is apparelled, or how can you write a fashionable novel, in which you cannot afford more than two incidents in the three volumes? Two are absolutely necessary for the editor of the — Gazette to extract as specimens, before he winds up an eulogy. Do you think that you can proceed now for a week, without my assistance?

A. I think so, if you will first give me some general ideas. In the first place, am I always to continue in this style?

B. No; I thought you knew better. You must throw in patches of philosophy every now and then.

A. Philosophy in a fashionable novel?

B. Most assuredly, or it would be complained of as trifling; but a piece, now and then, of philosophy, as unintelligible as possible, stamps it with deep thought. In the dressing-room, or boudoir, it must be occasionally Epicurean; elsewhere, especially in the open air, more Stoical.

A. I'm afraid that I shall not manage that without a specimen to copy from. Now I think of it, Eugene Aram says something very beautiful on a starry night.

B. He does: it is one of the most splendid pieces of writing in our language. But I will have no profanation, Arthur;—to your pen again, and write. We'll suppose our hero to have retired from the crowded festivities of a ball-room at some lordly mansion in the country, and to have wandered into a churchyard, damp and dreary with a thick London fog. In the light dress of fashion, he throws himself on a tombstone. "Ye dead!" exclaims the hero, "where are ye? Do your disembodied spirits now float around me, and, shrouded in this horrible veil of nature, glare unseen upon vitality? Float ye upon this intolerable mist, in yourselves still more misty and intolerable? Hold ye high jubilee to-night? or do ye crouch behind these monitorial stones, gibbering and chattering at one who dares thus to invade your precincts? Here may I hold communion with my soul, and, in the invisible presence of those who could, but dare not to reveal. Away! it must not be." [Pg 185]

A. What mustn't be?

B. That is the mystery which gives the point to his soliloquy. Leave it to the reader's imagination.

A. I understand. But still the Honourable Augustus cannot lie in bed much longer, and I really shall not be able to get him out without your assistance. I do not comprehend how a man can get out of bed *gracefully*; he must show his bare legs, and the alteration of position is in itself awkward.

B. Not half so awkward as you are. Do you not feel that he must not be got out of bed at all—that is, by description.

A. How then?

B. By saying nothing about it. Re-commence as follows:—"I should like the bath at seventy-six and a half, Coridon," observed the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, as he wrapped his embroidered dressing-gown round his elegant form, and sank into a *chaise longue*, wheeled by his faithful attendant to the fire." There, you observe, he is out of bed, and nothing said about it.

A. Go on, I pray thee.

B. "How is the bath perfumed?' *Eau de mille fleurs.*' *Eau de mille fleurs!* Did not I tell you last week that I was tired of that villanous compound? It has been adulterated till nothing remains but its name. Get me another bath immediately *au violet*; and, Coridon, you may use that other scent, if there is any left, for the poodle; but observe, only when *you* take him an airing, not when he goes with *me.*"

A. Excellent! I now feel the real merits of an exclusive; but you said something about dressing-room, or in-door philosophy. [Pg 186]

B. I did; and now is a good opportunity to introduce it. Coridon goes into the ante-chamber to renew the bath, and of course your hero has met with a disappointment in not having the bath to his immediate pleasure. He must press his hands to his forehead. By-the-bye, recollect that his forehead, when you describe it, must be high and white as snow: all aristocratical foreheads are—at least, are in a fashionable novel.

A. What! the women's and all?

B. The heroine's must be; the others you may lower as a contrast. But to resume with the philosophy. He strikes his forehead, lifts his eyes slowly up to the ceiling, and drops his right arm as slowly down by the side of the *chaise longue*; and then in a voice so low that it might have been considered a whisper, were it not for its clear and brilliant intonation, he exclaims—

A. Exclaims in a whisper!

B. To be sure; you exclaim mentally,—why should you not in a whisper?

A. I perceive—your argument is unanswerable.

B. Stop a moment; it will run better thus:—"The Honourable Augustus Bouverie no sooner perceived himself alone, than he felt the dark shades of melancholy ascending and brooding over his mind, and enveloping his throbbing heart in their—their *adamantine* chains. Yielding to the overwhelming force, he thus exclaimed, 'Such is life—we require but one flower, and we are offered noisome thousands—refused that we wish, we live in loathing of that not worthy to be received—mourners from our cradle to our grave, we utter the shrill cry at our birth, and we sink in oblivion with the faint wail of terror. Why should we, then, ever commit the folly to be happy?'"

A. Hang me, but that's a poser!

B. Nonsense! hold your tongue; it is only preparatory to the end. "Conviction astonishes and torments—destiny prescribes and falsifies—attraction drives us away—humiliation supports our energies. Thus do we recede into the present, and shudder at the Elysium of posterity." [Pg 187]

A. I have written all that down, Barnstaple; but I cannot understand it, upon my soul!

B. If you had understood one particle, that particle I would have erased. This is your true philosophy of a fashionable novel, the extreme interest of which consists in its being unintelligible. People have such an opinion of their own abilities, that if they understood you, they would despise you; but a dose like this strikes them with veneration for your talents.

A. Your argument is unanswerable; but you said that I must describe the dressing-room.

B. Nothing more easy; as a simile, compare it to the shrine of some favoured saint in a richly-endowed Catholic church. Three tables at least, full of materials in methodised confusion—all tending to the beautification of the human form divine. Tinted perfumes in every variety of cut crystal receivers, gold and silver. If at a loss, call at Bayley's and Blew's, or Smith's in Bond Street. Take an accurate survey of all you see, and introduce your whole catalogue. You cannot be too minute. But, Arthur, you must not expect me to write the whole book for you.

A. Indeed I am not so exorbitant in my demands upon your good-nature; but observe, I may get up four or five chapters already with the hints you have given me, but I do not know how to move such a creation of the brain—so ethereal, that I fear he will melt away; and so fragile, that I am in terror lest he fall to pieces. Now only get him into the breakfast-room for me, and then I ask no more for the present. Only dress him, and bring him *down stairs.*

B. There again you prove your incapability. Bring him down stairs! Your hero of a fashionable novel never ascends to the first floor. Bed-room, dressing-room, breakfast-room, library, and boudoir, all are upon a level. As for his dressing, you must only describe it as perfect when finished; but not enter into a regular detail, except that, in conversation with his valet, he occasionally asks for something unheard-of, or fastidious to a degree. You must not walk him from one chamber to another, but manage it as follows:—"It was not until the beautiful airs of the [Pg 188]

French clock that decorated the mantel-piece had been thrice played, with all their variations, that the Honourable Augustus Bouverie entered his library, where he found his assiduous Coridon burning an aromatic pastile to disperse the compound of villanous exhalations arising from the condensed metropolitan atmosphere. Once more in a state of repose, to the repeated and almost affecting solicitations of his faithful attendant, who alternately presented to him the hyson of Pekoe, the bohea of Twankay, the fragrant berry from the Asiatic shore, and the frothing and perfumed decoction of the Indian nut, our hero shook his head in denial, until he at last was prevailed upon to sip a small liqueur glass of *eau sucrée*." The fact is, Arthur, he is in love—don't you perceive? Now introduce a friend, who rallies him—then a resolution to think no more of the heroine—a billet on a golden salver—a counter resolution—a debate which equipage to order—a decision at last—hat, gloves, and furred great-coat—and by that time you will have arrived to the middle of the first volume.

A. I perceive; but I shall certainly stick there without your assistance.

B. You shall have it, my dear fellow. In a week I will call again, and see how you get on. Then we'll introduce the heroine; that, I can tell you, requires some tact—*au revoir*.

A. Thanks, many thanks, my dear Barnstaple. Fare you well.

[*Exit Barnstaple.*]

A. (*Looking over his memoranda.*)—It will do! (*Hopping and dancing about the room.*) Hurrah! my tailor's bill will be paid after all!

PART II

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[*Mr Arthur Ansard's Chambers as before. Mr Ansard, with his eyes fixed upon the wig block, gnawing the feather end of his pen. The table, covered with sundry sheets of foolscap, shows strong symptoms of the Novel progressing.*]

Ansard (solus).

Where is Barnstaple? If he do not come soon, I shall have finished my novel without a heroine. Well, I'm not the first person who has been foiled by a woman. (*Continues to gnaw his pen in a brown study.*)

Barnstaple enters unperceived, and slaps Ansard on the shoulder. The latter starts up.

B. So, friend Ansard, making your dinner off your pen: it is not every novel writer who can contrive to do that even in anticipation. Have you profited by my instructions?

A. I wish I had. I assure you that this light diet has not contributed, as might be expected, to assist a heavy head; and one feather is not sufficient to enable my genius to take wing. If the public knew what dull work it is to write a novel, they would not be surprised at finding them dull reading. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* Barnstaple, I am at the very bathos of stupidity.

B. You certainly were absorbed when I entered, for I introduced myself.

A. I wish you had introduced another personage with you—you would have been doubly welcome.

B. Who is that?

A. My heroine. I have followed your instructions to the letter. My hero is as listless as I fear my readers will be, and he is not yet in love. In fact, he is only captivated with himself. I have made him dismiss Coridon.

B. Hah! how did you manage that?

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A. He was sent to ascertain the arms on the panel of a carriage. In his eagerness to execute his master's wishes, he came home with a considerable degree of perspiration on his brow, for which offence he was immediately put out of doors.

B. Bravo—it was unpardonable—but still—

A. O! I know what you mean—that is all arranged; he has an annuity of one hundred pounds per annum.

B. My dear Ansard, you have exceeded my expectations; but now for the heroine.

A. Yes, indeed; help me—for I have exhausted all my powers.

B. It certainly requires much tact to present your heroine to your readers. We are unfortunately denied what the ancients were so happy to possess—a whole *cortége* of divinities that might be summoned to help any great personage in, or the author out of, a difficulty; but since we cannot command their assistance, like the man in the play who forgot his part, we will do without it. Now, have you thought of nothing new, for we must not plagiarise even from fashionable novels?

A. I have thought—and thought—and can find nothing new, unless we bring her in in a whirlwind: that has not yet been attempted.

B. A whirlwind! I don't know—that's hazardous. Nevertheless, if she were placed on a beetling cliff, overhanging the tempestuous ocean, lashing the rocks with its wild surge; of a sudden, after

she has been permitted to finish her soliloquy, a white cloud rising rapidly and unnoticed—the sudden vacuum—the rush of mighty winds through the majestic and alpine scenery—the vortex gathering round her—first admiring the vast efforts of nature; then astonished; and, lastly, alarmed, as she finds herself compelled to perform involuntary gyrations, till at length she spins round like a well-whipped top, nearing the dangerous edge of the precipice. It is bold, and certainly quite novel—I think it will do. Portray her delicate little feet, peeping out, pointing downwards, the force of the elements raising her on her tip toes, now touching, now disdaining the earth. Her dress expanded wide like that of Herbelé in her last and best pirouette—round, round she goes—her white arms are tossed frantically in the air. Corinne never threw herself into more graceful attitudes. Now is seen her diminishing ankle—now the rounded symmetry—mustn't go too high up though—the wind increases—her distance from the edge of the precipice decreases—she has no breath left to shriek—no power to fall—threatened to be ravished by the wild and powerful god of the elements—she is discovered by the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, who has just finished his soliloquy upon another adjacent hill. He delights in her danger—before he rushes to her rescue, makes one pause for the purpose of admiration, and another for the purpose of adjusting his shirt collar.

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A. The devil he does!

B. To be sure. The hero of a fashionable novel never loses caste. Whether in a storm, a whirlwind, up to his neck in the foaming ocean, or tumbling down a precipice, he is still the elegant and correct Honourable Augustus Bouverie. To punish you for your interruption, I have a great mind to make him take a pinch of snuff before he starts. Well—he flies to her assistance—is himself caught in the rushing vortex, which prevents him from getting nearer to the lady, and, despite of himself, takes to whirling in the opposite direction. They approach—they recede—she shrieks without being heard—holds out her arms for help—she would drop them in despair, but cannot, for they are twisted over her head by the tremendous force of the element. One moment they are near to each other, and the next they are separated; at one instant they are close to the abyss, and the waters below roar in delight of their anticipated victims, and in the next a favouring change of the vortex increases their distance from the danger—there they spin—and there you may leave them, and commence a new chapter.

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A. But is not all this naturally and physically impossible?

B. By no means; there is nothing supernatural in a whirlwind, and the effect of a whirlwind is to twist everything round. Why should the heroine and the Honourable Augustus Bouverie not be submitted to the laws of nature? besides, we are writing a fashionable novel. Wild and improbable as this whirlwind may appear, it is within the range of probability; whereas, that is not at all adhered to in many novels—witness the drinking-scene in—, and others equally *outrées*, in which the author, having turned probability out of doors, ends by throwing possibility out of the window—leaving folly and madness to usurp their place—and play a thousand antics for the admiration of the public, who, pleased with novelty, cry out "How fine!"

A. Buy the book, and laud the author.

B. Exactly. Now, having left your hero and heroine in a situation peculiarly interesting, with the greatest nonchalance, pass over to the continent, rave on the summit of Mont Blanc, and descant upon the strata which compose the mountains of the Moon in central Africa. You have been philosophical, now you must be geological. No one can then say that your book is light reading.

A. That can be said of few novels. In most of them even smoke assumes the ponderosity of lead.

B. There is a metal still heavier, which they have the power of creating—gold—to pay a dunning tailor's bill.

A. But after having been philosophical and geological, ought one not to be a little moral?

B. Pshaw! I thought you had more sense. The great art of novel writing is to make the vices glorious, by placing them in close alliance with redeeming qualities. Depend upon it, Ansard, there is a deeper, more heartfelt satisfaction than mere amusement in novel reading; a satisfaction no less real, because we will not own it to ourselves; the satisfaction of seeing all our favourite and selfish ideas dressed up in a garb so becoming, that we persuade ourselves that our false pride is proper dignity, our ferocity courage, our cowardice prudence, our irreligion liberality, and our baser appetites mere gallantry.

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A. Very true, Barnstaple; but really I do not like this whirlwind.

B. Well, well, I give it up then; it was your own idea. We'll try again. Cannot you create some difficulty or dilemma, in which to throw her, so that the hero may come to her rescue with *éclat*?

A. Her grey palfrey takes fright.

B. So will your readers; stale—quite stale!

A. A wild bull has his horns close to her, and is about to toss her.

B. As your book would be—away with contempt. Vapid—quite vapid!

A. A shipwreck—the waves are about to close over her.

B. Your book would be closed at the same moment—worn out—quite worn out.

A. In the dead of the night, a fire breaks out—she is already in the midst of the flames—

B. Where your book would also be, by the disgusted reader—worse and worse.

A. Confound it—you will not allow me to expose her to earth, air, fire or water. I have a great mind to hang her in her garters, and make the hero come and cut her down.

B. You might do worse—and better.

A. What—hang myself?

B. That certainly would put an end to all your difficulties. But, Ansard, I think I can put your heroine in a situation really critical and eminently distressing, and the hero shall come to her relief, like the descent of a god to the rescue of a Greek or Trojan warrior.

A. Or of Bacchus to Ariadne in her distress.

B. Perhaps a better simile. The consequence will be, that eternal gratitude in the bosom of the maiden will prove the parent of eternal love, which eternity of passion will, of course, last until they are married.

A. I'm all attention.

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B. Get up a splendid dinner party for their first casual meeting. Place the company at table.

A. Surely you are not going to choke her with the bone of a chicken.

B. You surely are about to murder me, as Samson did the Philistines—

A. With the jaw-bone of a fashionable novel writer, you mean.

B. Exactly. But to proceed:—they are seated at table; can you describe a grand dinner?

A. Certainly, I have partaken of more than one.

B. Where?

A. I once sat down three hundred strong at the Freemasons' Tavern.

B. Pshaw! a mere hog feed.

A. Well, then, I dined with the late lord mayor.

B. Still worse. My dear Ansard, it is however of no consequence. Nothing is more difficult to attain, yet nothing is more easy to describe, than a good dinner. I was once reading a very fashionable novel by a very fashionable bookseller, for the author is a mere nonentity, and was very much surprised at the accuracy with which a good dinner was described. The mystery was explained a short time afterwards, when casually taking up Eustache Eude's book in Sams's library, I found, that the author had copied it out exactly from the injunctions of that celebrated gastronome. You can borrow the book.

A. Well, we will suppose that done; but I am all anxiety to know what is the danger from which the heroine is to be rescued.

B. I will explain. There are two species of existence—that of mere mortal existence, which is of little consequence, provided, like Cæsar, the hero and heroine die decently: the other is of much greater consequence, which is fashionable existence. Let them once lose caste in that respect, and they are virtually dead, and one mistake, one oversight, is a death-blow for which there is no remedy, and from which there is no recovery. For instance, we will suppose our heroine to be quite confounded with the appearance of our hero—to have become *distracte*, *reveuse*—and, in short, to have lost her recollection and presence of mind. She has been assisted to *fillet de soles*. Say that the only sauce ever taken with them is *au macedoine*—this is offered to her, and, at the same time, another, which to eat with the above dish would be unheard of. In her distraction she is about to take the wrong sauce—actually at the point of ruining herself for ever and committing suicide upon her fashionable existence, while the keen grey eyes of Sir Antinous Antibes, the arbiter of fashion, are fixed upon her. At this awful moment, which is for ever to terminate her fashionable existence, the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, who sits next to her, gently touches her *séduisante* sleeve—blandly smiling, he whispers to her that the *other* is the sauce *macedoine*. She perceives her mistake, trembles at her danger, rewards him with a smile, which penetrates into the deepest recesses of his heart, helps herself to the right sauce, darts a look of contemptuous triumph upon Sir Antinous Antibes, and, while she is dipping her sole into the sauce, her soul expands with gratitude and love.

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A. I see, I see. Many thanks; my heroine is now a fair counterpart of my hero.

"Ah, sure a pair were never seen,
So justly form'd to meet by nature."

B. And now I'll give you another hint, since you appear grateful. It is a species of claptrap in a novel, which always takes—to wit, a rich old uncle or misanthrope, who, at the very time that he is bitterly offended and disgusted with the hero, who is in awkward circumstances, pulls out a pocket-book and counts down, say fifteen or twenty thousand pounds in bank notes, to relieve him from his difficulties. An old coat and monosyllables will increase the interest.

A. True (*sighing*.) Alas! there are no such uncles in real life; I wish there were.

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B. I beg your pardon; I know no time in which *my uncle* forks out more bank notes than at the present.

A. Yes, but it is for value, or more than value, received.

B. That I grant; but I'm afraid it is the only *uncle* left now; except in a fashionable novel. But you comprehend the value of this new auxiliary.

A. Nothing can be better. Barnstaple, you are really—, but I say no more. If a truly great man cannot be flattered with delicacy, it must not be attempted at all; silence then becomes the best tribute. Your advice proves you to be truly great. I am *silent*, therefore you understand the full force of the oratory of my thanks.

B. (*bowing*.) Well, Ansard, you have found out the cheapest way of paying off your bills of gratitude I ever heard of. "Poor, even in thanks," was well said by Shakespeare; but you, it appears, are rich, in having nothing at all wherewith to pay. If you could transfer the same doctrine to your tradesmen, you need not write novels.

A. Alas! my dear fellow, mine is not yet written. There is one important feature, nay, the most important feature of all—the style of language, the diction—on that, Barnstaple, you have not yet doctinated.

B. (*pompously*.) When Demosthenes was asked what were the three principal attributes of eloquence, he answered, that the first was action; on being asked which was the second, he replied, action; and the third, action; and such is the idea of the Irish *mimbers* in the House of Commons. Now there are three important requisites in the diction of a fashionable novel. The first, my dear fellow, is—flippancy; the second, flippancy; and flippancy is also the third. With the dull it will pass for wit, with some it will pass for scorn, and even the witty will not be enabled to point out the difference, without running the risk of being considered invidious. It will cover every defect with a defect still greater; for who can call small beer tasteless when it is sour, or dull when it is bottled and has a froth upon it?

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A. The advice is excellent; but I fear that this flippancy is as difficult to acquire as the tone of true eloquence.

B. Difficult! I defy the writers of the silver-fork school to write out of the style flippant. Read but one volume of—, and you will be saturated with it; but if you wish to go to the fountain-head, do as have done most of the late fashionable novel writers, repair to their instructors—the lady's-maid, for flippancy in the vein *spirituelle*; to a London footman for the vein critical; but, if you wish a flippancy of a still higher order, at once more solemn and more empty, which I would call the vein political, read the speeches of some of our members of Parliament. Only read them; I wish no man so ill as to inflict upon him the torture of hearing them—read them, I say, and you will have taken the very highest degree in the order of inane flippancy.

A. I see it at once. Your observations are as true as they are severe. When we would harangue geese, we must condescend to hiss; but still, my dear Barnstaple, though you have fully proved to me that in a fashionable novel all plot is unnecessary, don't you think there ought to be a catastrophe, or sort of a kind of an end to the work, or the reader may be brought up short, or as the sailors say, "all standing," when he comes to the word "Finis," and exclaim with an air of stupefaction,—"*And then—*"

B. And then, if he did, it would be no more than the fool deserved. I don't know whether it would not be advisable to leave off in the middle of a sentence, of a word, nay of a syllable, if it be possible: I'm sure the winding-up would be better than the lackadaisical running-down of most of the fashionable novels. Snap the main-spring of your watch, and none but an ass can expect you to tell by it what it is o'clock; snap the thread of your narrative in the same way, and he must be an unreasonable being who would expect a reasonable conclusion. Finish thus, in a case of delicate distress; say, "The honourable Mr Augustus Bouverie was struck in a heap with horror. He rushed with a frantic grace, a deliberate haste, and a graceful awkwardness, and whispered in her ear these dread and awful words, 'IT IS TOO LATE!'" Follow up with a—*and Finis*.

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A. I see; the fair and agitated reader will pass a sleepless night in endeavouring to decipher the mutilated sentence. She will fail, and consequently call the book delightful. But should there not have been a marriage previously to this happy awful climax?

B. Yes; everything is arranged for the nuptials—carriages are sent home, jewellery received but not paid for, dresses all tried on, the party invited—nay, assembled in the blue-and-white drawing-room. The right reverend, my lord bishop, is standing behind the temporary altar—he has wiped his spectacles, and thumbed his prayer-book—all eyes are turned towards the door, which opens not—the bride faints, for the bridegroom cometh not—he's not "i' the vein"—a something, as like nothing as possible, has given him a disgust that is insurmountable—he flings his happiness to the winds, though he never loved with more outrageous intensity than at the moment he discards his mistress; so he fights three duels with the two brothers and father. He wounds one of the young men dangerously, the other slightly; fires his pistol in the air when he meets her father—for how could he take the life of him who gave life to his adored one? Your hero can always hit a man just where he pleases—*vide* every novel in Mr C.'s collection. The hero becomes misanthropical, the heroine maniacal. The former marries an antiquated and toothless

dowager, as an escape from the imaginary disgust he took at a sight of a matchless woman; and the latter marries an old brute, who threatens her life every night, and puts her in bodily fear every morning, as an indemnity in full for the loss of the man of her affections. They are both romantically miserable; and then come on your tantalising scenes of delicate distress, and so the end of your third volume, and then finish without any end at all. *Verb. sap. sat.* Or, if you like it better, kill the old dowager of a surfeit, and make the old brute who marries the heroine commit suicide; and, after all these unheard-of trials, marry them as fresh and beautiful as ever.

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A. A thousand thanks. Your *verba* are not thrown to a *sap*. Can I possibly do you any favour for all this kindness?

B. Oh, my dear fellow! the very greatest. As I see yours will be, at all points, a most fashionable novel, do me the inestimable favour *not* to ask me *to read it*.

How to write a Book of Travels

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Mr Ansard's Chambers.

A. (*alone.*) Well, I thought it hard enough to write a novel at the dictate of the biblioplist; but to be condemned to sit down and write my travels—travels that have never extended farther than the Lincoln's Inn Coffee House for my daily food, and a walk to Hampstead on a Sunday. These travels to be swelled into Travels up the Rhine in the year 18—. Why, it's impossible. O that Barnstaple were here, for he has proved my guardian angel! Lazy, clever dog!

Enter Barnstaple.

B. Pray, my dear Ansard, to whom did you apply that last epithet?

A. My dear Barnstaple, I never was more happy to see you. Sit down, I have much to tell you, all about myself and my difficulties.

B. The conversation promises to be interesting to me, at all events.

A. Everything is interesting to true friendship.

B. Now I perceive that you do want something. Well, before you state your case, tell me, how did the novel go off?

A. Wonderfully well. It was ascribed to Lord G—: the bait took, and 750 went off in a first edition, and the remainder of the copies printed went off in a second.

B. Without being reprinted?

A. Exactly. I was surprised at my success, and told my publisher so; but he answered that he could sell an edition of any trash he pleased.

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B. That was not flattering.

A. Not very; but his bill was honoured, and that consoled me. However, to proceed to business—he has given me another order—A Journey up the Rhine, in two vols. large octavo, in the year 18—. Now, Barnstaple, what's to be done?

B. Write it, to be sure.

A. But you well know I have never been out of England in my life.

B. Never mind, write it.

A. Yes, it's very well to say write it; but how the devil am I to write it? Write what I have never seen—detail events which never occurred—describe views of that which I have not even an idea—travel post in my old armchair. It's all very well to say write it, but tell me, how.

B. I say again, write it, and pocket the money. Ansard, allow me to state that you are a greenhorn. I will make this mountain of difficulties vanish and melt away like snow before the powerful rays of the sun. You are told to write what you have never seen; but if you have not, others have, which will serve your purpose just as well. To detail events which have never occurred—invent them, they will be more amusing. Describe views, &c. of which you are ignorant—so are most of your readers; but have we not the art of engraving to assist you? To travel post in your armchair—a very pleasant and a very profitable way of travelling, as you have not to pay for the horses and postilions, and are not knocked to pieces by continental roads. Depend upon it, the best travels are those written at home, by those who have never put their foot into the Calais packet-boat.

A. To me this is all a mystery. I certainly must be a greenhorn, as you observe.

B. Why, Ansard, my dear fellow, with a book of roads and a gazetteer, I would write a more amusing book of travels than one half which are now foisted on the public. All you have to do is to fill up the chinks.

A. All I want to do is to fill up the chinks in my stomach, Barnstaple; for, between you and me,

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times are rather queer.

B. You shall do it, if you will follow my advice. I taught you how to write a fashionable novel, it will be hard, indeed, if I cannot send you up the Rhine. One little expense must be incurred—you must subscribe a quarter to a circulating library, for I wish that what you do should be well done.

A. Barnstaple, I will subscribe to—anything.

B. Well, then, since you are so reasonable, I will proceed. You must wade through all the various "Journies on the Rhine," "Two Months on the Rhine," "Autumns on the Rhine," &c., which you can collect. This you will find the most tiresome part of your task. Select one as your guide, one who has a reputation; follow his course, not exactly—that I will explain afterwards—and agree with him in everything, generally speaking. Praise his exactitude and fidelity, and occasionally quote him; this is but fair: after you rob a man (and I intend you shall rifle him most completely), it is but decent to give him kind words. All others you must abuse, contradict, and depreciate. Now, there is a great advantage in so doing: in the first place, you make the best writer your friend—he forgets your larcenies in your commendation of him, and in your abuse of others. If his work be correct, so must yours be; he praises it everywhere—perhaps finds you out, and asks you to dine with him.

A. How should I ever look at his injured face?

B. On the contrary, he is the obliged party—your travels are a puff to his own.

A. But, Barnstaple, allowing that I follow this part of your advice, which I grant to be very excellent, how can I contradict others, when they may be, and probably are, perfectly correct in their assertions?

B. If they are so, virtue must be its own reward. It is necessary that you write a book of travels, and all travellers contradict each other—*ergo*, you must contradict, or nobody will believe that you have travelled. Not only contradict, but sneer at them.

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A. Well, now do explain how that is to be done.

B. Nothing more simple: for instance, a man measures a certain remarkable piece of antiquity—its length is 747 feet. You must measure it over again, and declare that he is in error, that it is only 727. To be sure of your being correct, measure it *twice* over, and then convict him.

A. But surely, Barnstaple, one who has measured it, is more likely to be correct than one who has not.

B. I'll grant you that he is correct to half an inch—that's no matter. The public will, in all probability, believe you, because you are the last writer, and because you have *decreased* the dimensions. Travellers are notorious for amplification, and if the public do not believe you, let them go and measure it themselves.

A. A third traveller may hereafter measure it, and find that I am in the wrong.

B. Ten to one if you are not both in the wrong; but what matter will that be, your book will have been sold.

A. Most true, O king! I perceive now the general outline, and I feel confident, that with your kind assistance, I may accomplish it. But, Barnstaple, the beginning is everything. If I only had the first chapter as a start, I think I could get on. It is the *modus* that I want—the style. A first chapter would be a keynote for the remainder of the tune, with all the variations.

B. Well, then, take up your pen. But before I commence, it may be as well to observe, that there is a certain method required, even in writing travels. In every chapter you should have certain landmarks to guide you. For instance, enumerate the following, and select the works from which they may be obtained, so as to mix up the instructive with the amusing. Travelling—remarks on country passed through—*anecdote*—arrival at a town—churches—population—historical remarks—another *anecdote*—eating and drinking—natural curiosities—egotism—remarks on the women (never mind the men)—another *anecdote*—reflections—an adventure—and go to bed. You understand, Ansard, that in these memoranda you have all that is required; the rule is not to be followed absolutely, but generally. As you observed, such is to be the tune, but your variations may be infinite. When at a loss, or you think you are dull, always call in a grisette, and a little mystery; and, above all, never be afraid of talking too much about yourself.

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A. Many, many thanks; but now, my dear Barnstaple, for the first chapter.

B. Let your style be flowery—I should say florid—never mind a false epithet or two in a page, they will never be observed. A great deal depends upon the first two pages—you must not limp at starting; we will, therefore, be particular. Take your pen.

