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EDINBURGH

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DELAWARE;

OR

THE RUINED FAMILY.

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

**PRINTED FOR ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH;
AND WHITTAKER & CO., LONDON.
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PREFACE.

Not many years ago, as the writer of this work was returning on horseback to Castellamare, from a visit to the Lactarian Hills, he overtook, just under the chestnut trees on the slope, which every one who has visited that part of Italy must remember, two gentlemen with their guide, who were on their way home after some expedition of a kind similar to his own.

As the indefinable something told him at once that they were Englishmen, he turned, as usual under such circumstances, to examine them more critically in passing, and in one of them recollected a person whom he had met more than once in London. He hesitated whether he should claim the acquaintance; as, when he had before seen him, the traveller had appeared to great disadvantage. A man of rank and fortune, flattered, caressed, single, and set at, he had borne a sort of sneering indifference on his countenance, which certainly did not recommend him to a person who neither sought his friendship nor feared his contempt. A few traits, indeed, had casually appeared, which seemed to betray a better spirit beneath this kind of supercilious exterior; but still the impression was unfavourable.

All hesitation, however, was put an end to by a bow and friendly recognition on the part of the other; and either because the annoyances of the society in which he had formerly been met, were now removed, or because a general improvement had worked itself in his demeanour and character, his tone was so different, and his aspect so prepossessing, that all feelings of dislike were soon done away. He instantly made his "dear, new-found friend" acquainted with his companion; and informing him that he had left his wife and sister at the Albergo Reale, invited him to join their party for the evening.

This was accordingly done, and now--having ridden the third person long enough, as it is the roughest going horse in the stable--I will, with the reader's permission, do the next ten miles on the first person singular.

The acquaintance which was there renewed soon went on to intimacy; and as I found that the party which I had met with, consisted of an odd number, the unfortunate fifth being an old gentleman, who required some one more of his own age than his four relations to converse with, I ventured to propose myself as their companion in a visit to some places in the neighbourhood,

and as their cicerone to Pæstum. The proposal was accepted; and, strange enough to say, our companionship, which had commenced so suddenly, did not end till those I may now boldly call my friends returned to England, nearly a year after, leaving me to stupify at Lauzanne.

Amongst the many pleasures which I derived from their society in Italy, none was greater than that which some account of their preceding adventures gave me. This was first obtained in a casual manner, by hearing continual reference made amongst themselves to particular circumstances. "Do you remember, Henry, such and such an event? Does not that put you in mind of this, that, or the other?" was continually ringing in my ears; and thus I gathered part ere the whole was continuously related to me. At length, I obtained a complete narrative; and though it was told with many a gay and happy jest, and many a reference to details which would not amuse the world in general, I could not help thinking that the public might find it nearly as interesting as it proved to me.

In the same sort of gossiping anecdotal style in which I received it, I have here, with full permission, put down the whole story. In what tongue under the sun I have written it, I do not very well know, though the language I intended to employ is a sort of jargon, based upon Anglo-Saxon, with a superstructure of the Norman corruption of French, propped up by bad Latin, and having the vacancies supplied by Greek. Taking it for granted, that into this refuge for destitute tongues, any houseless stranger would be welcome, whenever I was not able to find readily a word or expression to my purpose, I have either made one for myself, or stolen one from the first language at hand; and as this has been done in all ages, I make no apology for it here.

I have reason, however, to believe that I have more sins to answer for amongst the technical terms, and other more important matters. My worthy lawyer, Mr. W---, tells me that my law is not sound; that, instead of *indicted* I should have said *arraigned*; instead of *action* I should have used the word *process*--or the reverse, I forget which. My gallant friend, Captain D---, has taken much pains to explain to me the difference between a *yawl* and a *Peter boat*, and has utterly confounded me with a definition of *clinker built*; and my noble friend, Lord A---, declares that I have certainly painted both his foibles and his adventures in somewhat strong colours; but if, by so doing, I make a better book of it--why, let it pass.

For all this I apologize to the public in general, acknowledging that I am neither lawyer nor physician, soldier nor sailor, scholar nor philosopher, nor what the cant of a former day denominated a man of wit about town. Whoever reads the book, will see all this at a glance; but I trust they will also see that I have not drawn from things of marble, but from flesh and blood.

To one portion of his Britannic Majesty's subjects I have particularly to apologize. Since this book went to the press, I have discovered, from Cary's Road-Book, that there is a real village, or hamlet, or town, called Emberton; and I hereby most solemnly declare, that, in fixing upon that name as the scene of my chief adventures, I believed I was employing an entirely fictitious title, and did so for the sole purpose of concealing the real place at which some of the events occurred. Let it be remembered, therefore, by all persons who have seen, heard, or known any thing of the village, town, or hamlet of Emberton, that, in writing this book, I did not know that such a place did truly exist, and that nothing herein contained, is in any way to be understood or construed to apply to the real place called Emberton or its inhabitants, referring solely to a different spot in a different county, which shall, by the reader's good leave, be nameless.

INNERLEITHEN,
25th May, 1833.

DELAWARE;

OR,

THE RUINED FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

Most cities are hateful; and, without any disposition to "babble about green fields," it must be owned that each is more or less detestable. Nevertheless, amongst them all, there is none to be compared as a whole to London;--none which comprehends within itself, from various causes, so much of the sublime in every sort. Whether we consider its giant immensity of expanse--the wonderful intricacy of its internal structure--the miraculous harmony of its discrepant parts--the grand amalgamation of its different orders, classes, states, pursuits, professions--the mighty aggregate of hopes, wishes, endeavours, joys, successes, fears, pangs, disappointments, crimes, and punishments, that it contains--its relative influence on the world at large--or the vehement pulse with which that "mighty heart" sends the flood of circulation through this beautiful land--we shall find that that most wonderful microcosm well deserves the epithet *sublime*.