[*Barnstaple muses for a little while and then continues.*

"A severe cough, which refused to yield even to the balmy influence of the genial spring of 18—, and threatened a pulmonary complaint, induced me to yield to the reiterated persuasions of my physicians to try a change of air, as most likely to ward off the threatened danger. Where to direct my steps was the difficult point to ascertain. Brighton, Torquay, Cromer, Ilfracombe, had all been visited and revisited. At either of these fashionable resorts I was certain to fall in with a numerous acquaintance, whose persuasions would have induced me to depart from that

regularity of diet and of rest, so imperiously insisted upon by my medical advisers. After much cogitation, I resolved upon a journey up the Rhine, and to escape the ruthless winter of our northern clime in the more genial land of history."

A. Land of history—I presume you mean Italy; but am I to go there?

B. No, you may recover, and come back again to skate upon the Serpentine, if you please. You observe, Ansard, I have not made you a fellow with £50 in his pocket, setting out to turn it into £300 by a book of travels. I have avoided mention of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and all common watering-places; I have talked of physicians in the plural; in short, no one who reads that paragraph, but will suppose that you are a young man of rank and fortune, to whom money is no object, and who spends hundreds to cure that which might be effected by a little regularity, and a few doses of ipecacuanha.

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A. I wish it were so. Nevertheless, I'll travel *en grand seigneur*—that's more agreeable even in imagination, than being rumbled in a "*diligence*."

B. And will produce more respect for your work, I can assure you. But to proceed. Always, when you leave England, talk about *hospitality*. The English like it. Have you no relations or friends in whose opinion you wish to stand well? Public mention in print does wonders, especially with a copy handsomely bound "from the author."

A. Really, Barnstaple, I do not know any one. My poor mother is in Cumberland, and that is not *en route*. I have a maternal uncle of the name of Forster, who lives on the road—a rich, old, miserly bachelor; but I can't say much for his hospitality. I have called upon him twice, and he has never even asked me to dinner.

B. Never mind. People like being praised for a virtue which they do not possess—it may prove a legacy. Say, then, that you quitted the hospitable roof of your worthy and excellent-hearted relation, Mr Forster, and felt—

A. Felt how?

B. How—why you felt, as he wrung your hand, that there was a sudden dissolution of the ties of kindred and affection.

A. There always has been in that quarter, so my conscience is so far clear.

B. You arrive at Dover (mind you spell it Dover)—go to bed tired and reflective—embark early the next morning—a rough passage—

A. And sea-sick, of course?

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B. No, Ansard, there I'll give you a proof of my tact—you sha'n't be sea-sick.

A. But I'm sure I should be.

B. All travellers are, and all fill up a page or two with complaints, *ad nauseam*—for that reason sick you shall not be. Observe—to your astonishment you are not sea-sick: the other passengers suffer dreadfully; one young dandy puffs furiously at a cigar in bravado, until he sends it over the side, like an arrow from the blow-pipe of a South American Indian. Introduce a husband with a pretty wife—he jealous as a dog, until he is sick as a cat—your attentions—she pillowed on your arms, while he hangs over the lee gunwale—her gratitude—safe arrival at Calais—sweet smiles of the lady—sullen deportment of the gentleman—a few hints—and draw the veil. Do you understand?

A. Perfectly. I can manage all that.

B. Then when you put your foot on shore, you must, for the first time, *feel sea-sick*.

A. On shore?

B. Yes; reel about, not able to stand—every symptom as if on board. Express your surprise at the strange effect, pretend not to explain it, leave that to medical men, it being sufficient for you to state the *fact*.

A. The fact! O Barnstaple!

B. That will be a great hit for a first chapter. You reverse the order of things.

A. That I do most certainly. Shall I finish the first chapter with that *fact*?

B. No. Travellers always go to bed at the end of each chapter. It is a wise plan, and to a certain degree it must be followed. You must have a baggage adventure—be separated from it—some sharp little urchin has seized upon your valise—it is no where to be found—quite in despair—walk to the hotel d'Angleterre, and find that you are met by the landlord and garçons, who inform you that your carriage is in the remise, and your rooms ready—ascend to your bedroom—find that your baggage is not only there, but neatly laid out—your portmanteau unstrapped—your trunk uncorded—and the little rascal of a commissaire standing by with his hat in his hand, and a smile *de malice*, having installed *himself* as your *domestique de place*—take him for his impudence—praise the "*Cotelettes* and the *vin de Beaune*"—wish the reader good-night, and go to bed. Thus ends the first chapter.

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[*Ansard gets up and takes Barnstaple's hand, which he shakes warmly without speaking. Barnstaple smiles and walks out. Ansard is left hard at work at his desk.*]

Arthur Ansard in his Chambers, solus, with his pen in his hand.

Ans. Capital! that last was a *hit*. It has all the appearance of reality. To be sure, I borrowed the hint, but that nobody will be able to prove. (*Yawns.*) Heigho! I have only got half-way on my journey yet, and my ideas are quite exhausted. I am as much worn out and distressed as one of the German post-horses which I described in my last chapter. (*Nods, and then falls fast asleep.*)

Barnstaple taps at the door; receiving no answer, he enters.

B. So—quite fast. What can have put him to sleep? (*Reads the manuscript on the table.*) No wonder, enough to put anybody to sleep apparently. Why, Ansard!

A. (starting up, still half asleep.) Already? Why, I've hardly shut my eyes. Well, I'll be dressed directly; let them get some *café* ready below. Henri, did you order the hind-spring to be repaired? (*Nods again with his eyes shut.*)

B. Hallo! What now, Ansard, do you really think that you are travelling?

A. (waking up.) Upon my word, Barnstaple, I was so dreaming. I thought I was in my bed at the hotel de Londres, after the fatiguing day's journey I described yesterday. I certainly have written myself into the conviction that I was travelling post.

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B. All the better—you have embodied yourself in your own work, which every writer of fiction ought to do; but they can seldom attain to such a desideratum. Now, tell me, how do you get on?

A. Thank you—pretty well. I have been going it with four post-horses these last three weeks.

B. And how far have you got?

A. Half way—that is, into the middle of my second volume. But I'm very glad that you're come to my assistance, Barnstaple; for, to tell you the truth, I was breaking down.

B. Yes, you said something about the hind-spring of your carriage.

A. That I can repair without your assistance; but my spirits are breaking down. I want society. This travelling post is dull work. Now, if I could introduce a companion—

B. So you shall. At the next town that you stop at, buy a *Poodle*.

A. A *Poodle*! Barnstaple? How the devil shall I be assisted by a poodle?

B. He will prove a more faithful friend to you in your exigence, and a better companion, than one of your own species. A male companion, after all, is soon expended, and a female, which would be more agreeable, is not admissible. If you admit a young traveller into your carriage—what then? He is handsome, pleasant, romantic, and so forth; but you must not give his opinions in contradiction to your own, and if they coincide, it is superfluous. Now, a poodle is a dog of parts, and it is more likely that you fall in with a sagacious dog than with a sagacious man. The poodle is the thing; you must recount your meeting, his purchase, size, colour, and qualifications, and anecdotes of his sagacity, vouched for by the landlord, and all the *garçons* of the hotel. As you proceed on your travels, his attachment to you increases, and wind up every third chapter with "your faithful Mouton."

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A. Will not all that be considered frivolous?

B. Frivolous! by no means. The frivolous will like it, and those who have more sense, although they may think that Mouton does not at all assist your travelling researches, are too well acquainted with the virtues of the canine race, and the attachment insensibly inbibed for so faithful an attendant, not to forgive your affectionate mention of him. Besides it will go far to assist the versimilitude of your travels. As for your female readers, they will prefer Mouton even to you.

A. All-powerful and mighty magician, whose wand of humbug, like that of Aaron's, swallows up all others, not excepting that of divine Truth, I obey you! Mouton shall be summoned to my aid: he shall flourish, and my pen shall flourish in praise of his endless perfections. But, Barnstaple, what shall I give for him?

B. (thinks awhile.) Not less than forty louis.

A. Forty louis for a poodle!

B. Most certainly; not a sous less. The value of anything in the eyes of the world is exactly what it costs. Mouton, at a five franc piece, would excite no interest; and his value to the reader will increase in proportion to his price, which will be considered an undeniable proof of all his wonderful sagacity, with which you are to amuse the reader.

A. But in what is to consist his sagacity?

B. He must do everything but speak. Indeed, he must so far speak as to howl the first part of "Lieber Augustin."

A. His instinct shall put our boasted reason to the blush. But—I think I had better not bring him

home with me.

B. Of course not. In the first place, it's absolutely necessary to kill him, lest his reputation should induce people to seek him out, which they would do, although, in all probability, they never will his master. Lady Cork would certainly invite him to a literary *soirée*. You must therefore kill him in the most effective way possible, and you will derive the advantage of filling up at least ten pages with his last moments—licking your hand, your own lamentations, violent and inconsolable grief on the part of Henri, and tanning his skin as a memorial.

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A. A beautiful episode, for which receive my best thanks. But, Barnstaple, I have very few effective passages as yet. I have remodelled several descriptions of mountains, precipices, waterfalls, and such wonders of the creation—expressed my contempt and surprise at the fear acknowledged by other travellers, in several instances. I have lost my way twice—met three wolves—been four times benighted—and indebted to lights at a distance for a bed at midnight, after the horses have refused to proceed. All is incident, and I am quite hard up for description. Now, I have marked down a fine passage in —'s work—a beautiful description of a cathedral, with a grand procession. (*Reads.*) "What with the effect of the sun's brightest beams upon the ancient glass windows—various hues reflected upon the gothic pillars—gorgeousness of the procession—sacerdotal ornaments—tossing of censers—crowds of people—elevation of the host, and sinking down of the populace *en masse*." It really is a magnificent line of writing, and which my work requires. One or two like that in my book would do well to be quoted by impartial critics, before the public are permitted to read it. But here, you observe, is a difficulty. I dare not borrow the passage.

B. But you shall borrow it—you shall be even finer than he is, and yet he shall not dare to accuse you of plagiarism.

A. How is that possible, my dear Barnstaple? I'm all impatience.

B. His description is at a certain hour of the day. All you have to do is to portray the scene in nearly the same words. You have as much right to visit a cathedral as he has, and as for the rest—here is the secret. You must visit it at *night*. Instead of "glorious beams," you will talk of "pale melancholy light;" instead of "the stained windows throwing their various hues upon the gothic pile," you must "darken the massive pile, and light up the windows with the silver rays of the moon." The glorious orb of day must give place to thousands of wax tapers—the splendid fretwork of the roof you must regret was not to be clearly distinguished—but you must be in ecstasies with the broad light and shade—the blaze at the altar—solemn hour of night—feelings of awe—half a Catholic—religious reflections, &c. Don't you perceive?

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A. I do. Like the rest of my work, it shall be all *moonshine*. It shall be done, Barnstaple; but have you not another idea or two to help me with?

B. Have you talked about cooks?

A. As yet, not a word.

B. By this time you ought to have some knowledge of gastronomy. Talk seriously about eating.

A. (*writes.*) I have made a mem.

B. Have you had no affront?

A. Not one.

B. Then be seriously affronted—complain to the burgomaster, or mayor, or commandant, whoever it may be—they attempt to bully—you are resolute and firm as an Englishman—insist upon being righted—they must make you a thousand apologies. This will tickle the national vanity, and be read with interest.

A. (*writes.*) I have been affronted. Anything else which may proceed from your prolific brain, Barnstaple?

B. Have you had a serious illness?

A. Never complained even of a headache.

B. Then do everything but die—Henri weeping and inconsolable—Mouton howling at the foot of your bed—kick the surgeons out of the room—and cure yourself with three dozen of champagne.

A. (*writes.*) Very sick—cured with three dozen of champagne—I wish the illness would in reality come on, if I were certain of the cure *gratis*. Go on, my dear Barnstaple.

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B. You may work in an episode here—delirium—lucid intervals—gentle female voice—delicate attentions—mysterious discovery from loquacious landlady—eternal gratitude—but no marriage—an apostrophe—and all the rest left to conjecture.

A. (*writes down.*) Silent attentions—conjecture—I can manage that, I think.

B. By-the-bye, have you brought in Madame de Stael?

A. No—how the devil am I to bring her in?

B. As most other travellers do, by the head and shoulders. Never mind that, so long as you bring

her in.

A. (*writes.*) Madame de Stael by the shoulders—that's not very polite towards a lady. These hints are invaluable; pray go on.

B. Why, you have already more hints this morning than are sufficient for three volumes. But, however, let me see. (*B. thinks a little.*) Find yourself short of cash.

A. A sad reality, Barnstaple. I shall write this part well, for truth will guide my pen.

B. All the better. But to continue—no remittances—awkward position—explain your situation—receive credit to any amount—and compliment your countrymen.

A. (*writes.*) Credit to any amount—pleasing idea? But I don't exactly perceive the value of this last hint, Barnstaple.

B. All judicious travellers make it a point, throughout the whole of their works, to flatter the nation upon its wealth, name, and reputation in foreign countries; by doing so you will be read greedily, and praised in due proportion. If ever I were to write my travels into the interior of Africa, or to the North Pole, I would make it a point to discount a bill at Timbuctoo, or get a cheque cashed by the Esquimaux, without the least hesitation in either case. I think now that what with your invention, your plagiarism, and my hints, you ought to produce a very effective Book of Travels; and with that feeling I shall leave you to pursue your journey, and receive, at its finale, your just reward. When we meet again, I hope to see you advertised.

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A. Yes, but not exposed, I trust. I am *incog.* you know.

B. To be sure, that will impart an additional interest to your narrative. All the world will be guessing who you may be. Adieu, voyageur. [*Exit Barnstaple.*]

A. And heaven forfend that they should find me out. But what can be done? In brief, I cannot get a brief, and thus I exercise my professional acquirements how I can, proving myself as long-winded, as prosy perhaps, and certainly as lying, as the more fortunate of my fraternity.

How to write a Romance

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Mr Arthur Ansard, standing at his table, selecting a steel pen from a card on which a dozen are ranged up, like soldiers on parade.

I must find a regular *graver* to write this chapter of horrors. No goose quill could afford me any assistance. Now then. Let me see—(*Reads, and during his reading Barnstaple comes in at the door behind him, unperceived.*) "At this most monstrously appalling sight, the hair of Piftlianteriscki raised slowly the velvet cap from off his head, as if it had been perched upon the rustling quills of some exasperated porcupine—(I think that's new)—his nostrils dilated to that extent that you might, with ease, have thrust a musket bullet into each—his mouth was opened so wide, so unnaturally wide, that the corners were rent asunder, and the blood slowly trickled down each side of his bristly chin—while each tooth loosened from its socket with individual fear.—Not a word could he utter, for his tongue, in its fright, clung with terror to his upper jaw, as tight as do the bellies of the fresh and slimy soles, paired together by some fishwoman; but if his tongue was paralysed, his heart was not—it throbbed against his ribs with a violence which threatened their dislocation from the sternum, and with a sound which reverberated through the dark, damp subterrene—." I think that will do. There's *force* there.

B. There is, with a vengeance. Why, what is all this?

A. My dear Barnstaple, you here? I'm writing a romance for B—. It is to be supposed to be a translation.

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B. The Germans will be infinitely obliged to you; but, my dear fellow, you appear to have fallen into the old school—that's no longer in vogue.

A. My orders are for the old school. B— was most particular on that point. He says that there is a re-action—a great re-action.

B. What, on literature? Well, he knows as well as any man. I only wish to God there was in everything else, and we could see the good old times again.

A. To confess the truth, I did intend to have finished this without saying a word to you. I wished to have surprised you.

B. So you have, my dear fellow, with the few lines I have heard. How the devil are you to get your fellow out of that state of asphyxia?

A. By degrees—slowly—very slowly—as they pretend that we lawyers go to heaven. But I'll tell you what I have done, just to give you an idea of my work. In the first place, I have a castle perched so high up in the air, that the eagles, even in their highest soar, appear but as wrens below.

B. That's all right.

A. And then it has subterraneous passages, to which the sewers of London are a mere song, and they all lead to a small cave at high water mark on the sea-beach, covered with brambles and bushes, and just large enough at its entrance to admit of a man squeezing himself in.

B. That's all right. You cannot be too much underground; in fact, the two first, and the best part of the third volume, should be wholly in the bowels of the earth, and your hero and heroine should never *come to light* until the last chapter.

A. Then they would never have been born till then, and how could I marry them? But still I have adhered pretty much to your idea; and, Barnstaple, I have such a heroine—such a love—she has never seen her sweetheart, yet she is most devotedly attached, and has suffered more for his sake than any mortal could endure.

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B. Most heroines generally do.

A. I have had her into various dungeons for three or four years, on black bread and a broken pitcher of water—she has been starved to death—lain for months and months upon wet straw—had two brain fevers—five times has she risked violation, and always has picked up, or found in the belt of her infamous ravishers, a stiletto, which she has plunged into their hearts, and they have expired with or without a groan.

B. Excellent: and of course comes out of her dungeons each time as fresh, as sweet, as lovely, as pure, as charming, and as constant as ever.

A. Exactly; nothing can equal her infinite variety of adventure, and her imperishable beauty and unadhesive cleanliness of person; and, as for lives, she has more than a thousand cats. After nine months' confinement in a dungeon, four feet square, when it is opened for her release, the air is perfumed with the ambrosia which exhales from her sweet person.

B. Of course it does. The only question is, what ambrosia smells like. But let me know something about your hero.

A. He is a prince and a robber.

B. The two professions are not at all incompatible. Go on.

A. He is the chief of a band of robbers, and is here, there, and everywhere. He fills all Europe with terror, admiration, and love.

B. Very good.

A. His reasons for joining the robbers are, of course, a secret (and upon my word they are equally a secret to myself); but it is wonderful the implicit obedience of his men, and the many acts of generosity of which he is guilty. I make him give away a great deal more money than his whole band ever take, which is so far awkward, that the query may arise in what way he keeps them together, and supplies them with food and necessaries.

B. Of course with *IO U's* upon his princely domains.

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A. I have some very grand scenes, amazingly effective; for instance, what do you think, at the moment after the holy mass has been performed in St Peter's at Rome, just as the pope is about to put the sacred wafer into his mouth and bless the whole world, I make him snatch the wafer out of the pope's hand, and get clear off with it.

B. What for, may I ask?

A. That is a secret which I do not reveal. The whole arrangement of that part of the plot is admirable. The band of robbers are disguised as priests, and officiate, without being found out.

B. But isn't that rather sacrilegious?

A. No; it appears so to be, but he gives his reasons for his behaviour to the pope, and the pope is satisfied, and not only gives him his blessing, but shows him the greatest respect.

B. They must have been very weighty reasons.

A. And therefore they are not divulged.

B. That is to say, not until the end of the work.

A. They are never divulged at all; I leave a great deal to the reader's imagination—people are fond of conjecture. All they know is, that he boldly appears, and demands an audience. He is conducted in, the interview is private, after a sign made by our hero, and at which the pope almost leaps off his chair. After an hour he comes out again, and the pope bows him to the very door. Every one is astonished, and, of course, almost canonise him.

B. That's going it rather strong in a Catholic country. But tell me, Ansard, what is your plot?

A. Plot! I have none.

B. No plot!

A. No plot, and all plot. I puzzle the reader with certain materials. I have castles and dungeons, corridors and creaking doors, good villains and bad villains. Chain armour and clank of armour,

daggers for gentlemen, and stiletos for ladies. Dark forests and brushwood, drinking scenes, eating scenes, and sleeping scenes—robbers and friars, purses of gold and instruments of torture, an incarnate devil of a Jesuit, a handsome hero, and a lovely heroine. I jumble them all together, sometimes above, and sometimes underground, and I explain nothing at all.

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B. Have you nothing supernatural?

A. O yes! I've a dog whose instinct is really supernatural, and I have two or three visions, which may be considered so, as they tell what never else could have been known. I decorate my caverns and dungeons with sweltering toads and slimy vipers, a constant dropping of water, with chains too ponderous to lift, but which the parties upon whom they are riveted, clang together as they walk up and down in their cells, and soliloquise. So much for my underground scenery. Above, I people the halls with pages and ostrich feathers, and knights in bright armour, a constant supply of generous wine, and goblets too heavy to lift, which the knights toss off at a draught, as they sit and listen to the minstrel's music.

B. Bravo, Ansard, bravo. It appears to me that you do not want assistance in this romance.

A. No, when I do I have always a holy and compassionate friar, who pulls a wonderful restorative or healing balm, out of his bosom. The puffs of Solomon's Balm of Gilead are a fool to the real merits of my pharmacopœia contained in a small vial.

B. And pray what may be the title of this book of yours, for I have known it take more time to fix upon a title than to write the three volumes.

A. I call it *The Undiscovered Secret*, and very properly so too, for it never is explained. But if you please, I will read you some passages from it. I think you will approve of them. For instance, now let us take this, in the second volume. You must know, that Angelicanarinella (for that is the name of my heroine) is thrown into a dungeon not more than four feet square, but more than six hundred feet below the surface of the earth. The ways are so intricate, and the subterranean so vast, and the dungeons so numerous that the base Ethiop, who has obeyed his master's orders in confining her, has himself been lost in the labyrinth, and has not been able to discover what dungeon he put her in. For three days he has been looking for it, during which our heroine has been without food, and he is still searching and scratching his woolly head in despair, as he is to die by slow torture, if he does not reproduce her—for you observe, the chief who has thrown her into this dungeon is most desperately in love with her.

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B. That of course; and that is the way to prove romantic love—you ill-treat—but still she is certainly in a dilemma, as well as the Ethiop.

A. Granted; but she talks like the heroine of a romance. Listen. (*Ansard reads.*) "The beauteous and divinely-moulded form of the angelic Angelicanarinella pressed the dank and rotten straw, which had been thrown down by the scowling, thick-lipped Ethiop for her repose—she, for whom attendant maidens had smoothed the Sybaritic sheet of finest texture, under the elaborately carved and sumptuously gilt canopy, the silken curtains, and the tassels of the purest dust of gold."

B. Tassels of dust of gold! only figuratively, I suppose.

A. Nothing more. "Each particular straw of this dank, damp bed was elastic with delight, at bearing such angelic pressure; and, as our heroine cast her ineffably beaming eyes about the dark void, lighting up with their effulgent rays each little portion of the dungeon, as she glanced them from one part to another, she perceived that the many reptiles enclosed with her in this narrow tomb, were nestling to her side, their eyes fixed upon her in mute expressions of love and admiration. Her eclipsed orbs were each, for a moment, suffused with a bright and heavenly tear, and from the suffusion threw out a more brilliant light upon the feeling reptiles who paid this tribute to her undeserved sufferings. She put forth her beauteous hand, whose 'faint tracery,'—(I stole that from Cooper,)—whose faint tracery had so often given to others the idea that it was ethereal, and not corporeal, and lifting with all the soft and tender handling of first love a venerable toad, which smiled upon her, she placed the interesting animal so that it could crawl up and nestle in her bosom. 'Poor child of dank, of darkness, and of dripping,' exclaimed she, in her flute-like notes, 'who sheltereth thyself under the wet and mouldering wall, so neglected in thy form by thy mother Nature, repose awhile in peace where princes and nobles would envy thee, if they knew thy present lot. But that shall never be; these lips shall never breathe a tale which might endanger thy existence; fear not, therefore, their enmity, and as thou slowly creepest away thy little round of circumscribed existence, forget me not, but shed an occasional pearly tear to the memory of the persecuted, the innocent Angelicanarinella!'" What d'ye think of that?

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B. Umph! a very warm picture certainly; however, it is natural. You know, a person of her consequence could never exist without a little *toadyism*.

A. I have a good many subterraneous soliloquies, which would have been lost forever, if I did not bring them up.

B. That one you have just read is enough to make everybody else bring up.

A. I rather plume myself upon it.

B. Yes, it is a feather in your cap, and will act as a feather in the throat of your readers.

A. Now I'll turn over the second volume, and read you another *morceau*, in which I assume the more playful vein. I have imitated one of our modern writers, who must be correct in her language, as she knows all about heroes and heroines. I must confess that I've cribbed a little.

B. Let's hear.

A. The lovely Angelicanarinella *pottered* for some time about this fairy chamber, then 'wrote journal.' At last, she *threw herself down on the floor*, pulled out the miniature, *gulped* when she looked at it, and then *cried herself to sleep*.

B. *Pottered and gulped!* What language do you call that?

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A. It's all right, my dear fellow. I understand that it is the refined slang of the modern boudoir, and only known to the initiated.

B. They had better keep it entirely to their boudoirs. I should advise you to leave it all out.

A. Well, I thought that one who was so very particular, must have been the standard of perfection herself.

B. That does not at all follow.

A. But what I wish to read to you is the way in which I have managed that my secret shall never be divulged. It is known only to four.

B. A secret known to four people! You must be quick then.

A. So I am, as you shall hear; they all meet in a dark gallery, but do not expect to meet any one but the hero, whom they intend to murder, each one having, unknown to the others, made an appointment with him for that purpose, on the pretence of telling him the great secret. Altogether the scene is well described, but it is long, so I'll come at once to the *denouement*.

B. Pray do.

A. "Absenpresentini felt his way by the slimy wall, when the breath of another human being caught his ear: he paused, and held his own breath. 'No, no,' muttered the other, 'the *secret of blood and gold* shall remain with me alone. Let him come, and he shall find death.' In a second, the dagger of Absenpresentini was in the mutterer's bosom:—he fell without a groan. 'To me alone the secret of blood and gold, and with me it remains,' exclaimed Absenpresentini. 'It does remain with you,' cried Phosphorini, driving his dagger into his back:—Absenpresentini fell without a groan, and Phosphorini, withdrawing his dagger, exclaimed, 'Who is now to tell the secret but me?' 'Not you,' cried Vortiskini, raising up his sword and striking at where the voice proceeded. The trusty steel cleft the head of the abandoned Phosphorini, who fell without a groan. 'Now will I retain the secret of blood and gold,' said Vortiskini, as he sheathed his sword. 'Thou shalt,' exclaimed the wily Jesuit, as he struck his stiletto to the heart of the robber, who fell without a groan. 'With me only does the secret now rest, by which our order might be disgraced; with me it dies,' and the Jesuit raised his hand. 'Thus to the glory and the honour of his society does Manfredini sacrifice his life.' He struck the keen-pointed instrument into his heart, and died without a groan. 'Stop,' cried our hero."

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B. And I agree with your hero: stop, Ansard, or you'll kill me too—but not without a groan.

A. Don't you think it would act well?

B. Quite as well as it reads; pray is it all like this?

A. You shall judge for yourself. I have half killed myself with writing it, for I chew opium every night to obtain ideas. Now again—

B. Spare me, Ansard, spare me; my nerves are rather delicate; for the remainder I will take your word.

A. I wish my duns would do the same, even if it were only my washerwoman; but there's no more tick for me here, except this old watch of my father's, which serves to remind me of what I cannot obtain from others—time; but, however, there is a time for all things, and when the time comes that my romance is ready, my creditors will obtain the *ready*.

B. Your only excuse, Ansard.

A. I beg your pardon. The public require strong writing now-a-days. We have thousands who write well, and the public are nauseated with what is called *good writing*.

B. And so they want something bad, eh? Well, Ansard, you certainly can supply them.

A. My dear Barnstaple, you must not disparage this style of writing—it is not bad—there is a great art in it. It may be termed writing intellectual and ethereal. You observe, that it never allows probabilities or even possibilities to stand in its way. The dross of humanity is rejected: all the common wants and grosser feelings of our natures are disallowed. It is a novel which is all mind and passion. Corporeal attributes and necessities are thrown on one side, as they would destroy the charm of perfectability. Nothing can soil, or defile, or destroy my heroine; suffering adds lustre to her beauty, as pure gold is tried by fire: nothing can kill her, because she is all mind. As for my men, you will observe when you read my work—

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B. When I do!

A. Which, of course, you will—that they also have their appetites in abeyance; they never want to eat, or drink, or sleep—are always at hand when required, without regard to time or space. Now there is a great beauty in this description of writing. The women adore it because they find their sex divested of those human necessities, without which they would indeed be angels! the mirror is held up to them, and they find themselves perfect—no wonder they are pleased. The other sex are also very glad to dwell upon female perfectability, which they can only find in a romance, although they have often dreamt of it in their younger days.

B. There is some truth in these remarks. Every milliner's girl, who devours your pages in bed by the half-hour's light of tallow stolen for the purpose, imagines a strong similarity between herself and your Angelicanarinella, and every shop-boy measuring tape or weighing yellow soap will find out attributes common to himself and to your hero.

A. Exactly. As long as you draw perfection in both sexes, you are certain to be read, because by so doing you flatter human nature and self-love, and transfer it to the individual who reads. Now a picture of real life—

B. Is like some of Wouvermans' best pictures, which will not be purchased by many, because his dogs in the fore-ground are doing exactly what all dogs will naturally do when they first are let out of their kennels.

A. Wouvermans should have known better, and made his dogs better mannered if he expected his pictures to be hung up in the parlour of refinement.

B. Very true.

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A. Perhaps you would like to have another passage or two.

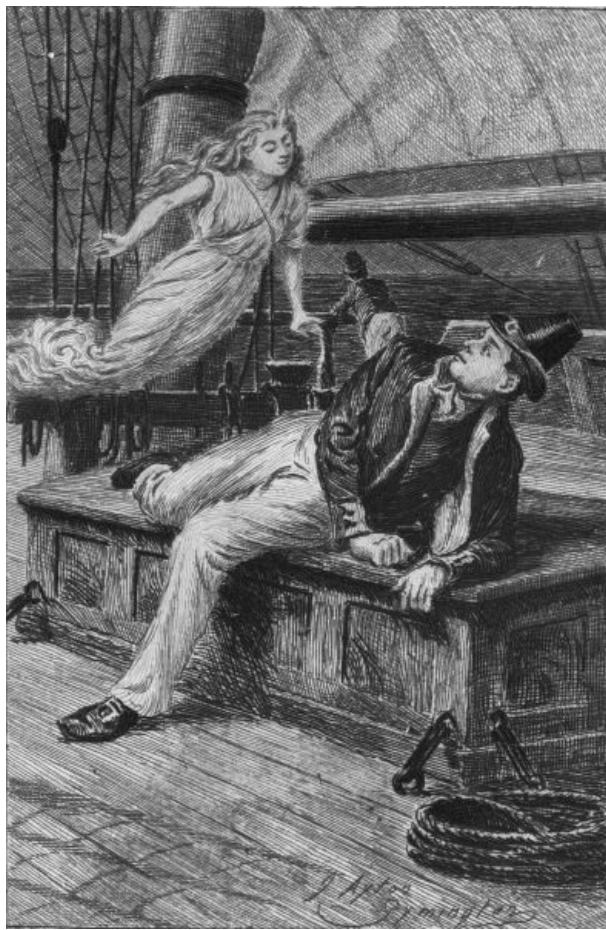
B. Excuse me: I will imagine it all. I only hope, Ansard, this employment will not interfere with your legal practice.

A. My dear Barnstaple, it certainly will not, because my legal practice cannot be interfered with. I have been called to the bar, but find no employment in my calling. I have been sitting in my gown and wig for one year, and may probably sit a dozen more, before I have to rise to address their lordships. I have not yet had a guinea brief. My only chance is, to be sent out as judge to Sierra Leone, or perhaps to be made a commissioner of the Court of Requests.

B. You are indeed humble in your aspirations. I recollect the time, Ansard, when you dreamt of golden fame, and aspired to the wool-sack—when your ambition prompted you to midnight labour, and you showed an energy—

A. (*putting his hands up to his forehead, with his elbows on the table.*) What can I do, Barnstaple? If I trust to briefs, my existence will be but brief—we all must live.

B. I will not reply as Richelieu did to a brother author, "Je ne vois pas la nécessité," but this I do say, that if you are in future to live by supplying the public with such nonsense, the shorter your existence the better.



S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.

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Jack Littlebrain was, physically considered, as fine grown, and moreover as handsome a boy as ever was seen, but it must be acknowledged that he was not very clever. Nature is, in most instances, very impartial; she has given plumage to the peacock, but, as everyone knows, not the slightest ear for music. Throughout the feathered race it is almost invariably the same; the homeliest clad are the finest songsters. Among animals the elephant is certainly the most intelligent, but, at the same time, he cannot be considered as a beauty. Acting upon this well ascertained principle, nature imagined, that she had done quite enough for Jack when she endowed him with such personal perfection; and did not consider it was at all necessary that he should be very clever; indeed, it must be admitted not only that he was not very clever, but (as the truth must be told) remarkably dull and stupid. However, the Littlebrains have been for a long while a well-known, numerous, and influential family, so that, if it were possible that Jack could have been taught anything, the means were forthcoming: he was sent to every school in the country; but it was in vain; at every following vacation, he was handed over from the one pedagogue to the other, of those whose names were renowned for the Busbian system of teaching by stimulating both ends: he was horsed every day and still remained an ass, and at the end of six months, if he did not run away before that period was over, he was invariably sent back to his parents as incorrigible and unteachable. What was to be done with him? The Littlebrains had always got on in the world, somehow or another, by their interest and connections; but here was one who might be said to have no brains at all. After many *pros* and *cons*, and after a variety of consulting letters had passed between the various members of his family, it was decided, that as his maternal uncle, Sir Theophilus Blazers, G.C.B., was at that time the second in command in the Mediterranean, he should be sent to sea under his command; the Admiral, having in reply to a letter on the subject, answered that it was hard indeed if he did not lick him into some shape or another; and that, at all events, he'd warrant that Jack should be able to box the compass before he had been three months nibbling the ship's biscuit; further, that it was very easy to get over the examination necessary to qualify him for lieutenant, as a turkey and a dozen of brown stout sent in the boat with him on the passing day, as a present to each of the passing captains, would pass him, even if he were as incompetent as a camel (or, as they say at sea, a cable,) to pass through the eye of a needle; that having once passed, he would soon have him in command of a fine frigate, with a good nursing first lieutenant; and that if he did not behave himself properly, he would make his signal to come on board of the flag-ship, take him into the cabin, and give him a sound horsewhipping, as other admirals have been known to inflict upon their own sons under similar circumstances. The reader must be aware that, from the tenour of Sir Theophilus's letter, the circumstances which we are narrating must have occurred some fifty years ago.

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When Jack was informed that he was to be a midshipman, he looked up in the most innocent way in the world (and innocent he was, sure enough), turned on his heels, and whistled as he went for want of thought. For the last three months he had been at home, and his chief employment was kissing and romping with the maids, who declared him to be the handsomest Littlebrain that the country had ever produced. Our hero viewed the preparations made for his departure with

perfect indifference, and wished everybody good-bye with the utmost composure. He was a happy, good-tempered fellow who never calculated, because he could not; never decided, for he had not wit enough to choose; never foresaw, although he could look straight before him; and never remembered, because he had no memory. The line, "If ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," was certainly made especially for Jack: nevertheless he was not totally deficient: he knew what was good to eat or drink, for his taste was perfect, his eyes were very sharp, and he could discover in a moment if a peach was ripe on the wall; his hearing was quick, for he was the first in the school to detect the footsteps of his pedagogue; and he could smell anything savoury nearly a mile off, if the wind lay the right way. Moreover, he knew that if he put his fingers in the fire that he would burn himself; that knives cut severely; that birch tickled, and several other little axioms of this sort which are generally ascertained by children at an early age, but which Jack's capacity had not received until at a much later date. Such as he was, our hero went to sea; his stock in his sea-chest being very abundant, while his stock of ideas was proportionally small.

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We will pass over all the trans-shipments of Jack until he was eventually shipped on board of the *Mendacious*, then lying at Malta with the flag of Sir Theophilus Blazers at the fore—a splendid ship, carrying 120 guns, and nearly 120 midshipmen of different calibres. (I pass over captain, lieutenant, and ship's company, having made mention of her most valuable qualifications.) Jack was received with a hearty welcome by his uncle, for he came in pudding-time, and was invited to dinner; and the Admiral made the important discovery, that if his nephew was a fool in other points, he was certainly no fool at his knife and fork. In a short time his messmates found out that he was no fool at his fists, and his knock-down arguments ended much disputation. Indeed, as the French would say, Jack was perfection in the *physique*, although so very deficient in the *morale*.

But if Pandora's box proved a plague to the whole world, Jack had his individual portion of it, when he was summoned to *box* the compass by his worthy uncle Sir Theophilus Blazers; who in the course of six months discovered that he could not make his nephew box it in the three, which he had warranted in his letter; every day our hero's ears were boxed, but the compass never. It required all the cardinal virtues to teach him the cardinal points during the forenoon, and he made a point of forgetting them before the sun went down. Whenever they attempted it (and various were the teachers employed to drive the compass into Jack's head) his head drove round the compass; and try all he could, Jack never could compass it. It appeared, as some people are said only to have one idea, as if Jack could only have one *point* in his head at a time, and to that point he would stand like a well-broken pointer. With him the wind never changed until the next day. His uncle pronounced him to be a fool, but that did not hurt his nephew's feelings; he had been told so too often already.

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I have said that Jack had a great respect for good eating and drinking, and, moreover, was blessed with a good appetite: every person has his peculiar fancies, and if there was anything which more titillated the palate and olfactory nerves of our hero, it was a roast goose with sage and onions. Now it so happened, that having been about seven months on board of the *Mendacious*, Jack had one day received a summons to dine with the Admiral, for the steward had ordered a roast goose for dinner, and knew not only that Jack was partial to it, but also that Jack was the Admiral's nephew, which always goes for something on board of a flag-ship. Just before they were sitting down to table, the Admiral wishing to know how the wind was, and having been not a little vexed with the slow progress of his nephew's nautical acquirements, said, "Now, Mr Littlebrain, go up, and bring me down word how the wind is; and mark me, as, when you are sent, nine times out of ten you make a mistake, I shall now bet you five guineas against your dinner, that you make a mistake this time: so now be off and we will soon ascertain whether you lose your dinner or I lose my money. Sit down, gentlemen; we will not wait for Mr Littlebrain."

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Jack did not much admire this bet on the part of his uncle, but still less did he like the want of good manners in not waiting for him. He had just time to see the covers removed, to scent a whiff of the goose, and was off.

"The Admiral wants to know how the wind is, sir," said Jack to the officer of the watch.

The officer of the watch went to the binnacle, and setting the wind as nearly as he could, replied, "Tell Sir Theophilus that it is *S.W. and by W. ¾ W.*"

"That's one of those confounded long points that I never can remember," cried Jack, in despair.

"Then you'll '*get goose*,' as the saying is," observed one of the midshipmen.

"No; I'm afraid that I sha'n't get any," replied Jack, despondingly. "What did he say, S.W. and by N. ¾ E.?"

"Not exactly," replied his messmate, who was a good-natured lad, and laughed heartily at Jack's version. "S.W. and by W. ¾ W."

"I never can remember it," cried Jack. "I'm to have five guineas if I do, and no dinner if I don't; and if I stay here much longer, I shall get no dinner at all events, for they are all terribly peckish, and there will be none left."

"Well, if you'll give me one of the guineas, I'll show you how to manage it," said the midshipman.

"I'll give you two, if you'll only be quick and the goose a'n't all gone," replied Jack.

The midshipman wrote down the point from which the wind blew, at full length, upon a bit of paper, and pinned it to the rim of Jack's hat. "Now," said he, "when you go into the cabin, you can

hold your hat so as to read it, without their perceiving you."

"Well, so I can; I never should have thought of that," said Jack.

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"You hav'n't wit enough," replied the midshipman.

"Well, I see no wit in the compass," replied Jack.

"Nevertheless, it's full of point," replied the midshipman; "now be quick."

Our hero's eyes served him well, if his memory was treacherous; and as he entered the cabin door he bowed over his hat very politely, and said, as he read it off, "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," and then he added, without reading at all, "if you please, Sir Theophilus."

"Steward," said the Admiral, "tell the officer of the watch to step down."

"How's the wind, Mr Growler?"

"S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," replied the officer.

"Then, Mr Littlebrain, you have won your five guineas, and may now sit down and enjoy your dinner."

Our hero was not slow in obeying the order, and ventured, upon the strength of his success, to send his plate twice for goose. Having eaten their dinner, drunk their wine, and taken their coffee, the officers, at the same time, took the hint which invariably accompanies the latter beverage, made their bows and retreated. As Jack was following his seniors out of the cabin, the Admiral put the sum which he had staked into his hands, observing, that "it was an ill wind that blew nobody good."

So thought Jack, who, having faithfully paid the midshipman the two guineas for his assistance, was now on the poop keeping his watch, as midshipmen usually do; that is, stretched out on the signal lockers, and composing himself to sleep after the most approved fashion, answering the winks of the stars by blinks of his eyes, until at last he shut them to keep them warm. But, before he had quite composed himself, he thought of the goose and the five guineas. The wind was from the same quarter, blowing soft and mild; Jack lay in a sort of reverie, as it fanned his cheek, for the weather was close and sultry.

"Well," muttered Jack to himself, "I do love that point of the compass, at all events, and I think that I never shall forget S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W. No I never—never liked one before, though—"

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"Is that true?" whispered a gentle voice in his ear; "do you love 'S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.,' and will you, as you say, never forget her?"

"Why, what's that?" said Jack, opening his eyes, and turning half round on his side.

"It's me—'S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.,' that you say you love."

Littlebrain raised himself and looked round;—there was no one on the poop except himself and two or three of the after-guard, who were lying down between the guns. "Why, who was it that spoke?" said Jack, much astonished.

"It was the wind you love, and who has long loved you," replied the same voice; "do you wish to see me?"

"See you,—see the wind?—I've been already sent on that message by the midshipmen," thought Jack.

"Do you love me as you say, and as I love you?" continued the voice.

"Well, I like you better than any other point of the compass, and I'm sure I never thought I should like one of them," replied Jack.

"That will not do for me; will you love only me?"

"I'm not likely to love the others," replied Jack, shutting his eyes again; "I *hate* them all."

"And love me?"

"Well, I do love you, that's a fact," replied Jack, as he thought of the goose and the five guineas.

"Then look round, and you shall see me," said the soft voice.

Jack, who hardly knew whether he was asleep or awake, did at this summons once more take the trouble to open his eyes, and beheld a fairy female figure, pellucid as water, yet apparently possessing substance; her features were beautifully soft and mild, and her outline trembled and shifted as it were, waving gently to and fro. It smiled sweetly, hung over him, played with his chestnut curls, softly touched his lips with her own, passed her trembling fingers over his cheeks, and its warm breath appeared as if it melted into his. Then it grew more bold,—embraced his person, searched into his neck and collar, as if curious to examine him.

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Jack felt a pleasure and gratification which he could not well comprehend: once more the charmer's lips trembled upon his own, now remaining for a moment, now withdrawing, again returning to kiss and kiss again, and once more did the soft voice put the question—

"Do you love me?"

"Better than goose," replied Jack.

"I don't know who goose may be," replied the fairy form, as she tossed about Jack's waving locks; "you must love only me, promise me that before I am relieved."

"What, have you got the first watch, as well as me?" replied Jack.

"I am on duty just now, but I shall not be so long. We southerly winds are never kept long in one place; some of my sisters will probably be sent here soon."

"I don't understand what you talk about," replied Jack. "Suppose you tell me who you are, and what you are, and I'll do all I can to keep awake; I don't know how it is, but I've felt more inclined to go to sleep since you have been fanning me about, than I did before."

"Then I will remain by your side while you listen to me. I am, as I told you, a wind——"

"That's puzzling," said Jack, interrupting her.

"My name is 'S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.'"

"Yes, and a very long name it is. If you wish me to remember you, you should have had a shorter one."

This ruffled the wind a little, and she blew rather sharp into the corner of Jack's eye,—however, she proceeded—

"You are a sailor, and of course you know all the winds on the compass by name."

"I wish I did; but I don't," replied Littlebrain, "I can recollect you, and not one other."

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Again the wind trembled with delight on his lips, and she proceeded:—"You know that there are thirty-two points on the compass, and these points are divided into quarters; so that there are, in fact, 128 different winds."

"There are more than I could ever remember; I know that," said Jack.

"Well, we are in all 128. All the winds which have northerly in them, are coarse and ugly; all the southern winds are pretty."

"You don't say so?" replied our hero.

"We are summoned to blow, as required, but the hardest duty generally falls to the northerly winds, as it should do, for they are the strongest; although we southerly winds can blow hard enough when we choose. Our characters are somewhat different. The most unhappy in disposition, and I may say, the most malevolent, are the north and easterly winds; the N.W. winds are powerful, but not unkind; the S.E. winds vary, but, at all events, we of the S.W. are considered the mildest and most beneficent. Do you understand me?"

"Not altogether. You're going right round the compass, and I never could make it out, that's a fact. I hear what you say, but I cannot promise to recollect it; I can only recollect S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W."

"I care only for your recollecting me; if you do that, you may forget all the rest. Now you see we South Wests are summer winds, and are seldom required but in this season; I have often blown over your ship these last three months, and I always have lingered near you, for I loved you."

"Thank you—now go on, for seven bells have struck some time, and I shall be going to turn in. Is your watch out?"

"No, I shall blow for some hours longer. Why will you leave me—why wo'n't you stay on deck with me?"

"What, stay on deck after my watch is out! No, if I do, blow me! We midshipmen never do that—but I say, why can't you come down with me, and turn in my hammock; it's close to the hatchway, and you can easily do it."

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"Well, I will, upon one promise. You say that you love me, now I'm very jealous, for we winds are always supplanting one another. Promise me that you will never mention any other wind in the compass but me, for if you do, they may come to you, and if I hear of it I'll blow the masts out of your ship, that I will."

"You don't say so?" replied Jack, surveying her fragile, trembling form.

"Yes, I will, and on a lee shore too; so that the ship shall go to pieces on the rocks, and the Admiral and every soul on board her be drowned."

"No, you wouldn't, would you?" said our hero, astonished.

"Not if you promise me. Then I'll come to you and pour down your windsails, and dry your washed clothes as they hang on the rigging, and just ripple the waves as you glide along, and hang upon the lips of my dear love, and press him in my arms. Promise me, then, on no account ever to recollect or mention any other wind but me."

"Well, I think I may promise that," replied Jack, "for I'm very clever at forgetting; and then you'll come to my hammock, wo'n't you, and sleep with me? you'll be a nice cool bedfellow these warm nights."

"I can't sleep on my watch as midshipmen do; but I'll watch you while you sleep, and I'll fan your cheeks, and keep you cool and comfortable, till I'm relieved."

"And when you go, when will you come again?"

"That I cannot tell—when I'm summoned; and I shall wait with impatience, that you may be sure of."

"There's eight bells," said Jack, starting up; "I must go down and call the officer of the middle watch; but I'll soon turn in, for my relief is not so big as myself, and I can thrash him."

Littlebrain was as good as his word; he cut down his relief, and then thrashed him for venturing to expostulate. The consequence was, that in ten minutes he was in his hammock, and "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W." came gently down the hatchway, and rested in his arms. Jack soon fell fast asleep, and when he was wakened up the next morning by the quarter-master, his bedfellow was no longer there. A mate inquiring how the wind was, was answered by the quarter-master that they had a fresh breeze from the N.N.W., by which Jack understood that his sweetheart was no longer on duty.

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Our hero had passed such a happy night with his soft and kind companion, that he could think of nothing else; he longed for her to come again, and, to the surprise of everybody, was now perpetually making inquiries as to the wind which blew. He thought of her continually; and in fact was as much in love with "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W." as he possibly could be. She came again—once more did he enjoy her delightful company; again she slept with him in his hammock, and then, after a short stay, she was relieved by another.

We do not intend to accuse the wind of inconstancy, as that was not her fault; nor of treachery, for she loved dearly; nor of violence, for she was all softness and mildness; but we do say, that "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W." was the occasion of Jack being very often in a scrape, for our hero kept his word; he forgot all other wind, and, with him, there was not other except his dear "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W." It must be admitted of Jack, that, at all events, he showed great perseverance, for he stuck to his point.

Our hero would argue with his messmates, for it is not those who are most capable of arguing who are most fond of it; and, like all arguers not very brilliant, he would flounder and diverge away right and left, just as the flaws of ideas came into his head.

"What nonsense it is your talking that way," would his opponent say, "Why don't you come to the point?"

"And so I do," cried Jack.

"Well then, what is your point?"

"S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," replied our hero.

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Who could reply to this? But in every instance, and through every difficulty, our hero kept his promise, until his uncle Sir Theophilus was very undecided, whether he should send him home to be locked up in a Lunatic Asylum, or bring him on in the service to the rank of post-captain. Upon mature consideration, however, as a man in Bedlam is a very useless member of society, and a tee-total non-productive, whereas a captain in the navy is a responsible agent, the Admiral came to the conclusion, that Littlebrain must follow up his destiny.

At last, Jack was set down as the greatest fool in the ship, and was pointed out as such. The ladies observed, that such might possibly be the case, but at all events he was the handsomest young man in the Mediterranean fleet. We believe that both parties were correct in their assertions.

Time flies—even a midshipman's time, which does not fly quite so fast as his money—and the time came for Mr Littlebrain's examination. Sir Theophilus, who now commanded the whole fleet, was almost in despair. How was it possible that a man could navigate a ship, with only one quarter point of the compass in his head?

Sir Theophilus scratched his wig; and the disposition of the Mediterranean fleet, so important to the country, was altered according to the dispositions of the captains who commanded the ships. In those days, there were martinets in the service; officers who never overlooked an offence, or permitted the least deviation from strict duty; who were generally hated, but at the same time were most valuable to the service. As for his nephew passing his examination before any of those of the first, or second, or even of the third degree, the Admiral knew that it was impossible. The consequence was, that one was sent away on a mission to Genoa, about nothing; another to watch for vessels never expected, off Sardinia; two more to cruise after a French frigate which had never been built: and thus, by degrees, did the Admiral arrange, so as to obtain a set of officers sufficiently pliant to allow his nephew to creep under the gate which barred his promotion, and which he never could have vaulted over. So the signal was made—our hero went on board—his uncle had not forgotten the propriety of a little *douceur* on the occasion; and, as the turkeys were all gone, three couple of geese were sent in the same boat, as a present to each

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of the three passing captains. Littlebrain's heart failed him as he pulled to the ship; even the geese hissed at him, as much as to say, "If you were not such a stupid ass, we might have been left alive in our coops." There was a great deal of truth in that remark, if they did say so.

Nothing could have been made more easy for Littlebrain than his examination. The questions had all been arranged beforehand; and some kind friend had given him all the answers written down. The passing captains apparently suffered from the heat of the weather, and each had his hand on his brow, looking down on the table at the time that Littlebrain gave his answers, so that of course they did not observe that he was reading them off. As soon as Littlebrain had given his answer, and had had sufficient time to drop his paper under the table, the captains felt better and looked up again.

There were but eight questions for our hero to answer. Seven had been satisfactorily got through; then came the eighth, a very simple one:—"What is your course and distance from Ushant to the Start?" This question having been duly put, the captains were again in deep meditation, shrouding their eyes with the palms of their hands.

Littlebrain had his answer—he looked at the paper. What could be more simple than to reply?—and then the captains would have all risen up, shaken him by the hand, complimented him upon the talent he had displayed, sent their compliments to the commander-in-chief, and their thanks for the geese. Jack was just answering, "North——"

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"Recollect your promise!" cried a soft voice, which Jack well recollected.

Jack stammered—the captains were mute—and waited patiently.

"I must say it," muttered Jack.

"You shan't," replied the little Wind.

"Indeed I must," said Jack, "or I shall be turned back."

The captains, surprised at this delay and the muttering of Jack, looked up, and one of them gently inquired if Mr Littlebrain had not dropped his handkerchief or something under the table? and then they again fixed their eyes upon the green cloth.

"If you dare, I'll never see you again," cried "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.,"—"never come to your hammock,—but I'll blow the ship on shore, every soul shall be lost, Admiral and all; recollect your promise!"

"Then I shall never pass," replied Jack.

"Do you think that any other point in the compass shall pass you except me?—never! I'm too jealous for that; come now, dearest," and the Wind again deliriously trembled upon the lips of our hero, who could no longer resist.

"S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," exclaimed Jack firmly.

"You have made a slight mistake, Mr Littlebrain," said one of the captains. "*Look* again—I meant to say, *think* again."

"S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," again repeated Jack.

"Dearest! how I love you!" whispered the soft Wind.

"Why, Mr Littlebrain," said one of the captains, for Jack had actually laid the paper down on the table, "what's in the wind now?"

"She's obstinate," replied Jack.

"You appear to be so, at all events," replied the captain. "Pray try once more."

"I have it!" thought Jack, who tore off the last answer from his paper. "I gained five guineas by that plan once before." He then handed the bit of paper to the passing captain: "I believe that's right, sir," said our hero.

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"Yes, that is right; but could you not have said it instead of writing it, Mr Littlebrain?"

Jack made no reply; his little sweetheart pouted a little, but said nothing; it was an evasion which she did not like. A few seconds of consultation then took place, as a matter of form. Each captain asked of the other if he was perfectly satisfied as to Mr Littlebrain's capabilities, and the reply was in the affirmative; and they were perfectly satisfied, that he was either a fool or a madman. However, as we have had both in the service by way of precedent, Jack was added to the list, and the next day was appointed lieutenant.

Our hero did his duty as lieutenant of the fore-castle; and as all the duty of that officer is, when hailed from the quarter-deck, to answer "*Ay, ay, sir*;" he got on without making many mistakes. And now he was very happy; no one dared to call him a fool except his uncle; he had his own cabin, and many was the time that his dear little "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W." would come in by the scuttle, and nestle by his side.

"You wo'n't see so much of me soon, dearest," said she, one morning, gravely.

"Why not, my soft one?" replied Jack.

"Don't you recollect that the winter months are coming on?"

"So they are," replied Jack. "Well, I shall long for you back."

And Jack did long, and long very much, for he loved his dear wind, and the fine weather which accompanied her. Winter came on, and heavy gales and rain, and thunder and lightning; nothing but double-reefed topsails, and wearing in succession; and our hero walked the fore-castle, and thought of his favourite wind. The N.E. winds came down furiously, and the weather was bitter cold. The officers shook the rain and spray off their garments when their watch was over, and called for grog.

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"Steward, a glass of grog," cried one, "and let it be strong."

"The same for me," said Jack; "only I'll mix it myself."

Jack poured out the rum till the tumbler was half full.

"Why, Littlebrain," said his messmate, "that is a dose, that's what we call a regular *Nor-wester*."

"Is it?" replied Jack. "Well then, *Nor-west*ers suit me exactly, and I shall stick to them like cobbler's wax."

And during the whole of the winter months our hero showed a great predilection for *Nor-west*ers.

It was in the latter end of February that there was a heavy gale; it had blown furiously from the northward for three days, and then it paused and panted as if out of breath—no wonder; and then the wind shifted, and shifted again, with squalls and heavy rain, until it blew from every quarter of the compass.

Our hero's watch was over, and he came down and called for a "*Nor-wester*" as usual.

"How is the wind, now?" asked the first lieutenant to the master, who came down dripping wet.

"S.S.W., but drawing now fast to the Westward," said old Spun yarn.

And so it was; and it veered round until "S.W. and by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.," with an angry gust, came down the sky-light, and blowing strongly into our hero's ear, cried—

"Oh! you false one!!"

"False!" exclaimed Jack. "What! you here, and so angry too?—what's the matter?"

"What's the matter!—do you think I don't know? What have you been doing ever since I was away, comforting yourself during my absence with *Nor-west*ers?"

"Why, you an't jealous of a *Nor-wester*, are you?" replied Littlebrain. "I confess, I'm rather partial to them."

"What!—this to my face!—I'll never come again,—without you promise me that you will have nothing to do with them, and never call for one again. Be quick—I cannot stay more than two minutes, for it is hard work now, and we relieve quick—say the word."

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"Well, then," replied Littlebrain, "you've no objection to *half-and-half*?"

"None in the world; that's quite another thing, and has nothing to do with the wind."

"It has, though," thought Jack, "for it gets a man in the wind; but I wo'n't tell her so; and," continued he, "you don't mind a raw nip, do you?"

"No—I care for nothing except a *Nor-wester*."

"I'll never call for one again," replied Jack; "it is but making my grog a little stronger; in future it shall be *half-and-half*."

"That's a dear!—now I'm off, don't forget me;" and away went the wind in a great hurry.

It was about three months after this short visit, the fleet being off Corsica, that our hero was walking the deck, thinking that he soon should see the object of his affections, when a privateer brig was discovered at anchor a few miles from Bastia. The signal was made for the boats of the fleet to cut her out, and the Admiral, wishing that his nephew should distinguish himself somehow, gave him the command of one of the finest boats. Now Jack was as brave as brave could be; he did not know what danger was; he hadn't wit enough to perceive it, and there was no doubt but he would distinguish himself. The boats went on the service. Jack was the very first on board, cheering his men as he darted into the closed ranks of his opponents. Whether it was that he did not think that his head was worth defending, or that he was too busy in breaking the heads of others to look after his own; this is certain, that a tomahawk descended upon it with such force as to bury itself in his skull (and his was a thick skull, too). The privateer's men were overpowered by numbers, and then our hero was discovered, under a pile of bodies, still breathing heavily. He was hoisted on board, and taken into his uncle's cabin: the surgeon shook his head when he had examined that of our hero.

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"It must have been a most tremendous blow," said he to the Admiral, "to have penetrated——"

"It must have been, indeed," replied the Admiral, as the tears rolled down his cheeks; for he loved his nephew.

The surgeon having done all that his art would enable him, left the cabin to attend to the others who were hurt; the Admiral also went on the quarter-deck, walking to and fro for an hour in a melancholy mood. He returned to the cabin, and bent over his nephew; Jack opened his eyes.

"My dear fellow," said the Admiral, "how's your head now?"

"*S.W. and by W. ¾ W.*," faintly exclaimed our hero, constant in death, as he turned a little on one side and expired.

It was three days afterwards, as the fleet were on a wind, making for Malta, that the bell of the ship tolled, and a body, sewed up in a hammock and covered with the Union Jack, was carried to the gangway by the Admiral's bargemen. It had been a dull cloudy day, with little wind; the hands were turned up, the officers and men stood uncovered; the Admiral in advance with his arms folded, as the chaplain read the funeral service over the body of our hero,—and as the service proceeded, the sails flapped, for the wind had shifted a little; a motion was made, by the hand of the officer of the watch, to the man at the helm to let the ship go off the wind, that the service might not be disturbed, and a mizzling soft rain descended. The wind had shifted to our hero's much loved *point*, his fond mistress had come to mourn over the loss of her dearest, and the rain that descended were the tears which she shed at the death of her handsome but not over-gifted lover.



The Sky-blue Domino

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It was a fine autumnal evening; I had been walking with a friend until dusk on the Piazza Grande, or principal square in the town of Lucca. We had been conversing of England, our own country, from which I had then banished myself for nearly four years, having taken up my residence in Italy to fortify a weak constitution, and having remained there long after it was requisite for my health from an attachment to its pure sky, and the *dolce far niente* which so wins upon you in that luxurious climate. We had communicated to each other the contents of our respective letters arrived by the last mail; had talked over politics, great men, acquaintances, friends, and kindred; and, tired of conversation, had both sank into a pleasing reverie as we watched the stars twinkling above us, when my friend rose hastily and bid me good-night.

"Where are you going, Alfred?" inquired I.

"I had nearly forgotten I had an appointment this evening. I promised to meet somebody at the Marquessa di Cesto's masquerade."

"Pshaw! are you not tired of these things?" replied I; "that eternal round of black masks and dominos of all colours; heavy harlequins, fools and clowns by nature wearing their proper dresses

there, and only in masquerade when out of it; nuns who have no holiness in their ideas, friars without a spice of religion, ugly Venuses, Dianas without chastity, and Hebes as old as your grandmother."

"All very true, Herbert, and life itself is masquerade enough; but the fact is, that I have made an appointment: it is of importance, and I must not fail."