To view it rightly--if we wish to view it with the eye of a philosopher--we should choose perhaps the hour which is chosen by the most magnificent and extraordinary of modern poets, and gaze upon it when the sun is just beginning to pour his first red beams through the dim and loaded air, when that vast desert of brick and mortar, that interminable wilderness of spires and chimneys, looks more wide, and endless, and solemn, than when the eye is distracted by the myriads of mites that creep about it in the risen day.

It may be asked, perhaps, who is there that ever saw it at that hour, except the red-armed housemaid, washing the morning step, and letting in the industrious thief, to steal the greatcoats from the hall; or the dull muffin-man, who goes tinkling his early bell through the misty streets of the wintry morning? Granted, that neither of these--nor the sellers of early purl--nor the venders of saloop and cocoa--nor Covent Garden market-women--nor the late returners from the *finish*--nor he who starts up from the doorway, where he has passed the wretched night, to recommence the day's career of crime, and danger, and sorrow--can look upon the vast hive in which they dwell with over-refined feelings; and perhaps, to them, may come home unhappy Shelley's forcible line,

"Hell is a city very much like London!"

The valetudinarian, too, who wakes with nervous punctuality to swallow down the morning draught, prescribed by courtly Henry's bitter-covering skill, may curse the cats that, perched upon the tiles, salute their lady-loves with most discordant cries, and keep him from repose; and, with all the virulence of Despréaux, may exclaim upon the many hateful sounds of a town morning. But besides all these, there are sometimes persons, who, rising five hours before their usual time, come forth in all the freshness of the early day, stimulated by the vast effort that roused them from their beds, proud of a successful endeavour to get up, and excited by the novelty of the circumstance and the scene, and who rush on, admiring all the beauties as they go to take their places in the gay stage-coach.

Fully double the extent of ancient Athens in its days of greatest splendour--at least if the calculation of Aristides be correct--London lies in circuit more than one day's journey, and many a day's journey may be taken in the interior without ever threading the same streets. It would not matter much, therefore, in what corner of the town was placed the coach-office, whence, at an early hour of every lawful day, set forth a smart-looking vehicle, drawn by four fiery bays, for a distant town in ----shire; but nevertheless, as it may be a satisfaction to the reader's mind, it is but fair to state, that the aforesaid four-inside light coach took its departure daily from that wild scene of bustle and confusion, which, within the last century or two, has usurped the site of what a modern writer of ancient romance, terms "the sweet little village of Charing," and which is now popularly called the Golden Cross, Charing Cross.

As the things that were, are now no more, and even three short years have made sad havoc amidst the brick antiquities of dear Pall Mall, it may not be amiss more particularly to commemorate the appearance--at the time our tale commences--of that agglomeration of street corners, Charing Cross, from which--on account I suppose of its beautiful vagueness--all rogues and insolvent debtors were wont to date their letters. But this commemoration had best be given in describing the effect of the whole upon a young and unsophisticated mind.

From a place that they call a hotel, in Piccadilly--Think of a man taking up his abode at a hotel in Piccadilly!--but he knew no better--From a hotel, in Piccadilly, at about half-past five o'clock on the morning of the last day of August, one thousand eight hundred and something, set out a hackney coach, containing within its sphere of rotten wood and rusty leather a small portmanteau on the front seat, and the portmanteau's master on the other. He was a well-made youth, of about five-and-twenty years of age, with firm, graceful, and yet powerful limbs, and a fresh clear complexion--not villainous red and white, but one general tone of florid health. His eye was blue and bright, and the clustering curls of fair hair--as pure Saxon as Sharon Turner's last new book--might have looked somewhat girlish, had it not been for the manly features and the free dauntless look that they overshadowed. At the same time, be it remarked, that there was something of melancholy, if not of gloom, in his aspect; but that did not prevent him--after the chambermaid had been satisfied, and the waiter had been paid, and boots had had his fees, and

the porter had claimed more than his due; and, in short, all the exactions of an inn had been played off upon him in succession--that did not prevent him, when fairly rolling away towards the top of the Haymarket, from gazing out upon the scene around him with a sufficient degree of open-eyed curiosity to make the waterman stick his tongue into his cheek, and mentally denominate him "*a raw*."

It may be necessary to inform the unlearned reader, that the sun rises, in the end of August, a few minutes after five in the morning, and at the time I speak of the great luminary was pouring a flood of radiance through the loaded air of the vast city, filling the long empty perspective of the streets with the golden mistiness of the morning light. Closed within the dull boards which defend the precious wares of many a careful tradesman from the cosmopolite fingers of the liberal Many, the shops exhibited nothing but the names and occupations of their various owners; but the wide streets, with all their irregular buildings, in the broad light and shade, were not without beauty of their own peculiar kind, distinct from all the mighty associations connected with their existence.

The coach rolled at the statute pace along Piccadilly, unobstructed by any thing, and, indeed, unencountered by any thing but two slow market carts, wending heavily towards Covent Garden, and another fac-simile of itself just overcoming--in order to take up some other early passenger--the *vis inertiae* which had held it on the straw-littered stand for the last hour. In the Haymarket, however, the progression was more difficult; for there, already had congregated many a loaded cart, the drivers of which, as usual, had, with skilful zeal, contrived to place them as a regular fortification, obstructing every step of the way. Gin and purl, too, were reeking up to the sky from the various temples of the rosy god that line the west side of the street; and amidst the bargainings of some early dealers, and the pœans of the gin-drinkers, no one attended to the objurgations of the embarrassed coachman. Nevertheless, all these difficulties were at length removed by one means or another; and Cockspur Street opened wide before the traveller, exposing at the end, black with the smoke of fires innumerable, the famous Statue and the girthless horse. On one side, wide and open, lay Whitehall, with all those offices whence many a time has issued the destiny of the world; on the other hand, dark and dingy, wound away the Strand, with the house of the Percys maintaining still the last aspect of a feudal dwelling to be found in London. The King's Mews, on which a violating hand had hardly yet been laid, occupied all the space to the left; and the flaming ensign of the Golden Cross, stuck up in front of a tall narrow-fronted house, told that the place of many coaches was before the traveller's eyes.