"Well, I wish you more amusement than I have generally extracted from these burlesque meetings," replied I. "Adieu, and may you be successful!" And Albert hastened away. [Pg 244]

I remained another half hour reclining on the bench, and then returned to my lodgings. My servant Antonio lighted the candle and withdrew. On the table lay a note; it was an invitation from the Marquesa. I threw it on one side and took up a book, one that required reflection and deep examination; but the rattling of the wheels of the carriages as they whirled along past my window would not permit me to command my attention. I threw down the book; and taking a chair at the window, watched the carriages full of masks as they rolled past, apparently so eager in the pursuit of pleasure. I was in a cynical humour. What fools, thought I, and yet what numbers will be there; there will be an immense crowd; and what can be the assignation which Albert said was of such consequence? Such was my reflection for the next ten minutes, during which at least fifty carriages and other vehicles had passed in review before me.

And then I thought of the princely fortune of the Marquesa, the splendid palazzo at which the masquerade was given, and the brilliant scene which would take place.

"The Grand Duke is to be there, and everybody of distinction in Lucca. I have a great mind to go myself."

A few minutes more elapsed. I felt that I was lonely, and I made up my mind that I would go. I turned from the window and rang the bell.

"Antonio, see if you can procure me a domino, a dark-coloured one if possible; and tell Carlo to bring the carriage round as soon as he can."

Antonio departed, and was away so long that the carriage was at the door previous to his return.

"Signor, I am sorry, very, very sorry; but I have run to every shop in Lucca, and there is nothing left but a sky-blue domino, which I have brought with me."

"Sky-blue! why, there will not be two sky-blue dominos in the whole masquerade; I might as well tell my name at once, I shall be so conspicuous." [Pg 245]

"You are as well hidden under a sky-blue domino as a black one, Signor, if you choose to keep your own secrets," observed Antonio.

"Very true," replied I; "give me my mask."

Enshrouding myself in the sky-blue domino, I went down the stairs, threw myself into the carriage, and directed Carlo to drive to the Palazzo of the Marquesa.

In half an hour we arrived at the entrance gates of the Marquesa's superb country seat. From these gates to the palazzo, a sweep of several hundred yards, the avenue through which the driver passed was loaded with variegated lamps, hanging in graceful festoons from branch to branch; and the notes of music from the vast entrance-hall of the palazzo floated through the still air. When I arrived at the area in front of the flight of marble steps which formed the entrance of the palazzo, I was astonished at the magnificence, the good taste, and the total disregard of expense which were exhibited. The palazzo itself appeared like the fabric built of diamonds and precious stones by the genii who obeyed the ring and lamp of Aladdin, so completely was its marble front hidden with a mass of many-coloured lamps, the reflection from whose galaxy of light rendered it bright as day for nearly one hundred yards around; various mottoes and transparencies were arranged in the walks nearest to the palazzo; and then all was dark, rendered still darker from the contrast with the flood of light which poured to a certain distance from the scene of festivity. Groups of characters and dominos were walking to and fro in every direction; most of them retracing their steps when they arrived at the sombre walks and alleys, some few pairs only continuing their route where no listeners were to be expected.

This is an animating scene, thought I, as the carriage stopped, and I am not sorry that I have made one of the party. As soon as I had descended, I walked up the flight of marble steps which led to the spacious hall in which the major part of the company were collected. The music had, for a moment, ceased to play; and finding that the perfume of the exotics which decorated the hall was too powerful, I was again descending the steps, when my hand was seized and warmly pressed by one in a violet-coloured domino. [Pg 246]

"I am so glad that you are come; we were afraid that you would not. I will see you again directly," said the domino; and it then fell back into the crowd and disappeared.

It immediately occurred to me that it was my friend Albert who spoke to me. "Very odd," thought I, "that he should have found me out!" And again I fell into the absurdity of imagining that because I had put on a conspicuous domino, I was sure to be recognised. "What can he want with me? He must be in some difficulty, some unexpected one, that is certain." Such were my reflections as I slowly descended the steps, occasionally pausing for a moment on one, as I was lost in conjecture, when I was again arrested by a slight slap on the shoulder. I looked around: it

was a female; and although she wore her half-mask, it was evident that she was young, and I felt convinced that she was beautiful.

"Not a word," whispered she, putting her finger to her lip; "follow me." Of course I followed: who could resist such a challenge?

"You are late," said the incognito, when we had walked so far away from the palazzo as to be out of hearing of the crowd.

"I did not make up my mind to come until an hour ago," replied I.

"I was so afraid that you would not come. Albert was sure that you would. He was right. He told me just now that he had spoken to you."

"What! was that Albert in the rose-coloured domino?"

"Yes; but I dare not stay now,—my father will be looking for me. Albert is keeping him in conversation. In half an hour he will speak to you again. Has he explained to you what has occurred?"

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"Not one word."

"If he has not had time—and I doubt if he will have, as he must attend to the preparations—I will write a few lines, if I can, and explain, or at least tell you what to do; but I am so harassed, so frightened! We do indeed require your assistance. Adieu!" So saying the fair unknown tripped hastily away.

"What the deuce is all this?" muttered I, as I watched her retreating figure. "Albert said that he had an appointment, but he did not make me his confidant. It appears that something which has occurred this night occasions him to require my assistance. Well, I will not fail him."

For about half an hour I sauntered up and down between the lines of orange-trees which were dressed up with variegated lamps, and shed their powerful fragrance in the air: I ruminated upon what might be my friend's intentions, and what might be the result of an intrigue carried on in a country where the stiletto follows Love so close through all the mazes of his labyrinth, when I was again accosted by the violet-coloured domino.

"Hist!" whispered he, looking carefully round as he thrust a paper into my hand; "read this after I leave you. In one hour from this be you on this spot. Are you armed?"

"No," replied I; "but Albert—"

"You may not need it; but nevertheless take this,—I cannot wait." So saying he put a stiletto into my hand, and again made a hasty retreat.

It had been my intention to have asked Albert what was his plan, and further why he did not speak English instead of Italian, as he would have been less liable to be understood if overheard by eavesdroppers; but a little reflection told me that he was right in speaking Italian, as the English language overheard would have betrayed him, or at least have identified him as a foreigner.

"A very mysterious affair this!" thought I; "but, however, this paper will, I presume, explain the business. That there is a danger in it is evident, or he would not have given me this weapon;" and I turned the stiletto once or twice to the light of the lamp next to me, examining its blade, when, looking up, I perceived a black domino standing before me.

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"It is sharp enough, I warrant," said the domino; "you have but to strike home. I have been waiting for you in the next walk, which I thought was to be our rendezvous. Here is a paper which you will fasten to his dress. I will contrive that he shall be here in an hour hence by a pretended message. After his death you will put this packet into his bosom;—you understand. Fail not: remember the one thousand sequins; and here is my ring, which I will redeem as soon as your work is done. The others will soon be here. The pass-word is 'Milano.' But I must not be seen here. Why a sky-blue domino? it is too conspicuous for escape;" and as I received from him the packet and ring, the black domino retreated through the orange grove which encircled us.

I was lost in amazement: there I stood with my hands full—two papers, a packet, a stiletto, and a diamond ring! "Well," thought I, "this time I am most assuredly taken for somebody else—for a bravo I am not. There is some foul work going on, which, perhaps, I may prevent." "But why a sky-blue domino?" said he. I may well ask the same question. "Why the deuce did I come here in a sky-blue domino, or any domino at all?" I put the ring on my finger, the stiletto and packet in my bosom, and then hastened away to the garden on the other side of the palazzo, that I might read the mysterious communication put into my hands by my friend Albert; and as I walked on, my love for admiration led me away so as to find myself pleased with the mystery and danger attending upon the affair; and feeling secure, now that I had a stiletto in my bosom for my defence, I resolved that I would go right through it until the whole affair should be unravelled.

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I walked on till I had gained the last lamp on the other side of the palazzo. I held up to its light the mysterious paper: it was in Italian, and in a woman's handwriting.

"We have determined upon flight, as we cannot hope for safety here, surrounded as we are by stilettoes on every side. We feel sure of pardon as soon as the papers which Albert received by this day's mail, and which he will entrust to you when

you meet again, are placed in my father's hands. We must have your assistance in removing our treasure. Our horses are all ready, and a few hours will put us in safety; but we must look to you for following us in your carriage, and conveying for me what would prove so great an incumbrance to our necessary speed. When Albert sees you again, he will be able to tell you where it is deposited. Follow us quick, and you will always have the gratitude of

"VIOLA.

"P.S. I write in great haste, as I cannot leave my father's side for a moment without his seeking for me."

"What can all this mean? Albert told me of no papers by this day's mail. Viola! I never heard him mention such a name. He said to me, 'Read this, and all will be explained.' I'll be hanged if I am not as much in the dark as ever!—Follow them in my carriage with the treasure—never says where! I presume he is about to run off with some rich heiress. Confound this sky-blue domino! Here I am with two papers, a packet, a stiletto, and a ring; I am to receive another packet, and am to convey treasure. Well, it must solve itself—I will back to my post; but first let me see what is in this paper which I am to affix upon the man's dress after I have killed him." I held it up to the light, and read, in capital letters, "*The reward of a traitor!*" "Short and pithy," muttered I, as I replaced it in my pocket: "now I'll back to the spot of assignation, for the hour must be nearly expired."

As I retraced my steps, I again reverted to the communication of Viola—"Surrounded as we are by stilettoes on every side!" Why, surely Albert cannot be the person that I am required by the black domino to despatch; and yet it may be so—and others are to join me here before the hour is passed." A thought struck me: whoever the party might be whose life was to be taken, whether Albert or another, I could save him.

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My reverie was again broken by a tap on the shoulder.

"Am I right? What is the pass-word?"

"Milano!" replied I, in a whisper.

"All's right, then—Giacomo and Tomaso are close by—I will fetch them."

The man turned away, and in a minute re-appeared with two others, bending as they forced their way under the orange-trees.

"Here we all are, Felippo," whispered the first. "*He* is to be here in a few minutes."

"Hush!" replied I, in a whisper, and holding up to them the brilliant ring which sparkled on my finger.

"Ah, Signor, I cry your mercy," replied the man, in a low voice; "I thought it was Felippo."

"Not so loud," replied I, still in a whisper. "All is discovered, and Felippo is arrested. You must away immediately. You shall hear from me to-morrow."

"Corpo di Bacco! Where, Signor? at the old place?"

"Yes—now away, and save yourselves."

In a few seconds the desperate men disappeared among the trees, and I was left alone.

"Slaves of the Ring, you have done my bidding at all events, this time," thought I, and I looked at the ring more attentively. It was a splendid solitaire diamond, worth many hundred crowns. "Will you ever find your way back to your lawful owner?" was the question in my mind when Albert made his appearance in his violet-coloured domino.

"'Twas imprudent of you to send me the paper by the black domino," said he, hastily. "Did I not tell you that I would be here in an hour? We have not a moment to spare. Follow me quickly, and be silent."

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I followed—the paper which Albert referred to needed no explanation; it was, indeed, the only part of the whole affair which I comprehended. He led the way to about three hundred yards of the path through the wood.

"There," said he, "in that narrow avenue, you will find my faithful negro with his charge. He will not deliver it up without you show him this ring." And Albert put a ring upon my finger.

"But, Albert,"—my mind misgave me—Albert never had a faithful negro to my knowledge; it must be some other person who had mistaken me for his friend,— "I am afraid,"—continued I—

"Afraid!—let me not hear you say that. You never yet knew fear," said he, interrupting me. "What have you to fear between this and Pisa? Your own horses will take you there in three hours. But here's the packet, which you must deliver yourself. Now that you know where the negro is, return to the palazzo, deliver it into his own hands, requesting his immediate perusal. After that do not wait a moment, but hasten here to your charge. While the Grand Duke is reading it I will escape with Viola."

"I really cannot understand all this," said I, taking the packet.

"All will be explained when we meet at Pisa. Away, now, to the Grand Duke—I will go to the negro and prepare him for your coming."

"But allow me——"

"Not a word more if you love me," replied the violet-coloured domino, who, I was now convinced, was not Albert; it was not his voice—there was a mystery and a mistake; but I had become so implicated that I felt I could not retreat without sacrificing the parties, whoever they might be.

"Well," said I, as I turned back to the palazzo, "I must go on now; for, as a gentleman and man of honour, I cannot refuse. I will give the packet to the Grand Duke, and I will also convey his treasure to Pisa. Confound this sky-blue domino!" [Pg 252]

As I returned to the palazzo, I was accosted by the black domino.

"Milano!" replied I.

"Is all right, Felippo?" said he, in a whisper.

"All is right, Signor," was my answer.

"Where is he?"

I pointed with my finger to a clump of orange-trees.

"And the paper and packet?"

I nodded my head.

"Then you had better away—I will see you to-morrow."

"At the old place, Signor?"

"Yes," replied the black domino, cutting into a cross-path, and disappearing.

I arrived at the palazzo, mounted the steps, forced my way through the crowd, and perceived the Grand Duke in an inner saloon, the lady who had accosted me leaning on his arm. It then occurred to me that the Grand Duke had an only daughter, whose name was Viola. I entered the saloon, which was not crowded, and walking boldly up to the Grand Duke, presented the packet, requesting that his Highness would give it his immediate attention. I then bowed, and hastened away, once more passed through the thronged hall, and gained the marble steps of the palazzo.

"Have you given it?" said a low voice close to me.

"I have," replied I; "but, Signor——"

"Not a word, Carlo: hasten to the wood, if you love me." And the violet-coloured domino forced his way into the crowd which filled the hall.

"Now for my journey to Pisa," said I. "Here I am, implicated in high treason, perhaps, in consequence of my putting on a sky-blue domino. Well, there's no help for it."

In a few minutes I had gained the narrow avenue, and having pursued it about fifty yards, perceived the glaring eyes of the crouched negro. By the starlight, I could just distinguish that he had a basket, or something like one, before him. [Pg 253]

"What do you come for, Signor?" said the negro, rising on his feet.

"For what has been placed under your charge; here is the ring of your master."

The negro put his fingers to the ring and felt it, that he might recognise it by its size and shape.

"Here it is, Signor," said he, lifting up the basket gently, and putting it into my arms. It was not heavy, although somewhat cumbrous from its size.

"Hark! Signor, there is confusion in the palazzo. You must be quick, and I must not be seen with you." And away darted the negro like lightning through the bushes.

I also hastened away with the basket (contents unknown), for it appeared to me that affairs were coming to a crisis. I heard people running different ways, and voices approaching me. When I emerged from the narrow avenue, I perceived several figures coming down the dark walk at a rapid pace, and, seized with a sort of panic, I took to my heels. I soon found that they were in pursuit, and I increased my speed. In the gloom of the night, I unfortunately tripped over a stone, and fell with the basket to the ground; and then the screams from within informed me that the treasure intrusted to my safe keeping was a child. Fearful that it was hurt, and forgetting, for the time, the danger of being captured, I opened the lid, and examined its limbs, while I tried to pacify it; and while I was sitting down in my sky-blue domino, thus occupied in hushing a baby, I was seized by both shoulders, and found myself a prisoner.

"What is the meaning of this rudeness, Signors?" said I, hardly knowing what to say.

"You are arrested by order of the Grand Duke," was the reply.

"I am arrested!—why?—I am an Englishman!"

"That makes no difference; the orders are to arrest all found in the garden in sky-blue dominos." [Pg 254]

"Confound the sky-blue domino!" thought I, for the twentieth time at least. "Well, Signors, I will attend you; but first let me try to pacify this poor frightened infant."

"Strange that he should be found running away with a child at the same time that the Lady Viola has disappeared!" observed one of my captors.

"You are right, Signors," replied I; "it is very strange; and what is more strange is, that I can no more explain it than you can. I am now ready to accompany you. Oblige me by one of you carrying the basket while I take care of the infant."

In a few minutes we had arrived at the palazzo. I had retained my mask, and I was conducted through the crowd into the saloon into which I had previously entered when I delivered the packet to the Grand Duke.

"There he is! there he is!" was buzzed through the crowd in the hall. "Holy Virgin! he has a child in his arms! *Bambino Bellissimo!*" Such were the exclamations of wonder and surprise as they made a lane for my passage, and I was in the presence of the Grand Duke, who appeared to be in a state of great excitement.

"It is the same person!" exclaimed the Duke. "Confess! are you not the party who put a packet into my hands about a quarter of an hour since?"

"I am the person, your Highness," replied I, as I patted and soothed the frightened child.

"Who gave it to you?"

"May it please your Highness, I do not know."

"What child is that?"

"May it please your Highness, I do not know."

"Where did you get it?"

"Out of that basket, your Highness."

"Who gave you the basket?"

"May it please your Highness, I do not know."

"You are trifling with me. Let him be searched."

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"May it please your Highness, I will save them that trouble if one of the ladies will take the infant. I have received a great many presents this evening, all of which I will have the honour of displaying before your Highness."

One of the ladies held out her arms to the infant, who immediately bent from mine toward her, naturally clinging to the other sex as its friend in distress.

"In the first place, your Highness, I have this evening received this ring," taking off my finger the one given by the party in a violet-coloured domino, and presenting it to him.

"And from whom?" said his Highness, instantly recognising the ring.

"May it please your Highness, I do not know. I have also received another ring, your Highness," continued I, taking off the ring given me by the black domino.

"And who gave you this?" interrogated the Duke, again evidently recognising it.

"May it please your Highness, I do not know. Also, this stiletto, but from whom, I must again repeat, I do not know. Also, this packet, with directions to put it into a dead man's bosom."

"And you are, I presume, equally ignorant of the party who gave it to you?"

"Equally so, your Highness; as ignorant as I am of the party who desired me to present you with the other packet which I delivered. Here is also a paper I was desired to pin upon a man's clothes after I had assassinated him."

"Indeed!—and to this, also, you plead total ignorance?"

"I have but one answer to give to all, your Highness, which is, I do not know."

"Perhaps, sir, you do not know your own name or profession," observed his Highness, with a sneer.

"Yes, your Highness," replied I, taking off my mask, "that I do know. I am an Englishman, and, I trust, a gentleman, and a man of honour. My name is Herbert; and I have more than once had the honour to be a guest at your Highness's entertainments."

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"Signor, I recognise you," replied the Grand Duke. "Let the room be cleared—I must speak with this gentleman alone."

When the company had quitted the saloon, I entered into a minute detail of the events of the evening, to which his Highness paid the greatest attention; and when I had finished, the whole mystery was unravelled to me by him, and with which I will now satisfy the curiosity of my readers.

The Grand Duke had one daughter, by name Viola, whom he had wished to marry to Rodolph, Count of Istria; but Viola had met with Albert, Marquis of Salerno, and a mutual attachment had ensued. Although the Grand Duke would not force his daughter's wishes and oblige her to marry Count Rodolph, at the same time he would not consent to her espousals with the Marquis Albert. Count Rodolph had discovered the intimacy between Viola and the Marquis of Salerno, and had made more than one unsuccessful attempt to get rid of his rival by assassination. After some time, a private marriage with the marquis had been consented to by Viola; and a year afterwards the Lady Viola retired to the country, and without the knowledge, or even suspicions, of her father, had given birth to a male child, which had been passed off as the offspring of one of the ladies of the court who was married, and to whom the secret had been confided.

At this period the secret societies, especially the *Carbonari*, had become formidable in Italy, and all the crowned heads and reigning princes were using every exertion to suppress them. Count Rodolph was at the head of these societies, having joined them to increase his power, and to have at his disposal the means of getting rid of his rival. Of this the Marquis of Salerno had received intimation, and for some time had been trying to obtain proof against the count; for he knew that if once it was proved, Count Rodolph would never be again permitted to appear in the state of Lucca. On the other hand, Count Rodolph had been making every arrangement to get rid of his rival, and had determined that it should be effected at this masquerade.

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The Marquis of Salerno had notice given him of this intention, and also had on that morning obtained the proof against Count Rodolph, which he was now determined to forward to the Grand Duke; but, aware that his assassination by the *Carbonari* was to be attempted, and also that the wrath of the Grand Duke would be excessive when he was informed of their private marriage, he resolved to fly with his wife to Pisa, trusting that the proofs of Count Rodolph being connected with the *Carbonari*, and a little time, would soften down the Grand Duke's anger. The marquis had arranged that he should escape from the Duke's dominions on the night of the masquerade, as it would be much easier for his wife to accompany him from thence than from the Grand Duke's palace, which was well guarded; but it was necessary that they should travel on horseback, and they could not take their child with them. Viola would not consent that it should be left behind; and on this emergency he had written to his friend, the Count d'Ossore, to come to their assistance at the masquerade, and, that they might recognise him, to wear a sky-blue domino, a colour but seldom put on. The Count d'Ossore had that morning left his town mansion on a hunting excursion, and did not receive the letter, of which the marquis and Viola were ignorant. Such was the state of affairs at the time that I put on the sky-blue domino to go to the masquerade.

My first meeting with the marquis in his violet-coloured domino is easily understood: being in a sky-blue domino I was mistaken for the Count d'Ossore. I was myself led into the mistake by the Marquis Albert having the same Christian name as my English friend. The second meeting with the Count Rodolph, in the black domino, was accidental. The next walk had been appointed as the place of meeting with the *Carbonari* Felippo and his companions; but Count Rodolph, perceiving me examining my stiletto by the light of the lamp, presumed that I was Felippo, and that I had mistaken the one path for the other which had been agreed upon. The papers given to me by Count Rodolph were *Carbonari* papers, which were to be hid in the marquis's bosom after he had been assassinated, to make it appear that he had belonged to that society, and by the paper affixed to his clothes, that he had been murdered by the agents of the society for having betrayed them. The papers which the marquis had requested me to give to the Grand Duke were the proofs of Count Rodolph's belonging to the secret society; and with those papers was enclosed a letter to the Grand Duke, in which they acknowledged their secret union. And now, I believe, the reader will comprehend the whole of this mysterious affair.

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After all had been explained, I ventured to ask his Highness if he would permit me to fulfil my promise of taking the child to its mother, as I considered it a point of honour that I should keep my engagement, the more so, as the delay would occasion the greatest distress to his daughter; and I ventured to add, that I trusted his Highness would pardon what could not now be remedied, and that I should have the satisfaction of being the bearer of such pleasing intelligence to his daughter and the marquis.

The Grand Duke paced the room for a minute, and then replied, "Signor Herbert, I feel so disgusted with the treachery and baseness of Count Rodolph, that I hardly need observe, if my daughter were free he never should espouse her; indeed, he will have immediate orders to quit the state. You have been instrumental in preserving the life of the Marquis of Salerno, who is my son-in-law, and as matters now stand, I am indebted to you. Your dismissal of the bravos, by means of the count's ring, was a masterly stroke. You shall have the pleasure of taking my forgiveness to my daughter and her husband; but as for the child, it may as well remain here. Tell Viola I retain it as a hostage for the quick return of its mother."

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I took my leave of his Highness, and hastened to Pisa, where I soon found out the retreat of the marquis and his wife. I sent up my name, requesting immediate admittance, as having a message from the Grand Duke. I found them in great distress. The Count d'Ossore had returned late on the night of the masquerade, found the letter, hastened to the Marquesa de Cesto's, and had arrived just after the elopement had been discovered. He immediately followed them to Pisa, when an explanation took place, and they discovered that they had been communicating with some unknown person, by whom they had, in all probability, been betrayed.

It would be difficult to portray their astonishment and joy when I entered into a detail of what

had occurred, and wound up with the message from the Grand Duke; and I hardly need add, now that I wind up my story, that the proofs of gratitude I received from the marquis and his wife, during my subsequent residence in Italy, left me no occasion to repent that I had gone to the masquerade of the Marquesa de Cesto, in a SKY-BLUE DOMINO.

Modern Town Houses

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I have often thought, when you consider the difference of comfort between houses built from sixty to a hundred years back, in comparison with the modern edifices, that the cry of the magician in "Aladdin," had he called out "new houses," instead of "new lamps," for old ones, would not have appeared so very absurd. It was my good fortune, for the major part of my life, to occupy an ancient house, built, I believe, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. My father lived in it before I was in existence: I was born in it, and it was bequeathed to me. It has since been my misfortune to have lived three years in one of the modern-built houses; and although I have had my share of the ills to which we all are heir, I must date my real unhappiness from the first month after I took possession. With your permission, I will enter into my history, as it may prove a warning to others, who will not remember the old proverb of "*Let well alone.*"

I am a married man, with six children; my three eldest are daughters, and have now quitted a school, near Portman-square, to which my wife insisted upon my sending them, as it was renowned for finishing young ladies. Until their return to domiciliate themselves under my roof, I never heard a complaint of my house, which was situated at Brompton. It was large, airy, and comfortable, with excellent shrubberies, and a few acres of land; and I possessed every comfort and even luxury which could be rationally required, my wife and daughters having their carriage, and in every respect my establishment being that of a gentleman.

I had not, however, taken my daughters from school more than two months, before I was told that we were "living out of the world," although not a mile and a half from Hyde Park Corner; and, to my surprise, my wife joined in the cry; it was always from morn to night, "We might do this but, we cannot do this, because we are here quite out of the world." It was too far to dine out in town; too far for people to come and dine with us; too far to go to the play, or the opera; too far to drive in the park; too far even to walk in Kensington Gardens. I remonstrated, that we had managed to dine out, to receive visitors, and to enjoy all other amusements very well for a considerable number of years, and that it did not appear to me that Brompton had walked away from London, on the contrary, that London was making rapid advances towards Brompton; but it would not do,—all day the phrase rang in my ears, "out of the world," until I almost began to wish that I was out too. But it is no use having the best of an argument when opposed to women. I had my choice, either to give up my house, and take another in London, or to give up my peace. With an unwilling sigh, I at last consented to leave a place dear to me, from long association and many reminiscences; and it was arranged that Brompton Hall was to be let, or sold, and that we were to look out immediately for a house in some of the squares in the metropolis. If my wife and daughters found that the distance from London was too far for other purposes, at all events it was not too far for house-hunting. They were at it incessantly week after week; and, at last, they fixed upon one in the neighbourhood of Belgrave-square, which, as they repeated, possessed all the cheerfulness and fresh air of the country, with all the advantages of a town residence. The next day I was to be dragged to see it, and give my opinion; at the same time, from the commendations bestowed upon it previous to my going, I felt assured that I was expected to give *their* opinion, and not my own.

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The next day, accordingly, we repaired thither, setting off immediately after breakfast, to meet the surveyor and builder, who was to be on the spot. The house in question was one of a row just building, or built, whitened outside, in imitation of stone. It was No. 2. No. 1 was finished; but the windows still stained with the drippings of the whitewash and colouring. No. 2, the one in question, was complete; and, as the builder asserted, ready for immediate occupation. No. 3 was not so far advanced. As for the others, they were at present nothing but carcasses, without even the front steps built to them; and you entered them by a drawbridge of planks.

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The builder stood at the front door, and bowed most respectfully. "Why," observed I, looking at the piles of mortar, lime, and bricks, standing about in all directions, "we shall be smothered with dust and lime for the next two years."

"Don't be alarmed, sir," replied the builder; "every house in the row will be finished before the winter. We really cannot attend to the applications for them."

We entered the house.

"Is not the entrance handsome?" observed my wife; "so neat and clean."

To this I had not a reply to make; it certainly did look neat and clean.

We went into the dining-room. "What a nice room!" exclaimed my eldest daughter. "How many can we dine in this room?"

"Um!" replied I; "about twelve, I suppose, comfortably."

"Dear me!" observed the builder; "you have no notion of the size of the house; rooms are so

deceiving, unfurnished. You may sit down twenty with ease; I'll appeal to the lady. Don't you think so, ma'am?"

"Yes, I do," replied my wife.

After that we went over the drawing-rooms, bedrooms, and attics.

Every bedroom was apportioned by my wife and daughters, and the others were allotted to the servants; and that in the presence of the builder, who took good note of all that passed.

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The kitchen was admired; so were the pantry, scullery, coal-hole, dust-hole, &c.; all so nice and clean; so compact; and, as the builder observed, not a nail to drive anywhere.

"Well, my dear, what do you think now? isn't it a charming house?" said my wife, as we re-ascended into the dining-parlour.

"It's a very nice house, my dear; but still it requires a little consideration," replied I.

"Consideration, my dear!" replied my wife; "what! now that you have gone over it?"

"I am afraid that I cannot give you very long, sir," observed the builder; "there are two other parties after the house, and I am to give them an answer by two o'clock."

"Mr Smithers told me the same yesterday," whispered my wife.

"What did you say the rent was, Mr Smithers?"

"Only £200 per annum."

"Any ground-rent?"

"Only £27, 10s."

"And the taxes?"

"Oh, they will be a mere trifle."

"The rent appears to me to be very high."

"High, my dear sir! consider the situation, the advantages. We can't build them fast enough at that price. But of course, sir, you best know," replied he, carelessly walking towards the window.

"Take it, my dear," said my wife.

"You must take it, papa."

"Pray take it, papa."

"Mr Whats-your-name, I beg your pardon——"

"Smithers, sir," said the builder, turning round.

"Pray, Mr Smithers, what term of lease do you let at?"

"Seven, fourteen, or twenty-one, at the option of either party, sir."

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"I should have no objection to take it for three years."

"Three years, my dear sir!—that would be doing yourself an injustice. You would lose half the value of your fixtures provided you left—and then the furniture. Depend upon it, sir, if you once get into it, you will never wish to leave it."

"That may or not be," replied I; "but I will not take it for more than three years. The town-air may not agree with me; and if, as you say, people are so anxious to take the houses, of course it can make no difference to you."

"I'm afraid, sir, that for so short a time——"

"I will not take it for longer," replied I, rising up, glad of an excuse to be off.

"Oh, papa!"

"My dear Mr B——"

"On that point," replied I, "I will not be overruled. I will not take a lease for more than three years, with the right of continuing if I please."

The builder perceived that I was in earnest.

"Well, sir," replied he, "I hardly know what to say; but rather than disappoint the ladies, I will accept you as a tenant for three years certain."

Confound the fellow, thought I; but I was pinned, and there was an end of the matter. Mr Smithers pulled out paper and ink; two letters of agreement were written upon a small deal table, covered with blotches of various-coloured paints; and the affair was thus concluded.

We got into the carriage and drove home, my wife and daughters in ecstasies, and I obliged to appear very well satisfied, that I might not damp their spirits; yet I must say that although the

house appeared a very nice house, I had my forebodings.

"At all events," thought I, "the lease is only for three years;" and thus I consoled myself.

The next day the whole house was in commotion. I believe my wife and daughters were up at daybreak. When I went into the breakfast-room, I discovered that the pictures had been taken down, although there was no chance of their being hung up for many weeks at least, and everything was in preparation for packing up. After breakfast my wife set off for town to order carpets and curtains, and did not come home till six o'clock, very tired with the fatigues of the day. She had also brought the measure of every grate, to ascertain what fenders would suit; the measure of the bedrooms and attics, to remodel the carpets; for it was proposed that Brompton Hall should be disposed of, the new occupier taking at a valuation what furniture might be left. To this I appeared to consent; but was resolved in my own mind that, if taken, it should only be for the same term of years as my new lease. I will pass over a month of hurry, bustle, and confusion; at the end of which I found myself in our new habitation. It was completely furnished, with the exception of the drawing-room carpet, which had not been laid down, but was still in a roll tied up with packthread in the middle of the room. The cause of this I soon understood from my wife. It was always the custom, she said, to give a house-warming upon entering a new house, and she therefore proposed giving a little dance. To this, as it would please her and my daughters, I raised no objection.

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I have always observed that what is proposed as a little dance invariably ends in a great one; for from the time of proposing till the cards are about, it increases like a snow-ball; but that arises, perhaps, from the extreme difficulty of knowing when to draw the line between friends and acquaintances. I have also observed that when your wife and daughters intend such a thing, they always obtain permission for the ball first, and then tack on the supper afterwards; commencing with a mere stand-up affair—sandwiches, cakes, and refreshments, and ending with a regular sit-down affair, with Gunter presiding over all. The music from two fiddles and a piano also swells into Collinet's band—verifying the old adage, "In for a penny, in for a pound." But to all this I gave my consent; I could afford it well, and I liked to please my wife and daughters. The ball was given, and this house-warming ended in house-breaking; for just before the supper-quadrille, as it was termed, when about twenty-four young ladies and gentlemen were going the grand ronde, a loud noise below, with exclamations and shrieks, was heard, and soon afterwards the whole staircase was smothered with dust.

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"What *is* the matter?" cried my wife, who had passed to the landing-place on the stairs before me.

"Ma'am," said one of Mr Gunter's men, shaking the lappets of his blue coat, which were covered with white dust, "the whole ceiling of the dining-room has come down."

"Ceiling come down!" screamed my wife.

"Yes, ma'am," replied our own servant; "and the supper and supper-tables are all smashed flat with the weight on it."

Here was a catastrophe. My wife hastened down, and I followed. Sure enough the weight of mortar had crushed all beneath it—all was chaos and confusion. Jellies, blancmanges, patés, cold roasts, creams, trifles—all in one mass of ruin, mixed up with lime, horse-hair, plaster of Paris, and stucco. It wore all the appearance of a Swiss avalanche in miniature.

"Good heavens, how dreadful!" exclaimed my wife.

"How much more so if there had been people in the room," replied I.

"What could be the cause of it?" exclaimed my wife.

"These new houses, sir, won't bear dancing in," observed Mr Gunter's head man.

"So it appears," replied I.

This unfortunate accident was the occasion of the party breaking up: they knew that there was no chance of supper, which they had looked forward to; so they put on their shawls and departed, leaving us to clear up the wreck at our leisure. In fact, as my daughters declared, it quite spoiled the ball as well as the supper.

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The next morning I sent for Mr Smithers, who made his appearance, and showed him what had taken place.

"Dear me, I'm very sorry; but you had too many people above stairs—that is very clear."

"Very clear, indeed, Mr Smithers. We had a ball last night."

"A ball, sir! Oh, then no wonder."

"No wonder! What! do you mean to say that balls are not to be given?"

"Why, really, sir, we do not build private houses for ball-rooms—we could not, sir; the price of timber just now is enormous, and the additional strength required would never pay us."

"What then! do you mean to say that there are no balls to be given in London?"

"Oh no, sir!—certainly not; but you must be aware that few people do. Even our aristocracy hire Willis's rooms for their balls. Some of the old houses indeed, such as Devonshire House, may do

for such a thing."

"But, Mr Smithers, I expect you will make this ceiling good."

"Much obliged to you sir, for giving me the preference—I will do it as reasonable as anybody," replied Mr Smithers, bowing. "I will order my workmen directly—they are only next door."

For a fortnight we were condemned to dine in the back dining-room; and after that Mr Smithers sent in a bill which cost me more than the ball and supper.

So soon as all was right again, I determined that I would hang up my pictures; for I had been accustomed to look at them for years, and I missed them. I sent for a carpenter and gave him directions.

"I have the middle now, sir, exactly," said the man, standing on the high steps; "but," continued he, tapping with his hammer, "I can't find wood."

"Can't find wood!"

"No, sir," replied the man, tapping as far as he could reach from right to left; "nothing to nail to, sir. But there never is no wood in these new-built houses." [Pg 268]

"Confound your new houses!" exclaimed I.

"Well, it is very provoking, my dear!" exclaimed my wife.

"I suppose that their new houses are not built for pictures any more than for balls," replied I; and I sighed. "What must be done?"

"I think, sir, if you were to order brass rods to be fixed from one corner to the other, we might find means to fasten them," observed the carpenter; "but there's no wood, that's certain."

"What the devil is the house built of then?" exclaimed I.

"All lath and plaster, sir," replied the man, tapping right and left.

At a heavy expense I procured the rods, and at last the pictures were hung up.

The next annoyance that we had was a very bad smell, which we found to proceed from the drains; and the bricklayers were sent for. All the drains were choked, it appeared, from their being so very narrow; and after having up the whole basement, at the expense of £40, that nuisance was abated.

We now had two months' repose, and I was in hopes that things would go on more comfortably; but one day I overheard a conversation between my wife and daughters, as I passed by the door of the room, which I must candidly acknowledge gave me satisfaction.

"It's really very awkward, mamma—one don't know where to put anything: there's not a cupboard or stow-hole in the whole house—not even a store-room."

"Well, it is so, my dear; I wonder we did not observe it when we looked over it. What a nice set of cupboards we had at Brompton Hall."

"Oh! yes—I wish we had them here, mamma. Couldn't we have some built?"

"I don't like to speak to your papa about it, my dear; he has already been put to such expense, what with the ceiling and the drains." [Pg 269]

"Then don't, mamma; papa is really very good-natured."

The equinoxes now came on, and we had several gales of wind, with heavy rain—the slates blew off and rattled up and down all night, while the wind howled round the corner of the square. The next morning complaints from all the attic residents; one's bed was wetted quite through with the water dropping through the ceiling—another had been obliged to put a basin on the floor to catch the leak—all declared that the roof was like a sieve. Sent again for Mr Smithers, and made a complaint.

"This time, Mr Smithers," said I, with the lease in my hand, "I believe you will acknowledge these are landlord's repairs."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," exclaimed Mr Smithers; "I shall desire one of my men to look to it immediately; but the fact is, with such heavy gales, the slates must be expected to move a little. Duchesses and countesses are very light, and the wind gets underneath them."

"Duchesses and countesses very light!" exclaimed my wife; "what do you mean?"

"It's the term we give to slates, madam," replied he; "we cannot put on a heavy roof with a brick-and-a-half wall. It would not support one."

"*Brick-and-a-half* wall!" exclaimed I;—"surely, Mr Smithers, that's not quite safe with a house so high."

"Not quite safe, my dear sir, if it were a single house; but," added he, "in a row, one house supports another."

"Thank Heaven," thought I, "I have but a three-years' lease, and sixth months are gone already."

But the annoyances up to this period were internal; we now had to experience the external nuisances attending a modern-built house.

"No. 1 is taken, papa, and they are getting the furniture in," said my eldest daughter one day; "I hope we shall have nice neighbours. And William told Mary that Mr Smithers told him, when he met him in the street, that he was now going to fit up No. 3 as fast as he could."

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The report was true, as we found from the report of the carpenters' hammers for the next three or four weeks. We could not obtain a moment's sleep except in the early part of the night, or a minute's repose to our ears during the day. The sound appeared as if it was *in* our house instead of next door; and it commenced at six o'clock in the morning, and lasted till seven in the evening. I was hammered to death; and, unfortunately, there was a constant succession of rain, which prevented me from going out to avoid it. I had nothing to do but to watch my pictures, as they jumped from the wall with the thumps of the hammers. At last No. 3 was floored, wainscotted and glazed, and we had a week's repose.

By this time No. 1 was furnished, and the parties who had taken it came in. They were a gouty old gentleman, and his wife, who, report said, had once been his cook. My daughters' hopes of pleasant neighbours were disappointed. Before they had been in a week, we found ourselves at issue: the old gentleman's bed was close to the partition-wall, and in the dead of the night we could distinctly hear his groans, and also his execrations and exclamations, when the fit came on him. My wife and daughters declared that it was quite horrible, and that they could not sleep for them.

Upon the eighth day there came a note:—

"Mrs Whortleback's compliments to Mr and Mrs —, and begs that the young people will not play on the piany, as Mr Whortleback is very ill with the gout."

Now, my daughters were proficients on the piano, and practised a great deal. This note was anything but satisfactory: to play when the old gentleman was ill would be barbarous,—not to play was to deprive ourselves of our greatest pleasure.

"Oh dear! how very disagreeable," cried my daughters.

"Yes, my dear; but if we can hear his groans, it's no wonder that he can hear the piano and harp: recollect the wall is only a brick and a half thick."

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"I wonder music don't soothe him," observed the eldest.

Music is mockery to a man in agony. A man who has been broken on the wheel would not have his last hours soothed by the finest orchestra. After a week, during which we sent every day to inquire after Mr Whortleback's health, we ventured to resume the piano and harp; upon which the old gentleman became testy, and sent for a man with a trumpet, placing him in the balcony, and desiring him to play as much out of tune as possible whenever the harp and piano sounded a note. Thus were we at open hostility with our only neighbour; and, as we were certain if my daughters touched their instruments, to have the trumpet blowing discord for an hour or two either that day or the next, at last the piano was unopened, and the harp remained in its case. Before the year closed, No. 3 became tenanted; and here we had a new annoyance. It was occupied by a large family; and there were four young ladies who were learning music. We now had our annoyance: it was strum, strum, all day long; one sister up, another down; and every one knows what a bore the first lessons in music are to those who are compelled to hear them. They could just manage to play a tune, and that eternal tune was ringing in our ears from morning to night. We could not send our compliments, or blow a trumpet. We were forced to submit to it. The nursery also being against the partition-wall, we had the squalls and noise of the children on the one side, added to groans and execrations of the old gentleman on the other.

However, custom reconciled us to everything, and the first vexation gradually wore off. Yet I could not help observing that when I was supposed not to be in hearing, the chief conversation of my wife, when her friends called upon her, consisted of a description of all the nuisances and annoyances that we suffered; and I felt assured that she and my daughters were as anxious to return to Brompton Hall as I was. In fact, the advantages which they had anticipated by their town residence were not realised. In our situation, we were as far off from most of our friends, and still farther from some than we were before, and we had no longer the same amusements to offer them. At our former short distance from town, access was more easy to those who did not keep a carriage, that is, the young men; and those were the parties who, of course, my wife and daughters cared for most. It was very agreeable to come down with their portmanteaus,—enjoy the fresh air and green lanes of the country for an afternoon,—dine, sleep, and breakfast, and return the next morning by conveyances which passed us every quarter of an hour; but to dine with us in — square, when the expense of a hackney-coach there and back was no trifle, and to return at eleven o'clock at night, was not at all agreeable. We found that we had not so much society, nor were we half so much courted, as at Brompton Hall. This was the bitterest blow of all, and my wife and daughters would look out of the windows and sigh; often a whole day passed without one friend or acquaintance dropping in to relieve its monotony.

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We continued to reside there, nevertheless, for I had made up my mind that the three years would be well spent if they cured my wife and daughters of their town mania; and although

anxious as I am sure they were to return, I never broached the matter, for I was determined that the cure should be radical. Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, were finished the next year, and, by the persuasions of Mr Smithers, were taken by different parties in the spring. And now we had another nuisance. Nothing but eternal rings at the bell. The man-servant grumbled, and was behind with his work; and when scolded, replied that there was no time for anything, that when cleaning his knives and plate the bell was rung, and he was obliged to wash himself, throw on his jacket, and go up to answer the front door; that the bell was not rung for us, but to find out where some new-comer lived, and to ascertain this they always rang at the house which appeared the longest inhabited. There was no end to the ringing for some months, and we had three servants who absolutely refused to stay in so bad a place. We had also to contend with letters and notes in the same way, brought to us at haphazard: "Does Mr So-and-so live here?"—"No, he does not."—"Then pray where does he?" This was interminable, and not five minutes in the day passed without the door-bell being rung. For the sake of not changing my servants I was at last put to the expense of an extra boy for no other purpose but to answer the constant applications at the door. At last we had remained there for two years and nine months, and then my wife would occasionally put the question whether I intended to renew the lease; and I naturally replied that I did not like change.

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Then she went upon another tack; observed that Clara did not appear well for some time, and that she thought that she required country air; but, in this, I did not choose to agree with her.

One day I came home, and, rubbing my hands as if pleased, said, "Well, at last I've an offer for Brompton Villa for a term of seven years,—a very fair offer and good tenants,—so that will now be off my hands."

My wife looked mortified, and my daughters held down their heads.

"Have you let it, papa?" said one of my daughters, timidly.

"No, not yet; but I am to give an answer to-morrow morning."

"It requires consideration, my dear," replied my wife.

"Requires consideration!" said I. "Why, my dear, the parties have seen the house, and I have been trying to let it these three years. I recollect when I took this house I said it required consideration, but you would not allow any such thing."

"I'm sure I wish we had," said Clara.

"And so do I."

"The fact is, my dear," said my wife, coming round to the back of my chair, and putting her arms round my neck, "we all wish to go back to Brompton."

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"Yes, yes, papa," added my daughters, embracing me on each side.

"You will allow, then, that I was right in not taking a lease for more than three years."

"Yes: how lucky you were so positive!"

"Well, then, if that is the case, we will unfurnish this house, and, as soon as you please, go back to Brompton Hall."

I hardly need observe that we took possession of our old abode with delight, and that I have had no more applications for a change of residence, or have again heard the phrase that we were living "out of the world."

The Way to be Happy

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Cut your coat according to your cloth, is an old maxim and a wise one; and if people will only square their ideas according to their circumstances, how much happier might we all be! If we only would come down a peg or two in our notions, in accordance with our waning fortunes, happiness would be always within our reach. It is not what we have, or what we have not, which adds or subtracts from our felicity. It is the longing for more than we have, the envying of those who possess that more, and the wish to appear in the world of more consequence than we really are, which destroy our peace of mind, and eventually lead to ruin.

I never witnessed a man submitting to circumstances with good humour and good sense, so remarkably as in my friend Alexander Willemott. When I first met him, since our school days, it was at the close of the war: he had been a large contractor with government for army clothing and accoutrements, and was said to have realised an immense fortune, although his accounts were not yet settled. Indeed, it was said that they were so vast, that it would employ the time of six clerks for two years, to examine them, previous to the balance sheet being struck. As I observed, he had been at school with me, and, on my return from the East Indies, I called upon him to renew our old acquaintance, and congratulate him upon his success.

"My dear Reynolds, I am delighted to see you. You must come down to Belem Castle; Mrs Willemott will receive you with pleasure, I'm sure. You shall see my two girls."

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I consented. The chaise stopped at a splendid mansion, and I was ushered in by a crowd of liveried servants. Everything was on the most sumptuous and magnificent scale. Having paid my respects to the lady of the house, I retired to dress, as dinner was nearly ready, it being then half-past seven o'clock. It was eight before we sat down. To an observation that I made, expressing a hope that I had not occasioned the dinner being put off, Willemott replied, "On the contrary, my dear Reynolds, we never sit down until about this hour. How people can dine at four or five o'clock, I cannot conceive. I could not touch a mouthful."

The dinner was excellent, and I paid it the encomiums which were its due.

"Do not be afraid, my dear fellow—my cook is an *artiste extraordinaire*—a regular *Cordon Bleu*. You may eat anything without fear of indigestion. How people can live upon the English cookery of the present day, I cannot conceive. I seldom dine out, for fear of being poisoned. Depend upon it, a good cook lengthens your days, and no price is too great to insure one."

When the ladies retired, being alone, we entered into friendly conversation. I expressed my admiration of his daughters, who certainly were very handsome and elegant girls.

"Very true; they are more than passable," replied he. "We have had many offers, but not such as come up to my expectations. Baronets are cheap now-a-days, and Irish lords are nothings; I hope to settle them comfortably. We shall see. Try this claret; you will find it excellent, not a headache in a hogshead of it. How people can drink port, I cannot imagine."

The next morning he proposed that I should rattle round the park with him. I acceded, and we set off in a handsome open carriage, with four greys, ridden by postilions at a rapid pace. As we were whirling along, he observed, "In town we must of course drive but a pair, but in the country I never go out without four horses. There is a spring in four horses which is delightful; it makes your spirits elastic, and you feel that the poor animals are not at hard labour. Rather than not drive four, I would prefer to stay at home."

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Our ride was very pleasant, and in such amusements passed away one of the most pleasant weeks that I ever remembered. Willemott was not the least altered—he was as friendly, as sincere, as open-hearted, as when a boy at school. I left him, pleased with his prosperity, and acknowledging that he was well deserving of it, although his ideas had assumed such a scale of magnificence.

I went to India when my leave expired, and was absent about four years. On my return, I inquired after my friend Willemott, and was told, that his circumstances and expectations had been greatly altered. From many causes, such as a change in the government, a demand for economy, and the wording of his contracts having been differently rendered from what Willemott had supposed their meaning to be, large items had been struck out of his balance sheet, and, instead of being a millionaire, he was now a gentleman with a handsome property. Belem Castle had been sold, and he now lived at Richmond, as hospitable as ever, and was considered a great addition to the neighbourhood. I took the earliest opportunity of going down to see him.

"Oh, my dear Reynolds, this is really kind of you to come without invitation. Your room is ready, and bed well aired, for it was slept in three nights ago. Come—Mrs Willemott will be delighted to see you."

I found the girls still unmarried, but they were yet young. The whole family appeared as contented and happy, and as friendly, as before. We sat down to dinner at six o'clock; the footman and the coachman attended. The dinner was good, but not by the *artiste extraordinaire*. I praised everything.

"Yes," replied he, "she is a very good cook; she unites the solidity of the English with the delicacy of the French fare; and, altogether, I think it a *decided improvement*. Jane is quite a treasure." After dinner, he observed, "Of course you know I have sold Belem Castle, and reduced my establishment. Government have not treated me fairly, but I am at the mercy of commissioners, and a body of men will do that which, as individuals, they would be ashamed of. The fact is, the odium is borne by no one in particular, and it is only the sense of shame which keeps us honest, I am afraid. However, here you see me, with a comfortable fortune, and always happy to see my friends, especially my old school-fellow. Will you take *port* or claret; the port is very fine, and so is the claret. By-the-bye, do you know—I'll let you into a family secret; Louisa is to be married to a Colonel Willer—an *excellent* match! It has made us all happy."

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The next day we drove out, not in an open carriage as before, but in a chariot and with a *pair of horses*.

"These are handsome horses," observed I.—"Yes," replied he, "I am fond of good horses; and, as I only keep a pair, I have the best. There is a certain degree of pretension in *four horses*, I do not much like—it appears as if you wished to overtop your neighbours."

I spent a few very pleasant days, and then quitted his hospitable roof. A severe cold, caught that winter, induced me to take the advice of the physicians, and proceed to the South of France, where I remained two years. On my return, I was informed that Willemott had speculated, and had been unlucky on the Stock Exchange; that he had left Richmond, and was now living at Clapham. The next day I met him near the Exchange.

"Reynolds, I am happy to see you. Thompson told me that you had come back. If not better engaged, come down to see me; I will drive you down at four o'clock, if that will suit."

It suited me very well, and, at four o'clock, I met him according to appointment at a livery stables over the Iron Bridge. His vehicle was ordered out, it was a phaeton drawn by two longed-tailed ponies—altogether a very neat concern. We set off at a rapid pace.

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"They step out well, don't they? We shall be down in plenty of time to put on a pair of shoes by five o'clock, which is *our dinner-time*. Late dinners don't agree with me—they produce indigestion. Of course, you know that Louisa has a little boy."

I did not; but congratulated him.

"Yes, and has now gone out to India with her husband. Mary is also engaged to be married—a very *good* match—a Mr Rivers, in the law. He has been called to the bar this year, and promises well. They will be a little pinched at first, but we must see what we can do for them."

We stopped at a neat row of houses, I forget the name, and, as we drove up, the servant, the only man-servant, came out, and took the ponies round to the stable, while the maid received my luggage, and one or two paper-bags, containing a few extras for the occasion. I was met with the same warmth as usual by Mrs Willemott. The house was small, but very neat; the remnants of former grandeur appeared here and there, in one or two little articles, favourites of the lady. We sat down at five o'clock to a *plain* dinner, and were attended by the footman, who had rubbed down the ponies and pulled on his livery.

"A good plain cook is the best thing, after all," observed Willemott. "Your fine cooks won't condescend to roast and boil. Will you take some of this sirloin, the under-cut is excellent. My dear, give Mr Reynolds some Yorkshire pudding."

When we were left alone after dinner, Willemott told me, very unconcernedly, of his losses.

"It was my own fault," said he; "I wished to make up a little sum for the girls, and risking what they would have had, I left them almost penniless. However, we can always command a bottle of port and a beef-steak, and *what more* in this world can you have? Will you take port or white?—I have no claret to offer you."

We finished our port, but I could perceive no difference in Willemott. He was just as happy and as cheerful as ever. He drove me to town the next day. During our drive, he observed, "I like ponies, they are so little trouble; and I prefer them to driving one horse in this vehicle, as I can put my wife and daughters into it. It's selfish to keep a carriage for yourself alone, and one horse in a four-wheeled double chaise appears like an imposition upon the poor animal."

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I went to Scotland, and remained about a year. On my return, I found that my friend Willemott had again shifted his quarters. He was at Brighton; and having nothing better to do, I put myself in the "Times," and arrived at the Bedford Hotel. It was not until after some inquiry, that I could find out his address. At last I obtained it, in a respectable but not fashionable part of this overgrown town. Willemott received me just as before.

"I have no spare bed to offer you, but you must breakfast and dine with us every day. Our house is small, but it's very comfortable, and Brighton is a very convenient place. You know Mary is married. A good place in the courts was for sale, and my wife and I agreed to purchase it for Rivers. It has reduced us a little, but they are very comfortable. I have retired from business altogether; in fact, as my daughters are both married, and we have enough to live upon, what can we wish for more? Brighton is very gay and always healthy; and, as for carriages and horses, they are no use here—there are *flies* at every corner of the streets."

I accepted his invitation to dinner. A parlour-maid waited, but everything, although very plain, was clean and comfortable.

"I have still a bottle of wine for a friend, Reynolds," said Willemott, after dinner, "but, for my part, I prefer *whisky-toddy*—it agrees with me better. Here's to the health of my two girls, God bless them, and success to them in life!"

"My dear Willemott," said I, "I take the liberty of an old friend, but I am so astonished at your philosophy, that I cannot help it. When I call to mind Belem Castle, your large establishment, your luxuries, your French cook, and your stud of cattle, I wonder at your contented state of mind under such a change of circumstances."

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"I almost wonder myself, my dear fellow," replied he. "I never could have believed, at that time, that I could live happily under such a change of circumstances; but the fact is, that, although I have been a contractor, I have a good conscience; then, my wife is an excellent woman, and provided she sees me and her daughters happy, thinks nothing about herself; and, further, I have made it a rule as I have been going down hill, to find reasons why I should be thankful, and not discontented. Depend upon it, Reynolds, it is not a loss of fortune which will affect your happiness, as long as you have peace and love at home."

I took my leave of Willemott and his wife, with respect as well as regard; convinced that there was no pretended indifference to worldly advantages; that it was not, that the grapes were sour, but that he had learned the whole art of happiness, by being contented with what he had, and by "cutting his coat according to his cloth."

There was a grand procession through the streets of the two towns of Perth and of Dundee. The holy abbots, in their robes, walked under gilded canopies, the monks chanted, the censers were thrown, flags and banners were carried by seamen, lighted tapers by penitents; St Antonio, the patron of those who trust to the stormy ocean, was carried in all pomp through the streets; and, as the procession passed, coins of various value were thrown down by those who watched it from the windows, and, as fast as thrown, were collected by little boys dressed as angels, and holding silver vessels to receive the largesses. During the whole day did the procession continue, and large was the treasure collected in the two towns. Everyone gave freely, for there were few, indeed none, who, if not in their own circle, at least among their acquaintances, had not to deplore the loss of some one dear to them, or to those they visited, from the dangerous rock which lay in the very track of all the vessels entering the Frith of Tay.

These processions had been arranged, that a sufficient sum of money might be collected to enable them to put in execution a plan proposed by an adventurous and bold young seaman, in a council held for the purpose, of fixing a bell on the rock, which could be so arranged that the slightest breath of wind would cause the hammer of it to sound, and thus, by its tolling, warn the mariner of his danger; and the sums given were more than sufficient. A meeting was then held, and it was unanimously agreed that Andrew M'Clise should be charged with the commission to go over to Amsterdam, and purchase the bell of a merchant residing there, whom Andrew stated to have one in his possession, which, from its fine tone and size, was exactly calculated for the purport to which it was to be appropriated.

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Andrew M'Clise embarked with the money, and made a prosperous voyage. He had often been at Amsterdam, and had lived with the merchant, whose name was Vandermaclin; and the attention to his affairs, the dexterity and the rapidity of the movements of Andrew M'Clise, had often elicited the warmest encomiums of Mynheer Vandermaclin; and many evenings had Andrew M'Clise passed with him, drinking in moderation their favourite scheedam, and indulging in the meditative meerschaum. Vandermaclin had often wished that he had a son like Andrew M'Clise, to whom he could leave his property, with the full assurance that the heap would not be scattered, but greatly added to.

Vandermaclin was a widower. He had but one daughter, who was now just arrived at an age to return from the pension to her father's house, and take upon herself the domestic duties. M'Clise had never yet seen the beautiful Katerina.

"And so, Mynheer M'Clise," said Vandermaclin, who was sitting in the warehouse on the ground-floor of his tenement, "you come to purchase the famous bell of Utrecht; with the intention of fixing it upon that rock, the danger of which we have so often talked over after the work of the day has been done? I, too, have suffered from that same rock, as you well know; but still I have been fortunate. The price will be heavy; and so it ought to be, for the bell itself is of no small weight."

"We are prepared to pay it, Mynheer Vandermaclin."

"Nevertheless, in so good a cause, and for so good a purport, you shall not be overcharged. I will say nothing of the beauty of the workmanship, or even of the mere manufacture. You shall pay but its value in metal; the same price which the Jew Isaacs offered me for it but four months ago. I will not ask what a Jew would ask, but what a Jew would give, which makes no small difference. Have you ten thousand guilders?"

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"I have, and more."

"That is my price, Mynheer M'Clise, and I wish for no more; for I, too, will contribute my share to the good work. Are you content, and is it a bargain?"

"It is; and the holy abbots will thank you on vellum, Mynheer Vandermaclin, for your generosity."

"I prefer the thanks of the bold seamen to those of the idle churchmen; but never mind, it is a bargain. Now, we will go in; it is time to close the doors. We will take our pipes, and you shall make the acquaintance of my fair daughter, Katerina."

At the time we are speaking of, M'Clise was about six-and-twenty years of age; he was above the middle size, elegant in person, and with a frankness and almost nobility in his countenance, which won all who saw him.

His manners were like those of most seamen, bold, but not offensively so. His eye was piercing as an eagle's, and it seemed as if his very soul spoke from it. At the very first meeting between him and the daughter of Vandermaclin, it appeared to both as if their destinies were to unite them.

They loved not as others love, but with an intensity which it would be impossible to portray; but they hardly exchanged a word. Again and again they met; their eyes spoke, but nothing more. The bell was put on board the vessel, the money had been paid down, and M'Clise could no longer delay. He felt as if his heartstrings were severed as he tore himself away from the land where all remained that he coveted upon earth. And Katerina, she too felt as if her existence was a blank; and, as the vessel sailed from the port, she breathed short; and when not even her white and lofty top-gallant sail could be discovered as a speck, she threw herself on her couch and wept. And M'Clise as he sailed away, remained for hours leaning his cheek on his hand, thinking

The months passed away, during which M'Clise was busied every ebb of the tide in superintending the work on the rock. At last, all was ready; and once more was to be beheld a gay procession; but this time it was on the water. It was on a calm and lovely summer's morn, that the abbots and the monks, attended by a large company of the authorities, and others, who were so much interested in the work in hand, started from the shore of Aberbrothwick in a long line of boats, decorated with sacred and with other various banners and devices. The music floated along the water, and the solemn chants of the monks were for once heard where never yet they had been heard before, or ever will again. M'Clise was at the rock, in a small vessel purposely constructed to carry the bell, and with sheers to hang it on the supports imbedded in the solid rock. The bell was in its place, and the abbot blessed the bell; and holy water was sprinkled on the metal, which was for the future to be lashed by the waves of the salt sea. And the music and the chants were renewed; and as they continued, the wind gradually rose, and with the rising of the wind the bell tolled loud and deep. The tolling of the bell was the signal for return, for it was a warning that the weather was about to change, and the procession pulled back to Aberbrothwick, and landed in good time; for in one hour more, and the rocky coast was again lashed by the waves, and the bell tolled loud and quick, although there were none there but the sea-gull, who screamed with fright as he wheeled in the air at this unusual noise upon the rock, which, at the ebb, he had so often made his resting-place.