He found, on alighting, that he had arrived at least ten minutes before the time; and after having been cheated, as usual, by the hackney coachman, and gazed about the dull desolate yard, shut in by the high houses round, in the far shadows of which stood two or three red, blue, and yellow vehicles, all unpacked and unhorsed, he once more sauntered out through the low-browed arch which gave admission to the court, and amused himself with the wider scene exhibited by the street.

At that hour, one-half of Murillo's pictures find living representatives in the streets of London; and when the young traveller had moralized for a minute or two on some groups of beggar-boys playing round the Statue--had marked the sage and solemn pace with which an elderly waterman brought forth his breakfast to a coachman on the stand--and had listened to the Solon-like sayings of each upon the weather and the state of the nation--he was looking back to see whether the coming of the coach was hopeless, when the rushing noise of rapid wheels caught his ear, and he turned his eyes in the direction of the sound.

If people would but remark, they would find that they have presentiments of little events a thousand times more often than they have presentiments of great ones; and the feeling of the gallant Nelson was not more strong, that the sun of Trafalgar was the last that was destined to shine upon his glory, than was at that moment the conviction of the young traveller that those rolling wheels were about to bring him a companion for the stage-coach. Nor, let me tell you, gentle reader, is it a matter of small importance who is to be brought in such close contact with one for the next ten hours. What is life but a chain of those brief portions of eternity which man calls hours, so inseparably linked together that the first and the last, and every link throughout the series, have a mutual dependence and connexion with each other! Oh, let no one despise an hour! It is fully enough to change dynasties and overthrow empires--to make or mar a fortune--to win high renown or stain a noble name--to end our being or to fix our destiny here and hereafter, in time and through eternity. So awful a thing is one hour--ay, one moment of active being!

The companion of the three hundred and sixty-fifth part of one out of seventy years, is a person to whom we may well attach some importance; and the young traveller looked with no small eagerness to see who was about to fill that station in relation to himself. The first thing that his eyes fell upon, as he turned round, was a dark brown cabriolet, whirled along with the speed of lightning by a tall bay horse, full of blood and action, and covered with harness, which, though somewhat elaborate and evidently costly, was guarded by scrupulous good taste from being gaudy. Behind the vehicle appeared a smart active boy in groom's apparel, but with no distinctive livery to designate him as the tiger of Colonel this, or the Earl of that, though a cockade in his hat told that his master pretended to either military or naval rank. Where the young traveller stood, the appearance of the driver was not to be discerned; but, from the style of the whole turn-out, he began to doubt that his anticipations in regard to their approaching companionship were fallacious, when, dashing up to the pavement, the horse was suddenly drawn up, the groom sprang to the head, and the person within at length made his appearance.

He was a young man of about seven-and-twenty, tall, and rather gracefully than strongly made; but still with a breadth of chest, and a sort of firm setting on his feet, which spoke a greater degree of personal strength than appeared at a casual glance. His clothes were all of that peculiar cut which combines the most decided adherence to the prevailing fashion, with a very slight touch of its extravagance. Every thing, however, in the whole of his apparel, was in good keeping, as the painters call it; and though the colours that appeared therein, were such as no one but a man of rank and station in society would have dared to wear, the general hue of the whole was dark.

"He's a dandy!" thought the young traveller, with a somewhat contemptuous curl of the lip as the other descended from the cabriolet; but the moment after, hearing him bid the boy tell Swainson not to forget to give Brutus a ball on Wednesday night--and to walk Miss Liddy for an hour twice every day in the park, he concluded that he was a gentleman horse-jockey--a thing, in his unsophisticated ideas, equally detestable with a dandy. Scarcely had he come to this conclusion--and his conclusions, be it remarked, were formed very quickly--when the stranger strode rapidly past him. The cabriolet drove away, and its owner--with a quantity of glossy black hair escaping from under his hat, and mingling with whiskers more glossy still--entered the inn-yard, and proceeded to the coach-office.

The other traveller followed, in hopes of seeing some signs of approaching departure; and, as he did so, he heard the reply of the book-keeper to something which the owner of the cabriolet had asked. "No room outside, sir;--very sorry, indeed--got our full number,"--he had got three more, by the way,--"plenty of room inside.--That 'ere gentleman's going inside, 'cause he can't get room out."

"Well, inside be it then," replied the other.

The book-keeper began to write. "What name, sir?"

"Burrel!" replied the stranger.

"Any luggage?"

"None," answered Burrel.

"One pound ten shillings and sixpence, sir, if you please!" said the book-keeper; and, as Burrel paid the money, the coachman's cry of, "Now, gentlemen, if you please!" sounded through the yard.

In another minute the horses were dashing through that antique and abominable arch, which, in days of yore, gave egress and regress to the Golden Cross, while Burrel and the other traveller, seated side by side, held their breath as the rough vehicle clattered over the London stones. It has often been remarked, that it is wonderful how much shaking together two Englishmen require before they speak to each other; and, in setting out from a town like London, there is scarcely any individual who has not too much to think of--either in parting from well-loved friends--in quitting scenes of pleasure or of pain--in self-congratulation on escaping from smoke and noise--in anticipation of quiet and repose of joyful meetings and smiles of welcome--not to court a few minutes' calm reflection as they leave behind them that great misty den of feelings and events. Our two travellers then leaned back in their respective corners without the interchange of a word--the one, Burrel, apparently buried in deep thought; and the other too proud, if not too shy, to begin any conversation himself, even had he not had memories enough in his bosom to furnish him also, with food for meditation. Such, however, he had; and--seeing that his companion appeared wrapped up in that sort of gentlemanly reserve which so often covers over a man's eyes, ears, and understanding, as he goes through life, and leaves him, like the Grand Lama, with nothing to speculate upon but his own perfections--the younger traveller gave way also to his thoughts, and, ere they had reached Brentford, had forgotten that there was any being in the coach but himself.