M'Clise had done his work; the bell was fixed; and once more he hastened with his vessel to Amsterdam. Once more was he an inmate of Vandermaclin's house; once more in the presence of the idol of his soul. This time they spoke; this time their vows were exchanged for life and death. But Vandermaclin saw not the state of their hearts. He looked upon the young seaman as too low, too poor, to be a match for his daughter; and as such an idea never entered his head, so did he never imagine that he would have dared to love. But he was soon undeceived; for M'Clise frankly stated his attachment, and demanded the hand of Katerina; and, at the demand, Vandermaclin's face was flushed with anger.

"Mynheer M'Clise," said he, after a pause, as if to control his feelings; "when a man marries, he is bound to show that he has wherewithal to support his wife; to support her in that rank, and to afford her those luxuries to which she has been accustomed in her father's house. Show me that you can do so, and I will not refuse you the hand of Katerina."

"As yet, I have not," replied M'Clise; "but I am young and can work; I have money, and will gain more. Tell me what sum do you think that I should possess to warrant my demanding the hand of your daughter?"

"Produce twelve thousand guilders, and she is yours," replied the merchant.

"I have but three thousand," replied M'Clise.

"Then, think no more of Katerina. It is a foolish passion, and you must forget it. And, Mynheer M'Clise, I must not have my daughter's affections tampered with. She must forget you; and that can only be effected by your not meeting again. I wish you well, Mynheer M'Clise, but I must request your absence."

M'Clise departed from the presence of the merchant, bowed down with grief and disappointment. He contrived that a letter, containing the result of his application, should be put in the hands of Katerina. But Vandermaclin was informed of this breach of observance, and Katerina was sent to a convent, there to remain until the departure of her lover; and Vandermaclin wrote to his correspondent at Dundee, requesting that the goods forwarded to him might not be sent by the vessel commanded by M'Clise.

Of this our young captain received information. All hope was nearly gone; still he lingered, and delayed his departure. He was no longer the active, energetic seaman; he neglected all, even his attire.

M'Clise knew in which convent his fair Katerina had been immured; and often would he walk round its precincts, with the hope of seeing her, if it were but for a moment, but in vain. His vessel was now laden, and he could delay no longer. He was to sail the next morning; and once more did the unhappy young man take his usual walk to look at those walls which contained all that was dear to him on earth. His reverie was broken by a stone falling down to his feet; he took it up; there was a small piece of paper attached to it with a silken thread. He opened it; it was the handwriting of Katerina, and contained but two words—" *The Bell*."

The bell! M'Clise started; for he immediately comprehended what was meant. The whole plan came like electricity through his brain. Yes; then there was a promise of happiness. The bell was worth ten thousand guilders; that sum had been offered, and would now be given by Isaacs the Jew. He would be happy with his Katerina; and he blessed her ingenuity for devising the means. For a minute or two he was transported; but the re-action soon took place. What was he about to attempt? sacrilege—cruelty. The bell had been blessed by the holy church; it had been purchased by holy and devout alms. It had been placed on the rock to save the lives of his brother seamen; and were he to remove it, would he not be responsible for all the lives lost? Would not the wail of the widow, and the tears of the orphan, be crying out to Heaven against him? No, no! never! The crime was too horrible; and M'Clise stamped upon the paper, thinking he was tempted by Satan in the shape of a woman; but when woman tempts, man is lost. He recalled the charms of Katerina; all his repugnance was overcome; and he resolved that the deed should be

accomplished, and that Katerina should be gained, even if he lost his soul.

Andrew M'Clise sailed away from Amsterdam, and Katerina recovered her liberty. Vandermaclin was anxious that she should marry: and many were the suitors for her hand, but in vain. She reminded her father, that he had pledged himself, if M'Clise counted down twelve thousand guilders, that she should be his wife; and to that pledge, she insisted that he was bound fast. And Vandermaclin after reasoning with her, and pointing out to her that twelve thousand guilders was a sum so large, that M'Clise might not procure until his old age, even if he were fortunate, acknowledged that such was his promise, and that he would, like an honest man, abide by it, provided that M'Clise should fulfil his part of the agreement in the space of two years; after which he should delay her settlement no longer. And Katerina raised her eyes to heaven, and whispered, as she clasped her hands, "The Bell." Alas! that we should invoke Heaven when we would wish to do wrong; but mortals are blind, and none so blind as those who are impelled by passion.

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It was in the summer of that year that M'Clise had made his arrangements: having procured the assistance of some lawless hands, he had taken the advantage of a smooth and glassy sea and a high tide to remove the bell on board his own vessel; a work of little difficulty to him, as he had placed it there, and knew well the fastenings. He sailed away for Amsterdam, and was permitted by Heaven to arrive safe with his sacrilegious freight. He did not, as before, enter the canal opposite to the house of Vandermaclin, but one that ran behind the habitation of the Jew Isaacs. At night, he went into the house, and reported to the Jew what he had for sale; and the keen grey eyes of the bent-double little Israelite sparkled with delight, for he knew that his profit would be great. At midnight the bell was made fast to the crane, and safely deposited in the warehouse of the Jew, who counted out the ten thousand guilders to the enraptured M'Clise, whose thoughts were wholly upon the possession of his Katerina, and not upon the crime he had committed.

But, alas! to conceal one crime, we are too often obliged to be guilty of even deeper; and thus it was with Andrew M'Clise. The people who had assisted, upon the promise of a thousand guilders being divided among them now murmured at their share, and insisted upon an equal division of the spoils, or threatened with an immediate confession of the black deed.

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M'Clise raved, and cursed, and tore his hair; promised to give them the money as soon as he had wedded Katerina; but they would not consent. Again the devil came to his assistance, and whispered how he was to act: he consented. The next night the division was to be made. They met in his cabin; he gave them wine, and they drank plentifully; but the wine was poisoned, and they all died before the morning. M'Clise tied weights to their bodies, and sunk them in the deep canal; broke open his hatches, to make it appear that his vessel had been plundered; and then went to the authorities denouncing his crew as having plundered him, and escaped. Immediate search was made, but they were not to be found; and it was supposed that they had escaped in a boat.

Once more M'Clise, whose conscience was seared, went to the house of Vandermaclin, counted down his twelve thousand guilders, and claimed his bride; and Vandermaclin, who felt that his daughter's happiness was at stake, now gave his consent. As M'Clise stated that he was anxious to return to England, and arrange with the merchants whose goods had been plundered, in a few days the marriage took place; and Katerina clasped the murderer in her arms. All was apparent joy and revelry; but there was anguish in the heart of M'Clise, who, now that he had gained his object, felt that it had cost him much too dear, for his peace of mind was gone for ever. But Katerina cared not; every spark of feeling was absorbed in her passion, and the very guilt of M'Clise but rendered him more dear; for was it not for her that he had done all this? M'Clise received her portion, and hastened to sail away; for the bodies were still in the canal, and he trembled every hour lest his crime should be discovered. And Vandermaclin bade farewell to his daughter: and, he knew not why, but there was a feeling he could not suppress, that they never should meet again.

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"Down—down below, Katerina! this is no place for you," cried Mr M'Clise, as he stood at the helm of the vessel. "Down, dearest, down, or you will be washed overboard. Every sea threatens to pour into our decks; already have we lost two men. Down, Katerina! down, I tell you."

"I fear not; let me remain with you."

"I tell you, down," cried M'Clise in wrath; and Katerina cast upon him a reproachful look, and obeyed.

The storm was at its height; the sun had set, black and monstrous billows chased each other, and the dismasted vessel was hurried on towards the land. The wind howled, and whistled sharply at each chink in the bulwarks of the vessel. For three days had they fought the gale, but in vain. Now, if it continued, all chance was over; for the shore was on their lee, distant not many miles. Nothing could save them, but gaining the mouth of the Frith of Tay, and then they could bear up for Dundee. And there was a boiling surge, and a dark night, and roaring seas, and their masts were floating far away; and M'Clise stood at the helm, keeping her broadside to the sea: his heart was full of bitterness, and his guilty conscience bore him down, and he looked for death, and he dreaded it; for was he not a sacrilegious murderer, and was there not an avenging God above?

Once more Katerina appeared on deck, clinging for support to Andrew.

"I cannot stay below. Tell me, will it soon be over?"

"Yes," replied M'Clise, gloomily; "it will soon be over with all of us."

"How mean you? you told me there was no danger."

"I told you falsely; there is death soon, and damnation afterwards: for you I have lost my soul!"

"Oh! say not so."

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"I say it. Leave me, leave me, woman, or I curse thee."

"Curse me, Andrew? Oh, no! Kiss me, Andrew; and if we are to perish, let us expire in each other's arms."

"'Tis as well; you have dragged me to perdition. Leave me, I say, for you have my bitter curse."

Thus was his guilty love turned to hate, now that death was staring him in the face.

Katerina made no reply. She threw herself on the deck, and abandoned herself to her feeling of bitter anguish. And as she lay there, and M'Clise stood at the helm, the wind abated; the vessel was no longer borne down as before, although the waves were still mountains high. The seamen on board rallied; some fragments of sail were set on the remnants of the masts, and there was a chance of safety. M'Clise spoke not, but watched the helm. The wind shifted in their favour; and hope rose in every heart. The Frith of Tay was now open, and they were saved! Light was the heart of M'Clise when he kept away the vessel, and gave the helm up to the mate. He hastened to Katerina, who still remained on the deck, raised her up, whispered comfort and returning love; but she heard not—she could not forget—and she wept bitterly.

"We are saved, dear Katerina!"

"Better that we had been lost!" replied she, mournfully.

"No, no! say not so, with your own Andrew pressing you to his bosom."

"Your bitter curse!"

"'Twas madness—nothing—I knew not what I said."

But the iron had entered into her soul. Her heart was broken.

"You had better give orders for them to look out for the Bell Rock," observed the man at the helm to M'Clise.

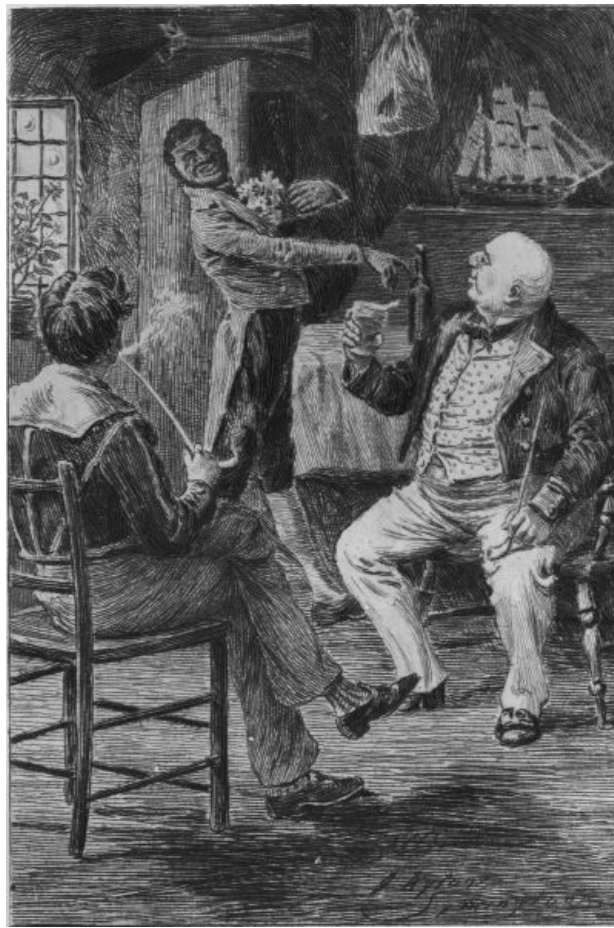
The Bell Rock! M'Clise shuddered, and made no reply. Onward went the vessel, impelled by the sea and wind: one moment raised aloft, and towering over the surge; at another, deep in the hollow trough, and walled in by the convulsed element. M'Clise still held his Katerina in his arms, who responded not to his endearments, when a sudden shock threw them on the deck. The crashing of the timbers, the pouring of the waves over the stern, the heeling and settling of the vessel, were but the work of a few seconds. One more furious shock,—she separates, falls on her beam ends, and the raging seas sweep over her.

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M'Clise threw from him her whom he had so madly loved, and plunged into the wave. Katerina shrieked, as she dashed after him, and all was over.

When the storm rises, and the screaming sea-gull seeks the land, and the fisherman hastens his bark towards the beach, there is to be seen, descending from the dark clouds with the rapidity of lightning, the form of Andrew M'Clise, the heavy bell to which he is attached by the neck, bearing him down to his doom.

And when all is smooth and calm, when at the ebbing tide, the wave but gently kisses the rock, then by the light of the silver moon, the occupants of the vessels which sail from the Firth of Tay, have often beheld the form of the beautiful Katerina, waving her white scarf as a signal that they should approach, and take her off from the rock on which she is seated. At times, she offers a letter for her father, Vandermaclin; and she mourns and weeps as the wary mariners, with their eyes fixed on her, and with folded arms, pursue their course in silence and in dread.



Moonshine

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Those who have visited our West India possessions, must have often been amused with the humour and cunning which occasionally appear in a negro more endowed than the generality of his race, particularly when the master also happens to be a humourist. The swarthy servitor seems to reflect his patron's absurdities; and having thoroughly studied his character, ascertains how far he can venture to take liberties without fear of punishment.

One of these strange specimens I once met with in a negro called Moonshine, belonging to a person equally strange in his own way, who had, for many years, held the situation of harbour-master at Port Royal, but had then retired on a pension, and occupied a small house at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. His name was Cockle, but he had long been addressed as Captain Cockle; and this brevet rank he retained until the day of his death. In person he was very large and fat—not unlike a cockle in shape: so round were his proportions, and so unwieldy, that it appeared much easier to roll him along from one place to another, than that he should walk. Indeed, locomotion was not to his taste: he seldom went much farther than round the small patch of garden which was in front of his house, and in which he had some pinks and carnations and chrysanthemums, of which he was not a little proud. His head was quite bald, smooth, and shining white; his face partook of a more roseate tint, increasing in depth till it settled into an intense red at the tip of his nose. Cockle had formerly been a master of a merchant vessel, and from his residence in a warm climate had contracted a habit of potation, which became confirmed during the long period of his holding his situation at Port Royal. He had purchased Moonshine for three hundred dollars, when he was about seven years old, and, upon his return to England, had taken him with him.

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Moonshine was very much attached to his master, very much attached to having his own way, and was, farther, very much attached to his master's grog bottle.

The first attachment was a virtue; the second human nature; and the third, in the opinion of old Cockle, a crime of serious magnitude. I very often called upon Captain Cockle, for he had a quaint humour about him which amused; and, as he seldom went out, he was always glad to see any of his friends. Another reason was, that I seldom went to the house without finding some entertainment in the continual sparring between the master and the man. I was at that time employed in the Preventive Service, and my station was about four miles from the residence of Cockle. One morning, I stalked in and found him, as usual, in his little parlour on the ground floor.

"Well, Cockle, my boy, how are you?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, Bob, I'm all wrong. I'm on the stool of repentance; to wit, on this easy chair, doing penance, as you perceive, in a pair of duck trousers. Last night I was half seas over, and tolerably happy; this morning, I am high and dry, and intolerably miserable. Carried more sail than ballast last night, and lost my head; this morning I've found it again, with a pig of ballast in it I believe. All owing to my good nature."

"How is that, Cockle?"

"Why, that Jack Piper was here last night; and rather than he should drink all the grog and not find his way home, I drank some myself—he'd been in a bad way if I had not, poor fellow!—and now, you see, I'm suffering all from good nature. Easiness of disposition has been my ruin, and has rounded me into this ball, by wearing away all my sharp edges, Bob."

"It certainly was very considerate and very kind of you, Cockle, especially when we know how much you must have acted at variance with your inclinations." [Pg 295]

"Yes, Bob, yes; I am the milk punch of human kindness; I often cry—when the chimney smokes; and sometimes when I laugh too much. You see, I not only give my money, as others will do, but, as last night, I even give my head to assist a fellow-creature. I could, however, dispense with it for an hour or two this morning."

"Nay, don't say that; for although you might dispense with the upper part, you could not well get on without your mouth, Cockle."

"Very true, Bob; a chap without a mouth would be like a ship without a companion hatch;—talking about that, the combings of my mouth are rather dry—what do you say, Bob, shall we call Moonshine?"

"Why it's rather broad daylight for Moonshine."

"He's but an eclipse—a total eclipse, I may say. The fact is, my head is so heavy, that it rolls about on my shoulders; and I must have a stiffener down my throat to prop it up. So, Moonshine, shine out, you black-faced rascal!"

The negro was outside, cleaning his knives:—he answered, but continued at his work.

"How me shine, Massa Cockle, when you neber gib me *shiner*?"

"No: but I'll give you a *shinner* on your lower limb, that shall make you feel planet-struck, if you don't show your ugly face," replied Cockle.

"Massa Cockle, you full of dictionary dis marning."

"Come here, sir!"

"Why you so parsonal dis marning, sar," replied Moonshine, rubbing away at the knife-board—"my face no shine more dan your white skull widout hair."

"I pulled one out, you scoundrel, every time you stole my grog, and now they are all gone—Hairs! what should I do with heirs when I've nothing to leave," continued Cockle, addressing me—"hairs are like rats, that quit a ship as soon as she gets old. Now, Bob, I wonder how long that rascal will make us wait. I brought him home and gave him his freedom—but give an inch and he takes an ell. Moonshine, I begin to feel angry—the tip of my nose is red already." [Pg 296]

"Come directly, Massa Cockle."

Moonshine gave two more rubs on the board, and then made his appearance.

"You call me, sar?"

"What's the use of calling you, you black rascal!"

"Now, sar, dat not fair—you say to me, Moonshine, always do one ting first—so I 'bey order and finish knives—dat ting done, I come and 'bey nest order."

"Well, bring some cold water and some tumblers."

Moonshine soon appeared with the articles, and then walked out of the room, grinning at me.

"Moonshine, where are you going, you thief?—when did you ever see me drink cold water, or offer it to my friends?"

"Nebber see you drink it but once, and den you tipsy, and tink it gin; but you very often gib notin but water to your friends, Massa Cockle."

"When, you scoundrel?"

"Why, very often you say dat water quite strong enough for me."

"That's because I love you, Moonshine. Grog is a sad enemy to us."

"Massa Cockle real fine Christian—he lub him enemy," interrupted Moonshine, looking at me.

"At all events, I'm not ashamed to look mine enemy in the face—so hand us out the bottle."

Moonshine put the bottle on the table.

"Now, Bob," said Cockle, "what d'ye say to a *seven bell-er*? Why, hallo! what's become of all the grog?"

"All drank last night, Massa Cockle," replied Moonshine.

"Now, you ebony thief, I'll swear that there was half a bottle left when I took my last glass; for I held the bottle up to the candle to ascertain the ullage."

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"When you go up tairs, Massa Cockle, so help me Gad! not one drop left in de bottle."

"Will you take your oath, Moonshine, that you did not drink any last night?"

"No, Massa Cockle, because I gentleman, and nebber tell lie—me drink, because you gib it to me."

"Then I must have been drunk indeed. Now, tell me, how did I give it to you?—tell me every word which passed."

"Yes, Massa Cockle, me make you recollect all about it. When Massa Piper go away, you look at bottel and den you say, 'Fore I go up to bed, I take one more glass for *coming up*'—den I say, 'Pose you do, you nebber be able to *go up*.' Den you say, 'Moonshine, you good fellow (you always call me good fellow when you want me), you must help me.' You drink your grog—you fall back in de chair, and you shut first one eye and den you shut de oder. I see more grog on de table: so I take up de bottel and I say, 'Massa Cockle, you go up stairs?' and you say, 'Yes, yes—directly.' Den I hold de bottel up and say to you, 'Massa, shall I help you?' and you say 'Yes, you must *help* me.' So den I take one glass of grog, 'cause you tell me to help you."

"I didn't tell you to help yourself though, you scoundrel!"

"Yes, Massa, when you tell me to help you with de bottel, I 'bey order, and help myself. Den, sar, I waits little more, and I say, 'Massa, now you go up'tairs,' and you start up and you wake, and you say, 'Yes, yes;' and den I hold up and show you bottel again, and I say, 'Shall I *help* you, massa?' and den you say 'Yes.' So I 'bey order again, and take one more glass. Den you open mouth and you snore—so I look again and I see one little glass more in bottel, and I call you, 'Massa Cockle, Massa Cockle,' and you say, 'high—high!'—and den you head fall on you chest, and you go sleep again—so den I call again and I say, 'Massa Cockle, here one lilly more drop, shall I drink it?' and you nod you head on you bosom, and say noting—so I not quite sure, and I say again, 'Massa Cockle, shall I finish this lilly drop?' and you nod you head once more. Den I say, 'all right,' and I say, 'you very good helt, Massa Cockle;' and I finish de bottel. Now, Massa, you ab de whole tory, and it all really for true."

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I perceived that Cockle was quite as much amused at this account of Moonshine's as I was myself, but he put on a bluff look.

"So, sir, it appears that you took advantage of my helpless situation, to help yourself."

"Massa Cockle, just now you tell Massa Farran dat you drink so much, all for good nature to Massa Piper—I do same all for good nature."

"Well, Mr Moonshine, I must have some grog," replied Cockle, "and as you helped yourself last night, now you must help me;—get it how you can, I give you just ten minutes—"

"Pose you gib me ten shillings, sar," interrupted Moonshine, "dat better."

"Cash is all gone. I havn't a skillick till quarter-day, not a shot in the locker till Wednesday. Either get me some more grog, or you'll get more kicks than halfpence."

"You no ab money—you no ab tick—how I get grog, Massa Cockle? Missy O'Bottom, she tell me, last *quarter*-day, no pay *whole* bill, she not *half* like it; she say you great deceiver, and no trust more."

"Confound the old hag! Would you believe it, Bob, that Mrs Rowbottom has wanted to grapple with me these last two years—wants to make me landlord of the Goose and Pepper-box, taking her as a fixture with the premises. I suspect I should be the goose, and she the pepper-box;—but we never could shape that course. In the first place, there's too much of her; and, in the next, there's too much of me. I explained this to the old lady as well as I could; and she swelled up as big as a balloon, saying, that, when people were really *attached*, they never *attached* any weight to such trifling obstacles."

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"But you must have been sweet upon her, Cockle?"

"Nothing more than a little sugar to take the nauseous taste of my long bill out of her mouth. As for the love part of the story, that was all her own. I never contradict a lady, because it's not polite; but since I explained, the old woman has huffed, and wo'n't trust me with half a quartern—will she, Moonshine?"

"No, sar: when I try talk her over, and make promise, she say dat *all moonshine*. But, sar, I try 'gain—I tink I know how." And Moonshine disappeared, leaving us in the dark as to what his plans might be.

"I wonder you never did marry, Cockle," I observed.

"You would not wonder if you knew all. I must say, that once, and once only, I was very near it. And to whom do you think it was—a woman of colour."

"A black woman?"

"No: not half black, only a quarter—what they call a quadroon in the West Indies. But, thank

Heaven! she refused me."

"Refused you! hang it, Cockle, I never thought that you had been refused by a woman of colour."

"I was, though. You shall hear how it happened. She had been the quadroon wife (you know what that means) of a planter of the name of Guinness; he died, and not only bequeathed her her liberty, but also four good houses in Port Royal, and two dozen slaves. He had been dead about two years, and she was about thirty, when I first knew her. She was very rich, for she had a good income and spent nothing, except in jewels and dress to deck out her own person, which certainly was very handsome, even at that time, for she never had had any family. Well, if I was not quite in love with her, I was with her houses and her money; and I used to sit in her verandah and talk sentimental. One day I made my proposal. 'Massa Cockle,' said she, 'dere two ting I not like; one is, I not like your name. 'Pose I 'cept you offer, you must change you name.'

"Suppose you accept my offer, Mistris Guinness, you'll change your name. I don't know how I am to change mine,' I replied. [Pg 300]

"I make 'quiry, Massa Cockle, and I find that by act and parliament you get anoder name.'

"An act of parliament!' I cried.

"Yes, sar; and I pay five hundred gold Joe 'fore I hear people call me Missy Cockle—dat *shell* fish,' said she, and she turned up her nose.

"Humph!' said I, 'and pray what is the next thing which you wish?'

"De oder ting, sar, is, you no ab *coat am arms*, no ab seal to your watch, with bird and beast pon 'em; now 'pose you promise me dat you take oder name, and buy um coat am arms; den, sar, I take de matter into 'sideration.'

"Save yourself the trouble, ma'am,' said I, jumping up; 'my answer is short—I'll see you and your whole generation hanged first!'"

"Well, that was a very odd sort of a wind-up to a proposal; but here comes Moonshine."

The black entered the room, and put a full bottle down on the table.

"Dare it is, sar," said he, grinning.

"Well done, Moonshine, now I forgive you; but how did you manage it?"

"Me tell you all de tory, sar—first I see Missy O'Bottom, and I say, 'How you do, how you find yourself dis marning? Massa come, I tink, by-an-bye, but he almost fraid,' I said. She say, 'What he fraid for?' 'He tink you angry—not like see him—no lub him any more: he very sorry, very sick at 'art—he very much in lub wid you.'"

"The devil you did!" roared Cockle; "now I shall be bothered again with that old woman; I wish she was moored as a buoy to the Royal George."

"Massa no hear all yet. I say, 'Miss O'Bottom, 'pose you no tell?' 'I tell.'—'Massa call for clean shirt dis morning, and I say, it no clean shirt day, sar;' he say, 'Bring me clean shirt;' and den he put him on clean shirt and he put him on clean duck trousers, he make me brush him best blue coat. I say, 'What all dis for, massa?' He put him hand up to him head, and he fetch him breath and say—'I fraid Missy O'Bottom, no hear me now—I no ab courage;' and den he sit all dress ready, and no go. Den he say, 'Moonshine, gib me one glass grog, den I ab courage.' I go fetch bottel, and all grog gone—not one lilly drop left; den massa fall down plump in him big chair, and say, 'I nebber can go.' 'But,' say Missy O'Bottom, 'why he no send for some?' 'Cause,' I say, 'quarter-day not come—money all gone.'—Den say she, 'If you poor massa so *very* bad, den I trust you one bottel—you gib my compliments and say, I very appy to see him, and stay at home.'—Den I say, 'Missy O'Bottom pose massa not come soon as he take one two glass grog cut my head off.' Dat all, sar." [Pg 301]

"That's all, is it? A pretty scrape you have got me into, you scoundrel! What's to be done now?"

"Why, let's have a glass of grog first, Cockle," replied I, "we've been waiting a long while for it, and we'll then talk the matter over."

"Bob, you're sensible, and the old woman was no fool in sending the liquor—it requires *Dutch* courage to attack such a Dutch-built old schuyt; let's get the cobwebs out of our throats, and then we must see how we can get out of this scrape. I expect that I shall pay 'dearly for my whistle' this time I wet mine. Now, what's to be done, Bob?"

"I think that you had better leave it to Moonshine," said I.'

"So I will—Now, sir, as you've got me into this scrape, you must get me out of it.—D'ye hear?"

"Yes, Massa Cockle, I tink—but no ab courage."

"I understand you, you sooty fellow—here, drink this, and see if it will brighten up your wits. He's a regular turnpike, that fellow, everything must pay toll."

"Massa Cockle, I tell Missy O'Bottom dat you come soon as you ab two glass grog; 'pose you only drink one." [Pg 302]

"That wo'n't do, Moonshine, for I'm just mixing my second; you must find out something better."

"One glass grog, massa, gib no more dan one tought—dat you ab—"

"Well, then, here's another.—Now recollect, before you drink it, you are to get me out of this scrape; if not, you get into a scrape, for I'll beat you as—as white as snow."

"Pose you no *wash* nigger white, you no *mangle* him white, Massa Cockle," added Moonshine.

"The fellow's *ironing* me, Bob, ar'n't he?" said Cockle, laughing. "Now, before you drink, recollect the conditions."

"Drink first, sar, make sure of dat," replied Moonshine, swallowing off the brandy; "tink about it afterwards.—Eh! I ab it," cried Moonshine, who disappeared, and Cockle and I continued in conversation over our grog, which to sailors is acceptable in any one hour in the twenty-four. About ten minutes afterwards Cockle perceived Moonshine in the little front garden. "There's that fellow, Bob; what is he about?"

"Only picking a nosegay, I believe," replied I, looking out of the window.

"The rascal, he must be picking all my chrysanthemums. Stop him, Bob."

But Moonshine vaulted over the low pales, and there was no stopping him. It was nearly an hour before he returned; and when he came in, we found that he was dressed out in his best, looking quite a dandy, and with some of his master's finest flowers, in a large nosegay, sticking in his waistcoat.

"All right, sar, all right; dat last glass grog gib me fine idee; you nebber ab more trouble bout Missy O'Bottom."

"Well, let's hear," said Cockle.

"I dress mysel bery 'pruce, as you see, massa. I take nosegay—"

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"Yes, I see that, and be hanged to you."

"Nebber mind, Massa Cockle. I say to Missy O'Bottom, 'Massa no able come, he very sorry, so he send me;' 'Well,' she say, 'what you ab to say, sit down, Moonshine, you very nice man.' Den I say, 'Massa Cockle lub you very much, he tink all day how he make you appy; den he say, Missy O'Bottom very fine 'oman, make very fine wife.' Den Missy O'Bottom say, 'Top a moment,' and she bring a bottel from cupboard, and me drink something did make 'tomach feel really warm; and den she say, 'Moonshine, what you massa say?' den I say, massa say, 'You fine 'oman, make good wife;' but he shake um head, and say, 'I very old man, no good for noting; I tink all day how I make her appy, and I find out—Moonshine, you young man, you 'andsome feller, you good servant, I not like you go away, but I tink you make Missy O'Bottom very fine 'usband; so I not care for myself, you go to Missy O'Bottom, and tell I send you, dat I part wid you, and give you to her for 'usband.'"

Cockle and I burst out laughing, "Well, and what did Mrs Rowbottom say to that?"