His reflections did not seem very pleasant; for at Hounslow, what appeared to be the first act thereof, ended in a sigh so long and deep, that it attracted the notice of his fellow-traveller, who turned his head, and, for the first time, examined him somewhat attentively, as he sat looking out of the windows, with the objects as they passed skimming hardly noted before his eyes. The second act of the young man's thoughts did not seem quite so abstracted as the first; for when the coach stopped for a few minutes at Staines, he put his head forth from the window, and demanded the name of the place, addressing Mynheer Boots, who gazed in his face and answered nothing.

"This is Staines," replied his hitherto silent companion, in a mild gentlemanly tone, in which there was not the slightest touch of *coxcombry* or affectation; "perhaps you have never travelled this road before?"

"I have, indeed," replied the other; "but the first time was many years ago; and when last I passed, I had various things to think of, which prevented my noting particularly the places through which I travelled."

"Oh, any thing on earth to think of," replied Burrel, "of course renders travelling out of the

question. It is no longer travelling, it is locomotion.--It becomes the act of a stage-coach, a steam-engine, or any other machine, as soon as a person has one thought occupied by either business or memory, or any one of the troublesome things of the world. Before one sets out on a journey, one should shake out one's mind, as the ancient pilgrims did their wallets, and leave no trace of friends, or relations, or feelings, or prejudices, or remembrances of any kind in short, to hang about it; but make all void and clear for the new stock of ideas that are to be placed in it."

"Yours is a strange doctrine," replied his companion, "though I believe it might be as well to practise it."

"Why, if a man carries about in his mind," continued Burrel, "his uncles and aunts, and sisters and brothers, and all the luggage of associations that they bring along with them, he might as well jog on in the old family coach at the rate of forty mortal miles per day, from the town house in Berkeley Square to the country house in Staffordshire. But let a man resolve to forget every thing on earth but the scenes through which he is passing, and he will find as much to interest, and amuse, and excite him--ay, and as much to the purpose of real information too--between London and Dorchester, as between Paris and the Dardanelles."

His companion smiled, perhaps as much from surprise at the very unexpected tone of his fellow-traveller's tirade, as from any acquiescence in the tirade itself. "Nay, nay," he said; "surely you won't deny that--putting all other advantages out of the question between the two journeys you mention--there is still much more picturesque beauty to be found between Paris and the Dardanelles than between London and Dorchester?"

"I do not know that," replied Burrel. "There may be newer scenery, and perhaps more sublime scenery; but whether the more sublime be calculated to produce a finer or a sweeter effect upon man's heart and mind than softer and gentler pictures, I much doubt. There is something in an English landscape to be found nowhere else--an air of rich, sweet, happy repose--of safe tranquillity and successful industry, that is in itself almost sublime. Let your eye now run over that view as the coach climbs the hill. Where did you ever behold a scene on which sight can so pleasantly repose?--The rich scattered wood in front, full of Old England's grand primeval oaks.--Then look how, bending over a thousand slopes, in the true lines of beauty, the hedgerows wind along, dividing wealthy field from field--now giving skips and glances of fair towns and uplands, and now massing together, till the eye believes them to be deep groves--then that catch of the river, glistening under the hill, while the sunshine streams through the valley, and that broad shadow of some cloud we do not see, passes slowly on, at every change that it effects in the light and shade of the landscape, bringing out some new beauty, as if it itself delighted in the loveliness it produces. Then again, cast your eyes up yonder to the village church hanging halfway down the hill, with its neat parsonage embowered in tall elms; and looking, as it is, the abode of peace and virtue. As good a man dwells there as the whole world can produce, and a true representative of the great majority of the much-belied English clergy. But say, did you ever see a fairer scene?"

"Seldom, indeed," replied his companion, whose attention, called to the principal points of a purely English picture, found more beauties in it than custom suffered him to see before. "But still," he added, "I am fond of mountain scenery."

"And so am I," replied Burrel. "I am fond of every kind of scenery, from the bold blue mountain with its purple heath, as bare, as naked, and as wild as the banks of Loch Awe itself can show, to the rich and undulating plains of Champagne, where soft line beyond line of faint and fainter shadows, vanishing away in Claude-like sunshine, are all that marks the wide extent over which the eye can roam. There is such a thing as the economy of admiration; and by husbanding that faculty properly, you will not find a scene in all the world on which you cannot afford to bestow some small portion thereof."

The other traveller replied, not a little pleased to find that all the fine sketches which he had been making of his companion's character, during the earlier part of their journey, were as empty as a protocol; and, with the very natural jump which man's heart takes when it finds itself agreeably disappointed in the estimation it had formed of another, perhaps the stranger now felt as much inclined to over-admire his companion, as he had before been disposed to undervalue him. A growing remembrance of his features, too, for some time made him fancy that he had met with an old friend, whose face, like a worn piece of money, though half obliterated by time, was still sufficiently plain to tease memory--one of those provoking recollections, as tenacious as remorse, and intangible as a soufflet. After some farther conversation, and one or two thoughtful pauses--in which memory was so busy in digging amongst the ruins of the past to see if she could find the name of Burrel, that she would not even let the young traveller's loquacious powers go on, for fear of disturbing her search--he suddenly exclaimed, with that degree of frank simplicity which at once spoke him but little a child of the great world, "Oh! now I remember where it was; I saw you before!"

"Where?" demanded Burrel with a slight smile, which he instantly repressed lest he should give pain.

But the young stranger was not of a nature to think there could be any thing wrong or absurd in acknowledging whatever he felt, if what he felt were pure and natural. "It was at the door of Lord Ashborough, in Grosvenor Square," he replied at once. "You were coming out as I was going

in to call for his lordship. It was but yesterday; and yet I have been searching through many long years to find out where it was I had seen you before."

"Memory is like the philosophers," replied Burrel, "and often sends out far to seek what she might stumble over at her own door. I now remember your face also, and think I heard you give your name as Captain Delaware."

"The same," answered his companion with somewhat of a sigh. "Do you know Lord Ashborough well?"

"I have known him long," replied Burrel; "but to know a man well is a very different thing; for I am afraid that all men have learned now-a-days what Sallust regrets in the decline of the Romans--*magis vultum quam ingenium, bonum habere*. Not that I mean to say it is so with Lord Ashborough;--far from it. He bears a high character in the world, and is esteemed upright, honourable, and talented, though somewhat stern and haughty."

A grave and rather melancholy expression came over the countenance of the other; and he replied, changing the subject abruptly, "You were speaking of the Dardanelles. Were you ever there?"

"Never," answered Burrel, "though once within little more than a hundred leagues. I should have been well pleased to have gone on; but circumstances called me back to England."

"I have been there," replied the other; "and there is nothing more delightful on earth than the sail from Corfu to Constantinople--except, indeed, some parts of the coast of Sicily."

"You are a naval man, then, I presume?" said Burrel. The other answered in the affirmative, and his companion proceeded.

---"For nothing on earth could be more disagreeable to me, and I suppose to most landsmen, than a sail from any one given point of the globe's surface to another. When you speak of Sicily, however, you speak of a land that I too know well; and in regard to which I can enter into your enthusiasm. There are few lands more fertile in beauties of nature and association than Sicily, and Epicurean Calabria, and the old Etruscan groves! You have of course visited Italy, if you so well know Sicily?"

"I have done little more than cruise along the coast," replied Captain Delaware; "but in Sicily I was landed, and remained some months for the recovery of my health."

"Oh, the sweet coasts of the Mediterranean Sea!" said Burrel, "where at every league there is some beauty and some memory--some pleasant dream of the present or the past--from the Imperial City and its wolf-suckled founder, to the grey majesty of Pæstum and the Calabrese peasant with his long gun and his Mother Goose hat, caroling his gay ditty as cheerfully as a pickpocket. In every other corner of the world, I feel earth stuffed with stern realities; but in Italy I can fully enter into the feeling of Metastasio, and exclaim, '*Sogno della mia vita e il corso intero!*'"

"You are an enthusiast, I see," replied the other with a smile.

"When I am in company with one," answered Burrel laughing. His companion coloured slightly, but good-humouredly, and the conversation went on in the same easy manner in which it had commenced, through the rest of their journey. It is unnecessary to give any farther details thereof; for such light nothings, though very pleasant to while away the hours in a stage-coach, are most excessively tiresome in the small pages of an octavo. Let it suffice that Captain Delaware, surprised and pleased with his companion, found the journey far shorter than he had expected. Indeed, so captivated was he, that in the whole of Burrel's deportment there was but one thing he thought might have been altered to advantage, which was a certain air of taking every thing as a matter of course--a tone of indifference which men of the world acquire they know not well how, and which, in the present instance, blended in an extraordinary manner with the high feeling of the beautiful and the excellent which his conversation breathed throughout.

That tone, however, is not without its advantages also, and the young sailor found that it might be serviceable, when at Hartford Bridge a person of a very different description was intruded upon them. He was a short, broad made man, with long baboonish arms, and a face on which nature had so plainly written the class to which it was to belong, that had fortune in some of her freaks covered it either with the coronet of a peer, or a peasants straw hat, his mother, or fortune, or nature, would have had much to answer for. Some of the features were good, however--the eyes were very tolerable, for instance; and the nose was not bad. But then the cheek-bones!--Good God, such cheek-bones! From Crim Tartary to Banff there is nothing to be seen like them. The mouth, too, was worse--one of those fearful mouths, whose broad, fat, wide-parted, irregular lips, seem to vaticinate the fate of the owner with such distinctness that no person of common foresight can see them without at once picturing the person who possesses them--not as about to be hanged, but as actually hanging. The skin that was over all was of that reddish, coarse, mottled kind, which puts one in mind of a gross strawberry; and although, as before said, the eyes in themselves were *goodish* blue, meaningless eyes enough, yet the place where there should have grown eyelashes, being alone furnished with a red knotty line in their room, gave them a ferret-like sharpness, without which they would have signified nothing at all.

This Worthy, "*passant à joints pieds*" as Madame de Sevigné calls it, over all ceremonies, was inclined to make himself so much at his ease, that Captain Delaware--disgusted and offended, yet without any absolute pretext for anger--felt strongly inclined to quarrel with, and eject from the window, a person who interrupted a pleasant conversation to substitute vulgar impertinence in its place. Burrel, on the contrary, with cool indifference, amused himself for a moment or two with the other's vulgarity, and then trode him into silence by contempt. He then calmly resumed the conversation with his first companion, from which there was something in his tone and manner that irresistibly excluded the other, who to revenge himself looked out of the window, and, like my Uncle Toby, whistled *lillebullero*.

Thus passed the remaining hours of their journey--Burrel every moment increasing upon the esteem of his travelling companion, till at length they approached, about six o'clock, a little village, which, though it may bear a different name in the county map, we shall take the liberty of calling Emberton. The sun had so far declined from the meridian, that the shadows were getting long and blue; but still the sheeny splendour of the summer's day was not at all decreased, though the approach of evening had cleared away the hazy brightness which hangs ever about a very hot and sunny noon. The coach wound on along the road, every now and then passing various objects which gave notice that it was approaching some place where the busy and improving emmets that lord it over this ant-hill world, had congregated together, and adorned their place of sojourn. Now came a neat gate and a detached cottage, too miniature in all its proportions, from the little turkey-carpet garden to the rustic porch, to be the country mansion of any man of large property; and yet too neat, and one might perhaps say too elegant, to be the dwelling of the poor. It was evidently the house of the doctor or the lawyer, or the retired maiden lady of some village near at hand, and it again was succeeded by a long clean whitewashed wall, belonging to garden, or shrubbery, or semi-park, between which and the coach road ran a fair gravel footpath, defended by green posts and iron chains. The manifold paths and roads branching to the right and left, clean and well kept, told the same tale of man's habitation; and in a moment after, winding over a slight rise, the coach reached the brow of the hill from which the whole village or little town of Emberton was visible.