"She jump up, and try to catch me hair, but I bob my head, and she miss; den she say, 'You filthy black rascal, you tell you massa, 'pose he ever come here, I break his white bald pate; and 'pose you ever come here, I smash you woolly black skull.'—Dat all, Massa Cockle; you see all right now, and I quite dry wid talking."

"All right! do you call it. I never meant to quarrel with the old woman; what d'ye think, Bob—is it all right?"

"Why, you must either have quarrelled with her, or married her, that's clear."

"Well, then, I'm clear of her, and so it's all right. It a'n't every man who can get out of matrimony by sacrificing a nosegay and two glasses of grog."

"Tree glasses, Massa Cockle," said Moonshine.

"Well, three glasses; here it is, you dog, and it's dog cheap, too. Thank God, next Wednesday's quarter-day. Bob, you must dine with me—cut the service for to-day."

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"With all my heart," replied I, "and I'll salve my conscience by walking the beach all night; but, Cockle, look here, there is but a drop in the bottle, and you have no more. I am like you, with a clean swept hold. You acknowledge the difficulty?"

"It stares me in the face, Bob; what must be done?"

"I'll tell you—in the first place, what have you for dinner?"

"Moonshine, what have we got for dinner?"

"Dinner, sar?—me not yet tink about dinner. What you like to ab, sar?"

"What have we got in the house, Moonshine?"

"Let me see, sar; first place, we ab very fine piece picklum pork; den we hab picklum pork; and den—let me tink—den we ab, we hab picklum pork, sar."

"The long and the short of it is, Bob, that we have nothing but a piece of pickled pork; can you dine off that?"

"Can a duck swim, Cockle?"

"Please, sar, we ab plenty pea for *dog baddy*," said Moonshine.

"Well, then, Cockle, as all that is required is to put the pot on the fire, you can probably spare Moonshine, after he has done that, and we will look to the cookery; start him off with a note to Mr Johns, and he can bring back a couple of bottles from my quarters."

"Really dat very fine tought, Massa Farren; I put in pork, and den I go and come back in one hour."

"That you never will, Mr Moonshine; what's o'clock now? mercy on us, how time flies in your company, Cockle, it is nearly four o'clock, it will be dark at six."

"Nebber mind, sar, me always ab *moonshine* whereber I go," said the black, showing his teeth.

"It will take two hours to boil the pork, Bob; that fellow has been so busy this morning that he has quite forgot the dinner."

"All you business, Massa Cockle."

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"Very true; but now start as soon as you can, and come back as soon as you can; here's the note."

Moonshine took the note, looked at the direction, as if he could read it, and in a few minutes he was seen to depart.

"And now, Cockle," said I, "as Moonshine will be gone some time, suppose you spin us a yarn to pass away the time."

"I'll tell you what, Bob, I am not quite so good at that as I used to be. I've an idea that when my pate became bald, my memory oozed away by insensible perspiration."

"Never mind, you must have something left, you can't be quite empty."

"No, but my tumbler is; so I'll just fill that up, and then I'll tell you how it was that I came to go to sea."

"The very thing that I should like to hear, above all others."

"Well, then, you must know that, like cockles in general, I was born on the sea-shore, just a quarter of a mile out of Dover, towards Shakespeare's Cliff. My father was a fisherman by profession, and a smuggler by practice, all was fish that came to his net; but his cottage was small, he was supposed to be very poor, and a very bad fisherman, for he seldom brought home many; but there was a reason for that, he very seldom put his nets overboard. His chief business lay in taking out of vessels coming down Channel, goods which were shipped and bonded for exportation, and running them on shore again. You know, Bob, that there are many articles which are not permitted to enter even upon paying duty, and when these goods, such as silks, &c., are seized or taken in prizes, they are sold for exportation. Now, it was then the custom for vessels to take them on board in the river, and run them on shore as they went down Channel, and the fishing-boats were usually employed for this service; my father was a well-known hand for this kind of work, for not being suspected he was always fortunate; of course, had he once been caught, they would have had their eyes upon him after he had suffered his punishment. Now the way my father used to manage was this, there was a long tunnel drain from some houses used as manufactories, about a hundred yards above his cottage, which extended out into the sea at low water mark, and which passed on one side of our cottage. My father had cut from a cellar in the cottage into the drain, and as it was large enough for a man to kneel down in, he used to come in at low water with his coble, and make fast the goods, properly secured from the wet and dirt in tarpaulin bags, to a rope, which led from the cellar to the sea through the drain. When the water had flowed sufficiently to cover the mouth of the drain, he then threw the bags overboard, and, securing the boat, went to the cottage, hauled up the articles, and secured them too; d'ye understand? My father had no one to assist him but my brother, who was a stout fellow, seven years older than myself, and my mother, who used to give a helping hand when required; and thus did he keep his own counsel, and grow rich; when all was right, he got his boat over into the harbour, and having secured her, he came home as innocent as a lamb. I was then about eight or nine years old, and went with my father and brother in the coble, for she required three hands, at least, to manage her properly, and like a tin-pot, although not very big, I was very useful. Now it so happened that my father had notice that a brig, lying in Dover harbour, would sail the next day, and that she had on board of her a quantity of lace and silks, purchased at the Dover custom-house for exportation, which he was to put on shore again to be sent up to London. The sending up to London we had nothing to do with; the agent at Dover managed all that; we only left the articles at his house, and then received the money on the nail. We went to the harbour, where we found the brig hauling out, so we made all haste to get away before her. It blew fresh from the northward and eastward, and there was a good deal of sea running. As we were shoving out, the London agent, a jolly little round-faced fellow, in black clothes, and a bald white head, called to us, and said that he wanted to board a vessel in the offing, and asked whether we would take him. This was all a ruse, as he intended to go on board of the brig with us to settle matters, and then return in the pilot boat. Well, we hoisted our jib, drew aft our foresheet, and were soon

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clear of the harbour; but we found that there was a devil of a sea running, and more wind than we bargained for; the brig came out of the harbour with a flowing sheet, and we lowered down the foresail to reef it—father and brother busy about that, while I stood at the helm, when the agent said to me, 'When do you mean to make a voyage?' 'Sooner than father thinks for,' said I, 'for I want to see the world.' It was sooner than I *thought for* too, as you shall hear. As soon as the brig was well out, we ran down to her, and with some difficulty my father and the agent got on board, for the sea was high and cross, the tide setting against the wind; my brother and I were left in the boat to follow in the wake of the brig; but as my brother was casting off the rope forward, his leg caught in the bight, and into the sea he went; however, they hauled him on board, leaving me alone in the coble. It was not of much consequence, as I could manage to follow before the wind under easy sail, without assistance: so I kept her in the wake of the brig, both of us running nearly before it at the rate of five miles an hour, waiting till my father should have made up his packages, of a proper size to walk through the tunnel drain.

"The Channel was full of ships, for the westerly winds had detained them for a long time. I had followed the brig about an hour, when the agent went on shore in a pilot boat, and I expected my father would soon be ready; then the wind veered more towards the southward, with dirt; at last it came on foggy, and I could hardly see the brig, and as it rained hard, and blew harder, I wished that my father was ready, for my arms ached with steering the coble for so long a while. I could not leave the helm, so I steered on at a black lump, as the brig looked through the fog: at last the fog was so thick that I could not see a yard beyond the boat, and I hardly knew how to steer. I began to be frightened, tired, and cold, and hungry I certainly was. Well, I steered on for more than an hour, when the fog cleared up a little, and then I saw the stern of the brig just before me. My little heart jumped with delight; and I expected that she would round-to immediately, and that my father would praise me for my conduct; and, what was still more to the purpose, that I should get something to eat and drink. But no: she steered on right down Channel, and I followed for more than an hour more, when it came on to blow very hard, and I could scarcely manage the boat—she pulled my little arms off, and I was quite exhausted. The weather now cleared up, and I could make out the vessel plainly; and I immediately discovered that it was not the *brig*, but a bark which I had got hold of in the fog, so that I did not know what to do; but I did as most boys of nine years old would have done who were frightened, I sat down and cried, still, however, keeping the tiller in my hand and steering as well as I could. At last, I could hold it no longer, I ran forward, let go the fore and jib haulyards and hauled down the sails; drag them into the boat I could not, and there I was, like a young bear adrift in a washing-tub. I looked all round me, and there were no vessels near; the bark had left me two miles astern, it was blowing a gale from the S.E., with a heavy sea; the gulls and sea birds wheeled and screamed in the storm; and as I thought, when they came close to me, looked at me with their keen eyes, as much as to say, 'What the devil are you doing there?' The boat was as light as a cork, and although she was tossed and rolled about so that I was obliged to hold on, she shipped no water of any consequence, for the jib in the water forward had brought her head to wind, and acted as a sort of floating anchor. At last there was nothing in sight, so I laid down at the bottom of the boat and fell asleep. It was daylight before I awoke, and then I got up and looked round me—it blew harder than ever; and, although there were some vessels at a distance, scudding before the gale, they did not mind, or perhaps see me. I sat very melancholy the whole day, the tears ran down my cheeks, my eyes were full of salt from the spray—I saw at last nothing but the roaring and trembling waves. I prayed every prayer I knew, that is, I said the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, and as much of the Catechism as I could recollect. It rained in torrents—I was wet, starving, and miserably cold. At night I again fell asleep from exhaustion. The morning broke again, and the sun shone, the gale was breaking off, and I felt more cheered; but I was now ravenous from hunger, as well as choking from thirst, and I was so weak that I could scarcely stand. I looked round me every now and then, and lay down again. In the afternoon I saw a large vessel standing right for me; this gave me courage and strength. I stood up and waved my hat, and they saw me—the sea was still running very high, but the wind had gone down. She rounded-to so as to bring me under her lee. Send a boat she could not, but the sea bore her down upon me, and I was soon close to her. Men in the chains were ready with ropes, and I knew that this was my only chance. At last, a very heavy sea bore her right down upon the boat, lurching over on her beam ends, her main chains struck the boat and sent her down, while I was seized by the scuff of the neck by two of the seamen, and borne aloft by them as the vessel returned to the weather-roll. They hauled me in, and I was safe. It was neck or nothing with me then; wasn't it, Bob?"

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"It was, indeed, a miraculous escape, Cockle." "Well, as soon as they had given me something to eat, I told my story;—and it appeared that she was an East Indiaman running down Channel, and not likely to meet with anything to send me back again. The passengers, especially the ladies, were very kind to me: and as there was no help for it, why, I took my first voyage to the *East Indies*."

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"And your father and your brother?"

"Why, when I met them, which I did about six years afterwards, I found that they had been in much the same predicament, having lost the coble, and the weather being so bad that they could not get on shore again. As there was no help for it, they took their first voyage to the *West Indies*; so there was a dispersion of a united family—two went west, one went east, coble went down, and mother, after waiting a month or two, and supposing father dead, went off with a soldier. All dispersed by one confounded gale of wind from the northward and eastward, so that's the way that I went to sea, Bob. And now it's time that Moonshine was back."

But Moonshine kept us waiting for some time: when he returned it was then quite dark, and we had lighted candles, anxiously waiting for him; for not only was the bottle empty, but we were very hungry. At last we heard a conversation at the gate, and Moonshine made his appearance with the two bottles of spirits, and appeared himself to be also in high spirits. The pork and peas pudding soon were on the table. We dined heartily, and were sitting over the latter part of the first bottle in conversation, it being near upon the eleventh hour, when we heard a noise at the gate—observed some figures of men, who stayed a short time and then disappeared. The door opened, and Moonshine went out. In a few seconds he returned, bringing in his arms an anker of spirits, which he laid on the floor, grinning so wide that his head appeared half off. Without saying a word, he left the room and returned with another.

"Why, what the devil's this?" cried Cockle.

Moonshine made no answer, but went out and in until he had brought six ankers in, one after another, which he placed in a row on the floor. He then shut the outside door, bolted it, came in, and seating himself on one of the tubs, laughed to an excess which compelled him to hold his sides; during which Cockle and I were in a state of astonishment and suspense.

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"Where the devil did all this come from?" cried Cockle, actually getting out of his easy chair. "Tell me, sir, or by——"

"I tell you all, Massa Cockle:—you find me better friend dan Missy O'Bottom. Now you ab plenty, and nebber need scold Moonshine 'pose he take lilly drap. I get all dis present to you, Massa Cockle."

I felt a great degree of anxiety, and pressed Moonshine to tell his story.

"I tell you all, sar. When I come back wid de two bottel I meet plenty men wid de tubs: dey say, 'Hollo there, who be you?' I say, 'I come from station; bring massa two bottel, and I show um.' Den dey say, 'Where you massa?' and I say, 'At um house at Ryde'—(den dey tink dat you my massa, Massa Farren)—so dey say, 'Yes, we know dat, we watch him dere, but now you tell, so we beat you dead.' Den I say, 'What for dat; massa like drink, why you no gib massa some tub, and den he never say noting, only make fuss some time, 'cause of Admirality.' Den dey say, 'You sure of dat?' and I say, 'Quite sure massa nebber say one word.' Den dey talk long while; last, dey come and say, 'You come wid us and show massa house.' So two men come wid me, and when dey come to gate I say, 'Dis massa house when he live at Ryde, and dere you see massa;—and I point to Massa Cockle, but dey see Massa Farren—so dey say, 'All very good; tree, four hour more, you find six tub here; tell you massa dat every time run tub, he alway hab six;' den dey go way, den dey come back, leave tub; dat all, massa."

"You rascal!" exclaimed I, rising up, "so you have compromised me; why I shall lose my commission if found out."

"No, sar; nobody wrong but de smuggler; dey make a lilly mistake; case you brought to court-martial, I gib evidence, and den I clear you."

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"But what must we do with these tubs, Cockle?" said I, appealing to him.

"Do, Bob?—why, they are a present—a very welcome one, and a very handsome one into the bargain. I shall not *keep* them, I pledge you my word; let that satisfy you—they shall all be *fairly entered*."

"Upon that condition, Cockle," I replied, "I shall of course not give information against you." (I knew full well what he meant by saying he would not *keep* them.)

"How I do, Massa Cockle," said Moonshine, with a grave face; "I take um to the custom-house to-night or to-morrow marning."

"To-morrow, Moonshine," replied Cockle; "at present just put them out of sight."

I did not think it prudent to make any further inquiries; but I afterwards discovered that the smugglers, true to their word, and still in error, continued to leave six tubs in old Cockle's garden whenever they succeeded in running a cargo, which, notwithstanding all our endeavours, they constantly did. One piece of information I gained from this affair, which was, the numbers of cargoes which were run compared to those which were seized during the remainder of the time I was on that station, and found it to be in the proportion of ten to one. The cargoes run were calculated by the observations of old Cockle, who, when I called upon him, used to say very quietly, "I shouldn't wonder if they did not run a cargo last night, Bob, in spite of all your vigilance—was it very dark?"

"On the contrary," replied I, looking at the demure face of the negro; "I suspect it was *Moonshine*."

The Fairy's Wand

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In the time of Charles II., Windsor Park stood just where it stands now, and the castle of Windsor was very often the abode of royalty, as it is now; but in those merry, but licentious times, there was much more fun and feasting going on than perhaps there is at present. Rochester was master of the revels, and the Countesses of — but I will say nothing about the ladies, although some of the highest of our aristocracy are descended from them. There were great preparations in the castle, for King Charles had invited down the Mayor of London, and a bevy of aldermen; not so much with a view of doing honour to the magistrates of the great and ancient city, as with the hope to extract some amusement from their peculiarities.

The fact is, that the Mayor and aldermen of London had certified to the Earl of Rochester, that they had some complaint to make and some favour to request of his Majesty. Rochester, ever willing to procure amusement for his royal master, at the same time was equally careful not to allow him to be annoyed, and therefore had contrived to ferret out that the complaint against the lords of the court, was for their too great familiarity with the citizens' wives, and that the favour to be demanded was, a curtailment of the dress, ornaments, and expensive habits of the city ladies.—He considered this a very favourable opportunity for procuring some mirth at the expense of the corporation.

With the consent of the king, he had intimated to the mayor and aldermen, that they would be received in the evening, and honoured with a seat at the royal banquet; and at the same time he had privately made known to the lady mayoress, what were the demands about to be made by her husband, desiring her to communicate the same, under a strict promise of secrecy, to the wives of all the aldermen; and also acquainting them that his Majesty would be glad to receive the ladies on the same evening, provided that they could come without the knowledge of their husbands, which might be done by their setting off for Windsor some short time after them. It was the intention of the king, that when the mayor and corporation should present the address, they should be met face to face by their wives, and thus issue be joined.

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But mortals were not the only parties who revelled in the beauties of the park of Windsor.

On the evening that this comedy was about to be enacted, there reclined under the celebrated oak, known as Herne's Oak, in a small clear space between some ferns, two of those beings called fairies who had for time immemorial taken up their quarters in that delightful retreat. Whether they were man and wife is not established, but certainly they were male and female; and as they appeared to be on the very best understanding, it is to be presumed that they were not married.

"Elda, there will be a scene to-night at the castle," said the male to the female sprite, as he tickled her nose with a blade of grass.

"Yes, Maya; how foolish those mortals are!"

"I have a mind to create even more mischief," rejoined Maya, "but if I did, you would want to see it."

"Well, and suppose I did, dearest?"

"I do not like that you should be in company with those women, Elda; those duchesses and countesses."

"Bless me, Maya!—what are you afraid of? my virtue?"

"Oh no, dearest! I did not mean that——"

"Then I'll tell you what you did mean, you jealous-pated fool: you meant, that you did not like that I should be in the company of the Earl of Rochester and the King. You ought to have more respect for yourself, and more respect for me, than to be jealous of those mortals."

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"Nay, Elda!"

"Yes, yes, and your reason for wanting to go alone, is to hang over that nasty Duchess of Portsmouth."

"Upon my honour!—"

"Your honour, sir!—you have none—there, sir, you may go."

"Oh, very well, madam; just as you please."

Certainly there was something very mortal in this quarrel, and may remind the reader of similar scenes in domestic life.

It ended by Maya walking sulkily away in the direction of the castle, and of Elda following him at a distance, determined to watch his motions.

But if these two lovers had quarrelled, there were two other beings who were indulging in a moonlight walk on the terrace, linked arm-in-arm so affectionately, so fondly, keeping exact pace for pace, and occasionally embracing each other, every one would have thought that nothing in the world could ever have disunited them. They were two young ladies of the court, aged about seventeen, just clear of their governess and bread-and-butter, and newly-appointed maids of honour: they were both beautiful, and had contracted a friendship, as all girls do at that age, when love has with them no precise definition. They had sworn eternal affection after an acquaintance of eight-and-forty hours—the sun and the moon, and all the stars in the firmament

—heaven above, the earth below, and everything below that again, had all been summoned to register their vows; and at the time that they were then walking they would have considered it positive heresy to hint at the idea of a disagreement even in thought; but, as I have before observed, they were only seventeen years old.

Maya, who had bent his steps towards the castle, perceived these two young damsels parading up and down, and although he had not the full power of Oberon, yet he was still a highly-endowed fairy. Among other powers vested in him, he had a wand, which when it touched any fairy would change that fairy into mortal size and shape, and if it touched any mortal would produce the contrary effect, giving them for the time the size and appearance of fairies, imps, tritons, naiads, or some of those intermediate creatures, which most accorded with their mortal propensities and dispositions.

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This very wand made him much feared by the other fairies, as they were often punished by him in this way, and it was only Oberon, the king, who had the power of reversing the charm; and it is said, that this very wand was one cause why his fair Elda, generally speaking, behaved so well, as he often threatened to turn her into a Dutch milkmaid; which, as she was of a very beautiful figure, would have been a very severe punishment.

It was with this wand—worn like a harlequin's at his side—that the fairy Maya was walking up the terrace; he had changed himself to a handsome young forester, dressed in a suit of green, with bugle by his side, a cap with black feathers hanging down to his right shoulder; wearing the appearance of a very handsome young man of about twenty, and just the description of person to create a difference between two young ladies, who had half an hour before sworn everlasting friendship.

As he passed he made a very profound obeisance.

"Who is he, dearest?" said Miss Araminta.

"Who is he, dearest?" said Miss Euthanasia, both nudging one another at the same moment.

"He bowed to *me*, said Araminta.

"No, sweetest, it was to *me* he bowed," rejoined Euthanasia.

"Well I declare!" cried Araminta. What was to follow is not known, for the young forester had retraced his steps and now addressed the young ladies.

"Fair maids of honour, as I presume you are such," said he, taking off his cap, and displaying such handsome curls that each young lady, for the first time, thought how much better it had been if she had walked out alone, "may I inquire the cause of such revelry to-night in the royal castle?"

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"The king entertains—" said Araminta.

"The mayor and aldermen," cried Euthanasia, taking the remainder of the sentence out of her friend's mouth.

"Indeed!" replied the fairy, who then entered into conversation with the young ladies, dividing his attentions as equally as he could.

Now it so happened that Elda, who had followed Maya at a distance, could no longer restrain her jealousy when she perceived him walking and talking so earnestly, and, as she considered, really making love to these fair mortals. She took the shape of a big bumble bee, and flying to him settled on his back, stinging him so severely that he uttered an exclamation of pain; and the young ladies were tenderly enquiring where he was hurt, when he felt convinced that it was Elda who had thus punished him. Fairies have consciences as well as mortals. Maya felt that he was, or what was quite as bad, that he appeared to be, guilty. He had already repented of his quarrel with Elda; and, after receiving the condolence of the two young ladies, who vied in their attentions to him, he very suddenly took leave, resolving in his own mind that he would seek out Elda, and make friends with her, infinitely preferring her to two young bread-and-butter maids of honour. Thus did the fairy prove his good sense, and abandon all idea of making mischief at the castle.

Now it so happened that the sting received from the jealous Elda was so very severe, that in his jump forward Maya had allowed his wand to drop out of his belt, and when he departed he did not perceive his loss. There it lay on the terrace, between the two young maids of honour, who already had discovered that their eternal friendship was on the wane. They both remained silent and watching the receding figure of the handsome young forester for at least a minute and a half. At last this unheard-of duration of silence between two young ladies who had sworn eternal friendship was broken. It proved to be like the calm which precedes the tornado.

"Well, I am sure!" cried Euthanasia.

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"I shouldn't wonder," replied Araminta.

"Courtly manners, indeed!" continued Euthanasia.

"Yes, you may say that; no wonder he wouldn't stay," responded Araminta, tossing her head.

"No; when you drove him away, miss."

"Me, miss?"

"Yes, you, miss."

"No, miss."

"Yes, miss."

I regret to report the scene which followed. After trying hard to drown each other's voices, the two young maids of honour, who had sworn eternal friendship, commenced pushing, then spitting, then slapping, then beating. Then they pulled each other's hair—then—yes, then Araminta perceived the wand lying on the terrace, and she seized it with the intention of chastising Euthanasia; and Euthanasia perceiving her intention, seized hold of the other end of the wand. A struggle took place, which ended in the wand breaking in half. Then they separated, Araminta throwing her half at her dearest friend, her dearest friend returning the compliment; after which, they both ran home to the castle, vowing that nothing should ever induce them even to speak one single word to each other as long as they lived. We must leave them to go to their rooms, wash their pretty faces, and repair the damage done to their dresses, while we inform the reader of what is going on in the reception-room of the castle.

The mayor and corporation had duly arrived, and had been ushered into a private room until his Majesty should be ready to receive them. The Earl of Rochester had detained them there purposely to give time for the arrival of the ladies of the corporation, who were by his directions received at a private door. The king, amused with the scheme, allowed Rochester to make his arrangements. When all was ready, the mayor and aldermen, who had been very comfortably regaled with sherry and biscuits, so that the time did not appear too tedious, were requested to enter the presence-chamber, where the king received them in due form. The mayor, approaching the throne, knelt down and laid at his Majesty's feet the petition, which he was requested by the king to read.

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The preamble set forth that the young nobility of the day were not content with the pleasures of the court, but were in the custom of entering the city on the other side of Temple-bar, creating disturbances, and visiting the wives of his Majesty's dutiful citizens, giving much cause for scandal, "and requesting that in future his Majesty would be pleased to give directions that the nobility should not enter the city without the permission of the corporation, as such would prove most advantageous to the morals of the community."

"Hah!" observed his Majesty, "how is this, my Lord of Rochester? Do our young gallants create disturbances with our good citizens? This must be looked to."

"May it please your Majesty," replied the Earl of Rochester, "assertion is not proof. Here are now twenty-five of the wealthiest citizens of London present, and on their knees before you—they have twenty-five wives—is there any one who will accuse his wife, or his neighbour's wife, of listening to the nonsense of these young nobles? Either they must listen to them, or, if they do not listen to them, there is no harm done."

"Very true," replied the king. "Say, Mr Mayor, where are your proofs of what you have now asserted?"

"May it please your Majesty, women are women," replied the mayor.

"I believe we may admit that, your Majesty," rejoined Rochester, with a smile.

"Yes. In that point I agree with Mr Mayor—go on. What further does this petition contain?"

"A request that your Majesty will pass some law by which our city dames may be prevented from vying in expense with those of the court—to forbid stuffs of gold, or Genoa velvet, to be worn by them—and all ornaments of too high price—which are not suitable to our condition as simple artisans, and very ruinous to our pockets."

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"May it please your Majesty, as any man can legislate for his own household, I think this last clause quite unnecessary. If the good citizens of London cannot afford to pay for such finery they must prevent their wives from purchasing it."

"That is very true," observed his Majesty; "you must prevent it yourselves."

"May it please your Majesty, we cannot," exclaimed the whole deputation, with one voice.

"Well, this is a very serious affair," replied the king, "and it must be laid before a special privy-council. Are you prepared to prove before the council, when you are called on, that your wives have been guilty of listening to these young gallants—have received them, and admitted their familiarities—say, Mr Mayor, and gentlemen, are you prepared to prove this?"

"All are prepared and ready to swear to it," replied the deputation.

"Well then, Mr Mayor, you will have the goodness to retire for a short time while I consult with my council, which I shall immediately summon; and if the facts are as you say, and you prove them, your petition shall be attended to."

The mayor and aldermen, delighted at this gracious reply, rose and humbly backed out of the presence-chamber. As soon as they had retired, the lady mayoress and all the aldermen's wives were ushered in, requested by his Majesty to be seated on chairs ranged round the throne, and

thus was formed King Charles' special council. Rochester read the petition in a merry way, and then his Majesty requested the lady mayoress, as first in rank, to give her opinion.

"May it please your Majesty," said the mayoress, "it is very true that many of the young nobility do come within the city walls and prove good customers to our husbands. As for disturbances, I never heard of any, for our husbands are peaceable men; and as for their paying attention to the ladies, it is in my opinion only paying a compliment to our husbands, as well as to ourselves."

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"Very well argued," replied the king.—"Your opinion, madam, on this first point," continued the king, addressing himself to one of the aldermen's ladies.

"Pray, does your Majesty think it fair," replied the lady, who was very pretty, "that our husbands are to leave us all day long, to add to their heaps of money, which they care for more than they do for us, and that we are not to amuse ourselves in some way? Besides, it can't be wrong, for the king sets the example, and the king can do no wrong."

"May it please your Majesty, that last argument settles the point," observed Rochester; "and I believe I may say, that the whole council are of the same opinion."

The ladies bowed their heads in acquiescence.

"And now as to the other request contained in this petition, that the ladies shall not in future dress in gold stuff, Genoa velvet, and rich ornaments. What say you, ladies?"

"May it please your Majesty," observed an alderman's wife, who had been married a week, "aware of what was to come, we have already discussed the point between ourselves. It is admitted that our husbands leave us alone, and that we are justified in receiving the attentions of the young nobles who so honour us. Now if our husbands stayed with us, and kept us company, we would dress to please them; but as they do not, and we are indebted to others for society, why we must dress accordingly. Courtiers require the splendour of the court, and it is our duty to study to please them, and our husbands' duty to accede to it, as a return for the compliments paid to us."

"This is remarkably good logic, Sire," observed Rochester. "I doubt whether you ever summoned a more wise council."

"A more delightful one, never," replied the king, bowing to the ladies.

"Now we will, if you please, summon in the lord mayor and deputation; and if they are willing, as they say they are, to prove——"

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"Yes, if—" rejoined the lady mayoress; and all the other ladies replied, "Yes, if——"

In a few minutes the deputation made its appearance: the mayor and his colleagues entered the room with joyful anticipations, and fully prepared to prove all that their petition asserted; but what was their dismay when they all beheld their own wives, dressed in stuffs of gold, and Genoa velvet, arranged in a circle round the throne, their eyes flashing fire, and their fans moving with a rapidity that was ever the precursor of a storm. Each dame had singled out her husband, fixed her eyes upon him, and every lord and master had quailed at their lightning flashes. They tottered, rather than walked, up to the throne, and when they again went down upon their knees, each one involuntarily turned round to the direction where his own wife was seated, as if to deprecate her wrath and implore her pardon.

The king bit his lips to control his laughter; Rochester stuffed his handkerchief into his mouth.

"Mr Mayor and gentlemen," said the king, after he had somewhat recovered himself, "I have, as you perceive, summoned a special council to consult on this case; and it has been the decision of the council, that you should now produce these proofs, which you but just now stated you were prepared and willing to do. Mr Mayor, you may proceed, we are all attention."

"May it—please your—ladyship," stammered the mayor.

"It does not please her ladyship," replied the lady mayoress, fanning herself furiously.

"I meant—his Majesty—I would have said—I have no proofs myself to bring forward—but my colleagues are, I believe, well prepared."

"Indeed, Mr Mayor, is it possible that I mistook you? You have no proofs? Well then, who are the other gentlemen who are to bring forward the proofs?"

The deputation answered not.

"My Lord of Rochester, oblige me by putting the question separately to each of these gentlemen."

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The question was put, but not one of the deputation had a proof to bring forward.

"By the mass, but this is strange!" said the king. "But an hour ago they all had proofs, and now they have not one. This is trifling with us, Mr Mayor—an insult to the throne and council. Speak, sir, what means this?"

"May it please your Majesty—it means—that we beg pardon of your Majesty—and of the special council."