It lay in a country slightly undulating, but backed by some high hills at the distance of about fifteen miles, and between them and the elevation which the coach had reached, the expanse might rather be called a plain than a valley. The village was close beneath the slope, and had little to distinguish it from any other English country town, having all that peculiar air of cleanness, of regularity, and of the spirit of industry and cultivation, which is only to be seen in England. Its greatest ornament was the river, which, clear, smooth, and tranquil, ran through the town very nearly at the middle, and was itself spanned over by a neat stone bridge of about fifty yards in length. That bridge, however, was to be remarked for something more than its light and elegant construction: its balustrade formed the continuation of a low stone wall which separated the village from a wide park on the right hand side, full of majestic trees, scattered in groups of four or five over a fine undulating piece of ground. Through the midst the river flowed gently on, reflecting the evening sky, and two or three swans that floated on its bosom, the clear light of which was only broken here and there by a fall of a few feet, which scarcely increased the flow of the current. As one looked up the park from the bridge--at the distance of about a third of a mile on either hand--might be seen a grove of tall graceful trees, sufficiently extensive to take the appearance of a forest, in some of the glades of which the eye caught occasionally the remains of old summer-houses, in the Charles the Second taste; and in the central point was seen the mansion itself built of mingled gray stone and red brick, with small innumerable windows. It bore the aspect of what it really had been--a monastery erected early in the reign of Henry VIII. by a wealthy community of friars. From them it was afterwards wrested by that pink of reforming monarchs, tyrants, and plunderers, and bestowed upon some minion of the day. The buttery of their time had become the lodge now, and was a detached building in the same fashion as the house, projecting into the high-road, and flanked by two large iron gates, which, to say sooth, were somewhat rusty for the want of paint. In what state of repair the dwelling-house itself was kept, could hardly be discerned at that distance; but no kinds of deer were seen sporting in the park, and sheep had evidently taken their place, as affording probably a more profitable manner of employing the land.

"That seems a splendid park!" said Burrel, as his eye first lighted on it. "Do you know what it is called?"

"Emberton Park," replied the young sailor briefly.

"And belongs to?"----said Burrel.

"Sir Sidney Delaware, my father," answered the young man with so deep a sigh that Burrel asked no further questions.

After dragging the wheel, the coach ran rapidly down the descent, and then rolling on, stopped at a neat clean house, with a small garden in the front. At the little white gate were four fine setters, with a servant out of livery; who instantly touched his hat to Burrel, and, approaching the door, said, "This is the house, sir."

"Very well," answered Burrel; "and now farewell Captain Delaware," he said, turning to his companion, and, giving him his hand with as much frank good humour as if he had addressed an old acquaintance, "I doubt not we shall meet again."

Delaware grasped his hand without reply, and the other alighted. All his dogs sprang up to greet him with evident joy, much to the detriment of his clothes, but not the least of his good humour, and after gazing up and down the road for a moment as one does in a strange place, he walked through the little gate and entered the house, at the door of which stood a tidy old lady, evidently curtsying to a new lodger.

The coach drove on; and then again stopped at the lodge of the park, where Captain Delaware alighted also. His portmanteau was given to the woman at the lodge; and he himself with a quick step walked up the path which led to the mansion.

CHAPTER II.

Whether there be something inherent in the nature of things which renders any object that man very much desires, thenceforth very difficult to be obtained; or whether it be, that, by a certain perversity in man's nature, he only desires those things that *are* difficult to be obtained, I cannot tell; but one point is very clear in every body's experience, that whenever we fix our heart upon one particular object, and strive for it very ardently, however easy it might seem before, we find a thousand difficulties and obstacles start up upon our path, and overrule our wishes. Nevertheless, as there is nothing upon earth half so tiresome--ay, and half so useless, too--as a disquisition upon causes and effects, we will proceed with the events which gave rise to the above sage observation, which, by rights, should have followed this chapter as a corollary upon it, instead of a sort of epigraph at its head.

The person who has figured before the reader during a long day's journey in a stage-coach under the name of Burrel, entered the small neat house we have before described; and, after having considered attentively with his eyes all the proportions and dimensions of the little parlour which was to be his sitting-room, he seated himself before the antique, and somewhat obscure, mahogany table that it contained, and addressed his servant--who had followed into the room, together with the decent, respectable landlady--pronouncing those two important, but somewhat laconic words, "Get dinner!"

The man bowed, and left the room without reply, and Burrel proceeded, speaking to the landlady, who was beginning to fear, from certain symptoms that she saw, that both master and man were equally taciturn. "Well, my good lady," he said, "my man has doubtless arranged every thing with you, and I hope you are satisfied with the bargain he has made?"

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" replied Widow Wilson, as the good dame was denominated. "There was but one word to that bargain, I can assure you."

"I suppose so," said Burrel dryly, "if Harding concluded it. But tell me--that is a beautiful park opposite the window; who does it belong to?"

"Bless you, sir, that is Emberton Park!" replied the landlady, looking unutterable things at Burrel's ignorance. "You must have heard tell of Sir Sidney Delaware, Bart. of Emberton Park, surely?"

"I think I have heard the name," replied Burrel. "What family has he?"

"Why, Lord bless me, sir! you came down with his own son," answered the old lady, more and more surprised at her lodger's ignorance of village facts, and beginning greatly to undervalue his understanding. "Why, I saw the Captain's head as plain as possible when you got out of the coach."

"Indeed!" said Burrel, with gravity not to be shaken; "and is he an only child?"

"Oh no, sir, no!" answered Mrs. Wilson. "Sir Sidney has a young lady, too. Himself, his son, and his daughter--that is all of them, poor people!"

"Poor people!" exclaimed Burrel; "I should think they were rich people with such a fine estate as that?"

"Ah, sir, things that show best are not always as they look!" replied the good woman. "They are as poor as church-mice, sir, and that's poor enough. I wish to God they were richer--much good would they do! But I have heard Lawyer Johnstone say, that, with all the fine estate, Sir Sidney, when all is paid, has not four hundred a-year of his own; and gentility without ability is like a pudding without plumbs. Then there is the Captain's half-pay, you know; and if they could let the house and park, it might bring something more. They tried one year, and went and lived at

a cottage down at Sidmouth--but it did not let, and the place was going to ruin--and so they came back; for, though there are not many of them, yet two or three in a house are better than none at all."

"That is very true," said Burrel; "very true, indeed; and now, my good lady, see if my man has taken up the hot water to the dressing-room."

The good woman took the hint and retired; and here it may be as well to mention one or two circumstances which preceded the arrival of Henry Burrel, Esq., at the neat little village of Emberton. These circumstances were simply as follows:--Two days before that on which we have thought fit to begin our tale, arrived by the coach--together with four portmanteaus, four dogs, and a gun-case--the servant whom we have seen waiting the traveller at the door of Mrs. Wilson's house. After a few enquiries at the inn, all conceived in very laconic style, he proceeded at once to Mrs. Wilson's, and, in words inexpressibly brief, concluded a bargain for her apartments, as they were called, for one month from that period, in the name of his master, Henry Burrel, Esq. As soon as the important fact was generally known that a gentleman possessing four portmanteaus, four setters, a gun-case, and a man out of livery, was about to take up his residence for one month in the village of Emberton, the wise may imagine the commotion that was created. The object of his visit was evidently to shoot, otherwise what could he do with four setters and a gun-case; but there were various other matters to be ascertained by the young and old ladies of the village; first and foremost, whether the shooter might not be shot by Cupid's shaft--next, whether he were rich--next, whether he were young or old--next, whether he were a bachelor or a widower--and next, whether he had ever been in India. All these points, with the various branches into which they spread, were matters of consideration to the three classes of ladies that inhabit a small country town; namely, those who will not, or cannot, marry at all, or any more--those who will marry when it suits them--and those who, at any time, will marry any thing, or anybody. However, not to enter into disagreeable particulars, the surgeon and apothecary, well knowing the importance of the case, the immense increase of influence he might acquire by learning the whole facts and all the concomitant advantages which might thence accrue, was the first to watch the servant out of the house, after the rumour had spread, and--accosting him in an easy and familiar way--to propound to him what the law people call leading questions. But the servant was as taciturn and as guarded as a thrice convicted Old Bailey witness *is*, or the ambassador's private secretary's valet-de-chambre *should be*; and nothing could the doctor make of him. The lawyer tried him next, and then the innkeeper, but all equally failed; and the consequence was, that at the hour the coach was expected to arrive on the two subsequent days, all Emberton was in a flutter. There were the Misses this and the Misses that, as fine as--but there is no word for it--all taking their afternoon walk along the line of road--and there was Mrs. the-other-thing, the fair young widow, in such becoming weeds--buying some grey silk at the mercer's opposite, which she found it necessary to examine by the broader light of the street-door--just as the wheels came rattling down the hill. The coach at length was seen to stop; and Burrel, who had noticed no one on the face of the earth but his own servant at the door of Mrs. Wilson's, walked into the house as we have before described, while the fact spread like lightning through the place that the gentleman at Mrs. Wilson's was young, handsome, dark, tall, and exquisite, and undoubtedly unmarried--for, by a peculiar test, or sort of instinct, which heaven has bestowed upon womankind, amongst their many other excellences, the fair sex have an extraordinary gift of discovering whether any male thing be married or single at the distance of a hundred yards.

There was but one subject of conversation throughout Emberton during the course of that evening. The old topic--the unhappy poverty of the people at the Park, and the absurd pride which prevented them from giving tea-parties, because they could not give dinners, with all the little malice and tittle-tattle thereunto attached--was forgotten for the time, and nothing was spoken of but Mrs. Wilson's lodger and his silent manservant. Indeed, the latter, with his extraordinary and unaccountable taciturnity, divided with his master the anxious curiosity of the two tea-parties given that evening; and one lady even went so far, as not to doubt that he was a foreigner, and could not speak English, in proof of which she adduced his heavy black brows and egregious whiskers--an argument which, combined with the man's reserve, left one-half of her hearers nearly convinced.

In the meanwhile, however, Henry Burrel sat down to his dinner, which he concluded with an excellent appetite, and in perfect silence, totally unconscious of the restless moments he was giving to the tongues of Emberton. This state of meditation continued unbroken till the cloth disappeared, and the silent servant, placing the inviolate bottle of comet claret before him--a supply of which, by the way, had been sent down to the coach-office ten days before, arguing, the lawyers would infer, a predetermination to lodge at Emberton--was about to retire, when he was arrested by his master's voice.

"Have you yet," demanded Burrel, musing, "made the enquiries I directed you, Harding?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, and was again silent.

"Where does he live, then, this Mr. Tims?" asked his master. "How far is it from the village?"

"About a mile and a half, sir," answered Harding, "down a back lane at the end of the park--a very retired place, but easily found."

"And what else did you discover?" continued his master, "I mean, in regard to the Delawares?"

"They visit no one, sir--in the village, at least," replied the man, "and receive no one."

"Do any of the family shoot?"

"None, sir,--and they have often given leave to gentlemen staying at the inn, for the mere asking."