"And your petition?"

"Is withdrawn, if it so please your Majesty," said the mayor, looking round to the aldermen.

"Yes, your Majesty, is withdrawn."

"For myself, Mr Mayor, I accept your excuses, and you have my pardon; but as for the special council, I must leave you to settle with it how you can.—Ladies, a banquet is prepared; when summoned, it will depend upon yourselves, whether you come alone or attended by the mayor and deputation. Come, my Lord of Rochester, we will not interfere in the arrangements, which will take place better when we are out of the way."

So saying, the king quitted the presence-chamber with the Earl of Rochester, leaving the ladies seated, and their husbands still kneeling. We shall not dwell upon what took place after the departure of the king; one thing is certain, that the fair sex are very merciful, and as their husbands promised them that in future they should have their own way, dress as they pleased, receive whom they pleased, and spend what money they pleased, the ladies very kindly and magnanimously forgave their spouses; and when they were summoned to the banquet, each lady entered the hall, hanging on the arm of her husband.

This happy reconciliation was duly celebrated. Wine flowed, bumper after bumper was drunk, pledge succeeded to pledge, and it was long past midnight before the carouse was over. The moon shone bright, and heated with the wine, Rochester proposed to the ladies that they should take a walk on the terrace before they ordered their carriages to go home. It must be confessed that the ladies had not been so cautious as they ought to have been, and that their steps were not very steady; but could a lady refuse to drink wine with a king or an Earl of Rochester? No! and the consequence was, that they all were merry, and some of them more than merry. As for the husbands, they were reeling and tumbling in all directions, and the terrace-wall, wide as it was, was not sufficiently wide for them. Rochester led the way, and all was fun and merry laughter.

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The party had not proceeded far, when a little altercation took place between the mayoress and the alderman's wife who had given her opinion after her in the council; for it so happened that as they sauntered along, the mayoress had picked up one portion of the broken wand, and the alderman's lady the other. The wand was of ebony, and highly polished—each would possess herself of the half in the hands of the other, and thus commenced the dispute; and it ended, as all disputes between ladies will end, if they happen to have a stick in their hands when they quarrel, by their beating each other. The mayoress gave the alderman's wife a slap with her part of the wand—it was immediately returned—when lo and behold—

It must be here explained, that although the wand when entire had the power of changing people as we have described, yet when broken, its power was divided between the two parts; the one end retaining its half power of changing only the upper portion of the figure, while the other could only change the lower half.

The blows were exchanged. The mayoress, who was a tall woman, immediately sank down a foot and a half, the upper portion of her plump body was now resting upon the two diminutive legs of a two-feet-high fairy—which could only make a stride of six inches at a time. The alderman's lady, on the contrary, retained her lower portion of her body; but instead of her lovely face, and graceful neck, she carried a little round head and shoulders, such as is represented in the figure of Puck. They must all have been very tipsy, for the others thought that they had put on masquerade dresses—the sticks were seized, one by Rochester, the other by the king, and they struck right and left—the lord mayor had the head and beard of a satyr—Rochester had the feet of a goat—the king appeared to have the bust of a beautiful woman, with a pair of splendid blue gossamer wings to his shoulders—one of the aldermen found himself with a naiad's tail, and he fell flat on the terrace, with great violence; all of them, men and women, were transformed into some shape or another—and the more strange the metamorphosis, the louder they all laughed and shouted. Some indeed were very much alarmed; particularly one little woman, who whispered to her neighbour, that she believed she was a little man.

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But the scene did not end here: the two parts of the wand found their way into other hands, who as they capered and jumped beat their companions. King Charles, struck by the lower part of the wand, found his transformation complete—he was now a lovely woman;—Rochester was turned by a blow, into a perfect satyr—while the mayoress, struck by the same portion, sank down into a little fairy not two feet high. As the sticks were passed round there was no end to the transformations: the fat alderman who had fallen down with a fish's tail, now became a perfect naiad, with long hair, and a comb in his hand. Such was the noise and confusion, that the two little maids of honour came out on the terrace to witness this strange revelling. Rochester seized them and kissed them as they screamed with fright at his shaggy beard—the wand was applied to them, and they too were transformed. The Duchess of Portsmouth opened her chamber-window, and perceiving the wild revelling resolved to indulge his Majesty with a good curtain-lecture; but he heard her not.

"To the oak of Herne the hunter," cried the king; "away to the oak!"

"To the oak! to the oak!" shouted the whole bacchanalian crew; and away they flew across the park, starting the quiescent deer with their shouts, their laughter, and their revelry. Rochester took the naiad under his arm, that she might not be left behind, and dancing, capering, tumbling, and getting up again, led by the merry king, who now was a beautiful fairy, they arrived there out of breath.

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But before they had reached the oak, their noise had disturbed the slumber of one happy pair who had nestled in each other's arms among the fern.

It was Maya and Elda—who had met, and had been reconciled, proving that with fairies, the quarrels of lovers are but the renewal of love; not the case, although supposed to be so, with us mortals. Maya had missed his wand, but he would not leave Elda to return for it—he intended to have searched for it the next morning.

"What is all that noise, dearest?" cried Elda, waking up and resting on her elbow, as she listened.

"What can it be, but the mad king at his pranks as usual?" replied Maya, who had risen on his feet. "But what is here? I see—I see how it is—they have found my wand and must have broken it; for it does not otherwise do things by halves."

As Maya said this, the king with his companions arrived under the oak-tree—Elda retired to a distance, while Maya soon regained the two parts of his wand from the hands of the intoxicated parties, who had possession of them.

"I shall have work to-night, and must repair this mischief," said Maya. "Elda, dearest, hasten and bring me poppy-juice to seal up the eyes of these mad people."

In a few minutes Elda had executed her commission; the whole company were now seated in a circle, singing songs, hugging one another, all merry but the two little maids of honour, who not having taken wine, were horrified at the transformation—they sat together and cried as if their little hearts would break.

Maya pressed the poppy-juice on the eyes of each individual, and in a few seconds they were all in a profound sleep. He then examined the transformations, and completed those which were partial above or below—till then he could not repair his wand. When they were all transformed, he put the two parts of his wand together, breathed upon them, and the wand was reunited. He then went round the circle, touched each person, and the whole company resumed their original forms.

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"So far have I done my part," observed Maya. "As for colds, catarrhs, fevers, agues, they deserve all they may catch. Now, Elda, let us once more retire to rest."

The leaves of the old oak-tree were gilded with the rays of the morning sun, before King Charles and his companions awoke, and very much astonished they were to find themselves in such a place and at such an hour—the ladies blushed and canvassed the affair among themselves—they recollected the transformations, they remembered their setting off for the Hunter's Oak—but still they were confused. The mayor and aldermen were puzzled—not so much at finding themselves asleep under the tree, but that their wives should be there also. The king and Rochester were the only two who appeared indifferent.

"Come, ladies—come, my lord mayor and gentlemen of the corporation, we have had a merry night of it, and have slept under the greenwood tree, now let us in to the toilet, and then to breakfast."

He offered his arm to the lady mayoress, the rest of the company followed—they hastened to the toilet—they ate their breakfasts, and then hastened back to the good city of London.

"Well," said the king, as soon as the company had departed, "what think you of this, Rochester—were we visited by the fairies last night, think you?"

"May it please your Majesty," replied the earl, "my opinion is that either we were in the hands of the fairies, or else——"

"Else what?"

"Or else, Sire, we were all most confoundedly drunk."



A Rencontre

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One evening I was sitting alone in the *salle à manger* of the *Couronne d'Or*, at Boulogne, when Colonel G—, an old acquaintance, came in. After the first greeting he took a chair, and was soon as busily occupied as I was with a cigar, which was occasionally removed from our lips as we asked and replied to questions as to what had been our pursuits subsequent to our last rencontre. After about half an hour's chit-chat, he observed, as he lighted a fresh cigar—

"When I was last in this room I was in company with a very strange personage."

"Male or female?" inquired I.

"Female," replied Colonel G—. "Altogether it's a story worth telling, and as it will pass away the time, I will relate it you—unless you wish to retire."

As I satisfied him that I was not anxious to go to bed, and very anxious to hear his story, he narrated it as near as I can recollect in the following words:—

"I had taken my place in the diligence from Paris, and when I arrived at *Notre Dame des Victoires* it was all ready for a start; the luggage, piled up as high as an English haystack, had been covered over and buckled down, and the *conducteur* was calling out for the passengers. I took my last hasty whiff of my cigar, and unwillingly threw away more than half of a really good Havannah; for I perceived that in the *intérieur*, for which I had booked myself, there was one female already seated: and women and cigars are such great luxuries in their respective ways, that they are not to be indulged in at one and the same time—the world would be too happy, and happiness, we are told, is not for us here below. Not that I agree with that moral, although it comes from very high authority;—there is a great deal of happiness in this world, if you knew how to extract it; or rather, I should say, of pleasure: there is a pleasure in doing good; there is a pleasure, unfortunately, in doing wrong; there is a pleasure in looking forward, ay, and in looking backward also; there is pleasure in loving and being loved, in eating, in drinking, and though last, not least, in smoking. I do not mean to say that there are not the drawbacks of pain, regret, and even remorse; but there is a sort of pleasure even in them: it is pleasant to repent, because you know that you are doing your duty; and if there is no great pleasure in pain, it precedes an excess when it has left you. I say again, that, if you know how to extract it, there is a great deal of pleasure and of happiness in this world, especially if you have, as I have, a very bad memory.

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"*Allons, Messieurs!*" said the *conducteur*; and when I got in I found myself the sixth person, and opposite to the lady; for all the other passengers were of my own sex. Having fixed our hats up to the roof, wriggled and twisted a little so as to get rid of coat-tails, etc., all of which was effected previous to our having cleared *Rue Notre Dame des Victoires*, we began to scrutinise each other. Our female companion's veil was down and doubled, so that I could not well make her out; my other four companions were young men, all Frenchmen, apparently good-tempered, and inclined to be agreeable. A few seconds were sufficient for my reconnoitre of the gentlemen, and then my

eyes were naturally turned towards the lady. She was muffled up in a winter cloak, so that her figure was not to be made out; and the veil still fell down before her face, so that only one cheek and a portion of her chin could be deciphered:—that fragment of her physiognomy was very pretty, and I watched in silence for the removal of the veil.

"I have omitted to state that, before I got into the diligence, I saw her take a very tender adieu of a very handsome woman; but as her back was turned to me at the time, I did not see her face. She had now fallen back in her seat, and seemed disposed to commune with her own thoughts: that did not suit my views, which were to have a view of her face. Real politeness would have induced me to have left her to herself, but pretended politeness was resorted to that I might gratify my curiosity; so I inquired if she wished the window up. The answer was in the negative, and in a very sweet voice; and then there was a pause, of course—so I tried again.

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"'You are melancholy at parting with your handsome sister,' observed I, leaning forward with as much appearance of interest as I could put into my beautiful phiz.

"'How could you have presumed that she was my sister?' replied she.

"'From the *strong family* likeness,' rejoined I, 'I felt certain of it.'

"'But she is only my sister-in-law, sir—my brother's wife.'

"'Then, I presume, he chose a wife as like his sister as he could find: nothing more natural—I should have done the same.'

"'Sir you are very polite,' replied the lady, who lowered down the window, adding, 'I like fresh air.'

"'Perhaps you will find yourself less incommoded if you take off your veil?'

"'I will not ascribe that proposition to curiosity on your part, sir,' replied the lady, 'as you have already seen my face.'

"'You cannot, then, be surprised at my wishing to see it once more.'

"'You are very polite, sir.'

"Although her voice was soft, there was a certain quickness and decision in her manner and language which were very remarkable. The other passengers now addressed her, and the conversation became general. The veiled lady took her share in it, and showed a great deal of smartness and repartee. In an hour more we were all very intimate. As we changed horses, I took down my hat to put into it my cigar-case, which I had left in my pocket, upon which the lady observed, 'You smoke, I perceive; and so, I dare say, do all the rest of the gentlemen.—Now, do not mind me; I am fond of the smell of tobacco—I am used to it.'

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"We hesitated.

"'Nay, more, I smoke myself, and will take a cigar with you.'

"This was decisive. I offered my cigar-case—another gentleman struck a light. Lifting up her veil so as to show a very pretty mouth, with teeth as white as snow, she put the cigar in her mouth, and set us the example. In a minute both windows were down, and every one had a cigar in his mouth.

"'Where did you learn to smoke, madam?' was a question put to the *incognita* by the passenger who sat next to her.

"'Where?—In the camp—Africa—everywhere. I did belong to the army—that is, my husband was one of the captains of the 47th. He was killed, poor man! in the last successful expedition to Constantine:—*c'était un brave homme*.'

"'Indeed! Were you at Constantine?'

"'Yes, I was; I followed the army during the whole campaign.'

"The diligence stopped for supper or dinner, whichever it might be considered, and the *conducteur* threw open the doors. 'Now,' thought I, 'we shall see her face,' and so, I believe, thought the other passengers: but we were mistaken; the lady went upstairs and had a basin of soup taken to her. When all was ready we found her in the diligence, with her veil down as before.

"This was very provoking, for she was so lively and witty in conversation, and the features of her face which had been disclosed were so perfect, that I was really quite on a fret that she would leave me without satisfying my curiosity:—they talk of woman's curiosity, but we men have as much, after all. It became dark;—the lady evidently avoided further conversation, and we all composed ourselves as well as we could. It may be as well to state in few words, that the next morning she was as cautious and reserved as ever. The diligence arrived at this hotel—the passengers separated—and I found that the lady and I were the only two who took up our quarters there. At all events, the Frenchmen who travelled with us went away just as wise as they came.

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"'You remain here?' inquired I as soon as we had got out of the diligence.

"Yes,' replied she. 'And you—'

"I remain here, certainly; but I hope you do not intend to remain always veiled. It is too cruel of you.'

"I must go to my room now and make myself a little more comfortable; after that, Mons l'Anglais, I will speak to you. You are going over in the packet, I presume?'

"I am: by to-morrow's packet.'

"I shall put myself under your protection, for I am also going to London.'

"I shall be most delighted.'

"*Au revoir.*'

"About an hour afterwards a message was brought to me by the *garçon*, that the lady would be happy to receive me in No. 19. I ascended to the second floor, knocked, and was told to come in.

"She was now without a veil; and what do you think was her reason for the concealment of her person?"

"By the beard of Mokhanna, how can I tell?"

"Well, then, she had two of the most beautiful eyes in the world; her eyebrows were finely arched; her forehead was splendid; her mouth was tempting—in short, she was as pretty as you could wish a woman to be, only she had *broken her nose*—a thousand pities, for it must once have been a very handsome one. Well, to continue, I made my bow.

"You perceive, now, sir,' said she, 'why I wore my veil down.'

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"No, indeed,' replied I.

"You are very polite, or very blind,' rejoined she: 'the latter I believe not to be the fact. I did not choose to submit to the impertinence of my own countrymen in the diligence: they would have asked me a hundred questions upon my accident. But you are an Englishman, and have respect for a female who has been unfortunate.'

"I trust I deserve your good opinion, madam; and if I can be in any way useful to you——'

"You can. I shall be a stranger in England. I know that in London there is a great man, one Monsieur Lis-tong, who is very clever.'

"Very true, madam. If your nose, instead of having been slightly injured as it is, had been left behind you in Africa, Mr Liston would have found you another.'

"If he will only repair the old one, I ask no more. You give me hopes. But the bones are crushed completely, as you must see.'

"That is of no consequence. Mr Liston has put a new eye in, to my knowledge. The party was short-sighted, and saw better with the one put in by Mr Liston, than with the one which had been left him.'

"*Est-il possible? Mais, quel homme extraordinaire!* Perhaps you will do me the favour to sit with me, monsieur; and, if I mistake not, you have a request to make of me—*n'est-ce pas?*'

"I feel such interest about you, madam, that I acknowledge, if it would not be too painful to you, I should like to ask a question.'

"Which is, How did I break my nose?—Of course you want to know. And as it is the only return I can make for past or future obligations to you, you shall most certainly be gratified. I will not detain you now. I shall expect you to supper. Adieu, monsieur.'

"I did not, of course, fail in my appointment; and after supper she commenced:—

"The question to be answered,' said she, 'is, How did you break your nose?—Is it not? Well, then, at least, I shall answer it after my own fashion. So, to begin at the beginning, I am now just twenty-two years old. My father was tambour-major in the Garde Impériale. I was born in the camp—brought up in the camp—and, finally, I was married in the camp, to a lieutenant of infantry at the time. So that, you observe, I am altogether *militaire*. As a child, I was wakened up with the drum and fife, and went to sleep with the bugles; as a girl, I became quite conversant with every military manœuvre; and now that I am a woman grown, I believe that I am more fit for the *bâton* than one half of those marshals who have gained it. I have studied little else but tactics; and have, as my poor husband said, quite a genius for them—but of that hereafter. I was married at sixteen, and have ever since followed my husband. I followed him at last to his grave. He quitted my bed for the bed of honour, where he sleeps in peace. We'll drink to his memory.'

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"We emptied our glasses, when she continued:—

"My husband's regiment was not ordered to Africa until after the first disastrous attempt upon Constantine. It fell to our lot to assist in retrieving the honour of our army in the more successful expedition which took place, as you of course are aware, about three months ago. I will not detain you with our embarkation or voyage. We landed from a steamer at Bona, and soon afterwards my husband's company were ordered to escort a convoy of provisions to the army

which were collecting at Mzez Ammar. Well, we arrived safely at our various camps of Dréan, Nech Meya, and Amman Berda. We made a little *détour* to visit Ghelma. I had curiosity to see it, as formerly it was an important city. I must say that a more tenable position I never beheld. But I tire you with these details.'

"On the contrary, I am delighted.'

"You are very good. I ought to have said something about the travelling in these wild countries, which is anything but pleasant. The soil is a species of clay, hard as a flint when the weather is dry, but running into a slippery paste as soon as moistened. It is, therefore, very fatiguing, especially in wet weather, when the soldiers slip about, in a very laughable manner to look at, but very distressing to themselves. I travelled either on horseback or in one of the waggons, as it happened. I was too well known, and I hope I may add, too well liked, not to be as well provided for as possible. It is remarkable how soon a Frenchman will make himself comfortable, wherever he may chance to be. The camp of Mzez Ammar was as busy and as lively as if it was pitched in the heart of France. The followers had built up little cabins out of the branches of trees, with their leaves on, interwoven together, all in straight lines, forming streets, very commodious, and perfectly impervious to the withering sun. There were *restaurants, cafés, débits de vin et eau-de-vie*, sausage-sellers, butchers, grocers—in fact, there was every trade almost, and everything you required; not very cheap certainly, but you must recollect that this little town had sprung up, as if by magic, in the heart of the desert.

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"It was in the month of September that Damrémont ordered a *reconnaissance* in the direction of Constantine, and a battalion of my husband's regiment, the 47th, was ordered to form a part of it. I have said nothing about my husband. He was a good little man, and a brave officer, full of honour, but very obstinate. He never would take advice, and it was nothing but "*Tais-toi, Coralie,*" all day long—but no one is perfect. He wished me to remain in the camp, but I made it a rule never to be left behind. We set off, and I rode in one of the little carriages called *cacolets*, which had been provided for the wounded. It was terrible travelling, I was jolted to atoms in the ascent of the steep mountain called the Rass-el-akba; but we gained the summit without a shot being fired. When we arrived there, and looked down beneath us, the sight was very picturesque. There were about four or five thousand of the Arab cavalry awaiting our descent; their white bournous, as they term the long dresses in which they enfold themselves, waving in the wind as they galloped at full speed in every direction; while the glitter of their steel arms flashed like lightning upon your eyes. We closed our ranks and descended; the Arabs, in parties of forty or fifty, charging upon our flanks every minute, not coming to close conflict, but stopping at pistol-shot distance, discharging their guns and then wheeling off again to a distance—mere child's play, sir; nevertheless there were some of our men wounded, and the little waggon upon which I was riding was ordered up in the advance to take them in. Unfortunately, to keep clear of the troops, the driver kept too much on one side of the narrow defile through which we passed; the consequence was, that the waggon upset, and I was thrown out a considerable distance down the precipice—'

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"And broke your nose,' interrupted I.

"No indeed, sir, I did not. I escaped with only a few contusions about the region of the hip, which certainly lamed me for some time, and made the jolting more disagreeable than ever. Well, the *reconnaissance* succeeded. Damrémont was, however, wrong altogether. I told him so when I met him; but he was an obstinate old fool, and his answer was not as polite as it might have been, considering that at that time I was a very pretty woman. We returned to the camp at Mzez Ammar; a few days afterwards we were attacked by the Arabs, who showed great spirit and determination in their desultory mode of warfare, which, however, can make no impression on such troops as the French. The attack was continued for three days, when they decamped as suddenly as they had come. But this cannot be very interesting to you, monsieur.'

"On the contrary, do not, I beg, leave out a single remark or incident.'

"You are very good. I presume you know how we *militaires* like to fight our battles over again. Well, sir, we remained in camp until the arrival of the Duc de Nemours—a handsome, fair lad, who smiled upon me very graciously. On the 1st of October we set off on our expedition to Constantine; that is to say, the advanced guard did, of which my husband's company formed a portion. The weather which had been very fine, now changed, and it rained hard all the day. The whole road was one mass of mud, and there was no end to delays and accidents. However, the weather became fine again, and on the 5th we arrived within two leagues of Constantine, when the Arabs attacked us, and I was very nearly taken prisoner.'

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"Indeed!'

"Yes; my husband, who, as I before observed to you, was very obstinate, would have me ride on a *caisson* in the rear; whereas I wished to be in the advance, where my advice might have been useful. The charge of the Arabs was very sudden; the three men who were with the *caisson* were sabred, and I was in the arms of a chieftain, who was wheeling round his horse to make off with me when a ball took him in the neck, and he fell with me. I disengaged myself, seized the horse by the bridle, and prevented its escape; and I also took possession of the Arab's pistols and scimitar.'

"Indeed!'

"My husband sold the horse the next day to one of our generals, who forgot to pay for it after my

husband was killed. As for the scimitar and pistols, they were stolen from me that night: but what can you expect?—our army is brave, but a little demoralised. The next day we arrived before Constantine, and we had to defile before the enemy's guns. At one portion of the road, men and horses were tumbled over by their fire; the *caisson* that I was riding upon was upset by a ball, and thrown down the ravine, dragging the horses after it. I lay among the horses' legs—they kicking furiously; it was a miracle that my life was preserved: as it was——'

"'You broke your nose,' interrupted I.

"'No, sir, indeed I did not. I only received a kick on the arm, which obliged me to carry it in a sling for some days. The weather became very bad; we had few tents, and they were not able to resist the storms of rain and wind. We wrapped ourselves up how we could and sat in deep pools of water, and the Arabs attacked us before we could open the fire of our batteries; we were in such a pickle that, had the bad weather lasted, we must have retreated; and happy would those have been who could have once more found themselves safe in the camp of Mzez Ammar. I don't think that I ever suffered so much as I did at that time—the weather had even overcome the natural gallantry of our nation; and so far from receiving any attention, the general remark to me was, "What the devil do *you* do here?" This to be said to a pretty woman!'

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"'It was not till the 10th that we could manage to open the fire of our batteries. It was mud, mud, and mud again; the men and horses were covered with mud up to their necks—the feathers of the staff were covered with mud—every ball which was fired by the enemy sent up showers of mud; even the face of the Duc de Nemours was disfigured with it. I must say that our batteries were well situated, all except the great mortar battery. This I pointed out to Damrémont when he passed me, and he was very savage. Great men don't like to be told of their faults; however, he lost his life three days afterwards from not taking my advice. He was going down the hill with Rulhières when I said to him, 'Mon Général, you expose yourself too much; that which is duty in a subaltern is a fault in a general.' He very politely told me to go to where he may chance to be himself now; for a cannon-ball struck him a few seconds afterwards, and he was killed on the spot. General Perrégaux was severely wounded almost at the same time. For four days the fighting was awful; battery answered to battery night and day: while from every quarter of the compass we were exposed to the fierce attacks of the Arab cavalry. The commander of our army sent a flag of truce to their town, commanding them to surrender; and, what do you think was the reply?—"If you want powder, we'll supply you; if you are without bread, we will send it to you: but as long as there is one good Mussulman left alive you do not enter the town."—Was not that grand? The very reply, when made known to the troops, filled them with admiration of their enemy, and they swore by their colours that if ever they overpowered them they would give them no quarter.

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"'In two days, General Vallée, to whom the command fell upon the death of Damrémont, considered the breach sufficiently wide for the assault, and we every hour expected that the order would be given. It came at last. My poor husband was in the second column which mounted. Strange to say, he was very melancholy on that morning, and appeared to have a presentiment of what was to take place. "Coralie," said he to me, as he was scraping the mud off his trousers with his pocket-knife, "if I fall, you will do well. I leave you as a legacy to General Vallée—he will appreciate you. Do not forget to let him know my testamentary dispositions."

"'I promised I would not. The drums beat. He kissed me on both cheeks. "Go, my Philippe," said I; "go to glory." He did; for a mine was sprung, and he with many others was blown to atoms. I had watched the advance of the column, and was able to distinguish the form of my dear Philippe when the explosion with the vast column of smoke took place. When it cleared away, I could see the wounded in every direction hastening back; but my husband was not among them. In the meantime the other columns entered the breach—the firing was awful, and the carnage dreadful. It was more than an hour after the assault commenced before the French tricolor waved upon the minarets of Constantine.

"'It was not until the next day that I could make up my mind to search for my husband's body; but it was my duty. I climbed up the breach, strewn with the corpses of our brave soldiers, intermingled with those of the Arabs; but I could not find my husband. At last a head which had been blown off attracted my attention. I examined it—it was my Philippe's, blackened and burnt, and terribly disfigured: but who can disguise the fragment of a husband from the keen eyes of the wife of his bosom? I leaned over it. "My poor Philippe!" exclaimed I; and the tears were bedewing my cheeks when I perceived the Duc de Nemours close to me, with all his staff attending him. "What have we here?" said he, with surprise, to those about him. "A wife, looking for her husband's body, mon Prince," replied I. "I cannot find it; but here is his head." He said something very complimentary and kind, and then walked on. I continued my search without success, and determined to take up my quarters in the town. As I clambered along, I gained a battered wall; and, putting my foot on it, it gave with me, and I fell down several feet. Stunned with the blow, I remained for some time insensible; when I came to, I found——"

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"'That you had broken your nose.'

"'No, indeed; I had sprained my ankle and hurt the cap of my knee, but my nose was quite perfect. You must have a little patience yet.

"'What fragments of my husband were found, were buried in a large grave, which held the bodies and the mutilated portions of the killed; and, having obtained possession of an apartment in Constantine, I remained there several days, lamenting his fate. At last it occurred to me that his

testamentary dispositions should be attended to, and I wrote to General Vallée, informing him of the last wishes of my husband. His reply was very short: it was, that he was excessively flattered, but press of business would not permit him to administer to the will. It was not polite.

"On the 26th I quitted Constantine with a convoy of wounded men. The dysentery and the cholera made fearful ravages, and I very soon had a *caisson* all to myself. The rain again came on in torrents, and it was a dreadful funeral procession. Every minute wretches, jolted to death, were thrown down into pits by the roadside, and the cries of those who survived were dreadful. Many died of cold and hunger; and after three days we arrived at the camp of Mzez Ammar, with the loss of more than one-half of our sufferers.

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"I took possession of one of the huts built of the boughs of the trees which I formerly described; and had leisure to think over my future plans and prospects. I was young and pretty, and hope did not desert me. I had recovered my baggage, which I had left at the camp, and was now able to attend to my toilet. The young officers who were in the camp paid me great attention, and were constantly passing and repassing to have a peep at the handsome widow, as they were pleased to call me; and now comes the history of my misfortune.

"The cabin built of boughs which I occupied was double; one portion was fenced off from the other with a wattling of branches, which ran up about seven feet, but not so high as the roof. In one apartment I was located, the other was occupied by a young officer who paid me attention, but who was not to my liking. I had been walking out in the cool of the evening and had returned, when I heard voices in the other apartment; I entered softly and they did not perceive my approach; they were talking about me, and I must say that the expressions were very complimentary. At last one of the party observed, "Well, she is a splendid woman, and a good soldier's wife. I hope to be a general by-and-bye, and she would not disgrace a marshal's baton. I think I shall propose to her before we leave the camp."

"Now, sir, I did not recognise the speaker by his voice, and, flattered by the remark, I was anxious to know who it could be who was thus prepossessed in my favour. I thought that if I could climb up on the back of the only chair which was in my apartment, I should be able to see over the partition and satisfy my curiosity. I did so, and without noise; and I was just putting my head over to take a survey of the tenants of the other apartment when the chair tilted, and down I came on the floor, and on my face. Unfortunately, I hit my nose upon the edge of the frying-pan, with which my poor Philippe and I used to cook our meat: and now, sir, you know how it was that I broke my nose.'

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"What a pity!" observed I.

"Yes; a great pity. I had gone through the whole campaign without any serious accident, and— But after all it was very natural: the two besetting evils of women are Vanity and Curiosity, and if you were to ascertain the truth, you would find that it is upon these two stumbling-blocks that most women are upset and break their noses.'

"Very true, madam,' replied I. 'I thank you for your narrative, and shall be most happy to be of any use to you. But I will detain you from your rest no longer, so wish you a very good night."

"Well, Colonel," said I, as he made a sudden stop, "what occurred after that?"

"I took great care of her until we arrived in London, saw her safe to the hotel in Leicester Square, and then took my leave. Whether Liston replaced her nose, and she is now *flanée*-ing about Paris, as beautiful as before her accident; or, whether his skill was useless to her, and she is among the *Sœurs de Charite*, or in a convent, I cannot say: I have never seen or heard of her since."

"Well, I know Liston, and I'll not forget to ask him about her the very first time that I meet him. Will you have another cigar?"

"No, I thank you. I've finished my cigar, my bottle, and my story, and so now good-night!"

THE END.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OLLA PODRIDA ***

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