"Very well," answered his master.--"Now, bring me my writing-desk, and some books from the library--the greatest trash you can find."

The man disappeared, and returned with the desk, from which, while he was again absent bringing the trash in quest of which his master had despatched him, Burrel took out some notes and accounts, and apparently went over the latter with the accurate attention of a man of business. He then wrote a brief note, which he folded and sealed, and, giving it to Harding on his return, bade him deliver it the next morning early, and wait an answer. All this being completed, he took up the first volume that had been brought him, cast himself back in his chair, and skimmed the pages till bed-time.

The breakfast-table was laid out by the neat hands of Mrs. Wilson, exactly at eight o'clock the next morning--the white table-cloth, the jug of rich yellow cream, the two smooth rolls, somewhat browner than the same article of food in London, but doubtless much more the children of the corn--all bespoke a comfortable country breakfast; and when, in about half an hour after, Burrel descended in shooting guise, he looked round with that air of satisfaction which a man feels, after a long London season, on waking and finding himself really in the country. The hot water, not in the accursed lukewarm urn, but in a kettle hissing hot from the fire, was brought in by Mrs. Wilson; but in about ten minutes Harding himself appeared, and, with his usual silence, presented his master with an answer to his note of the evening before. It ran as follows, and explains both itself and the one to which it replied:--

"Emberton Park, Wednesday Morning.

"Sir Sidney Delaware is happy to have the power of affording Mr. Burrel any gratification; and begs to say, that he is perfectly at liberty to shoot over any part of his property, with the exception of the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the house, the game on which he wishes to preserve."

"Hum!" said Burrel, shaking his head as he read the note; "Whom did you see, Harding?"

"A maid-servant, sir," replied the man, "and the old gentleman himself."

"Did he say nothing about calling on me?" demanded Burrel; "or being happy to see me?"

"Nothing, sir," replied the man; and, with an injunction to get his gun ready, and see that the old lady did not give the dogs any thing to eat before they went out, his master dismissed him. "We must find some means," said Burrel to himself when the servant was gone; "but I am afraid it will be more difficult than I thought---But the young man will call of course."

Now, though it would be very easy to look into the mind of Henry Burrel, Esq. as he there stands pondering, with his hand leaning on the table, yet it may be better to pursue him a little farther ere we take such a liberty, and see him set forth upon his shooting expedition, in the course of which he approached as near to the mansion of Emberton Park as he decently could. His expedition was solitary, however; and if he expected or hoped to meet any of the family, he was disappointed. No one did he see but an occasional shepherd, and a hedger and ditcher; and at three o'clock he returned home, with nothing to repay his walk but ten brace of birds.

The following morning it was no better; but Burrel seemed resolved upon another line of conduct, and, at the risk of seeming to intrude, he called at the house itself as he passed, and, on finding that its owner was from home, left a card with his compliments and thanks for the permission which had been granted him. "They will perhaps think me a presuming coxcomb," he thought; "but I care not." The next day, in crossing the fields with his dogs and his gun as usual, he suddenly met his stage-coach companion, Captain Delaware, with a young lady leaning upon his arm, whom, from a certain family likeness, he at once concluded to be the sister of his acquaintance. Her dress was as plain as possible; but the model was good, and no one could have doubted that she was a lady, though it is probable that the walking-dress of the mercer's daughter at Emberton, was beyond comparison more fashionable--in price. Her figure was extremely good, though heaven be praised not at all sylphlike; and all that Burrel remarked was, that she was a very pretty girl, and had a very pretty foot. Her brother stopped for a moment; and with a countenance, in which various emotions, strangely mingled, of pleasure and pain, called up an eloquent glow, he hoped that Burrel had met with good sport, introduced him to his sister Miss Delaware, and then, in a manner somewhat abrupt and embarrassed, bade him good-by, and turned away.

Burrel walked on with his gun under his arm; and for a minute, as he did so, he bit his nether lip, and his brow slightly contracted. The moment after, however, he laughed, lightly murmuring, "Well, I must have recourse to the old miser after all, though I hate his instrumentality;" and, turning on his heel, he sauntered back towards his own abode.

He was suffered to enter in peace; but his Manton was scarcely laid on the table, and his dogs given into the charge of his servant, when, to his horror and astonishment, Mr. Tomkins, the surgeon of the village, was announced, and a smart dapper little man, of a pale and gentlemanly aspect, made his appearance. Burrel was cool and civil; for it was a part of his code to be civil to every one till they were insolent; and, after the usual symphony concerning the weather, Mr. Tomkins proceeded to the chief motive of his visit.

"He had always," he said, "proposed to call upon Mr. Burrel as soon as his manifold occupations would permit; but he had that day been charged with a commission, which gave so much additional pleasure to his proposed visit, that he of course determined to pay it immediately. The fact was," he added, "that he had that morning been visiting Mrs. Darlington, the lady to whom that beautiful house and those sweet grounds upon the hill belonged, and who, having heard of Mr. Burrel's arrival in Emberton, though she could not of course call upon him herself, had begged the identical Mr. Tomkins, then before him, to say how much pleasure she would have to see him, if he would do her the honour of dining with her on the following day."

She was a widow lady of a certain age, Mr. Tomkins implied, who had all her life moved in the best society, and was the most charming and good-tempered person in the world--"draws beautifully; has a great taste for music; sees a good deal of company at her house, where the cookery is excellent; does a great deal of good, and takes a vast deal of interest in every thing that is doing in the village."

"What a disagreeable person!" thought Burrel. "Nevertheless, I may as well amuse myself with her and hers, as walk about these fields from breakfast till dinner-time, or read these idiotical romances from dinner till bed-time." He replied, however, according to the letter of the law of civility, "Mrs. Darlington does me a great deal of honour, my dear sir," he said; "and I will do myself the pleasure of accepting her invitation, which I will notify to her forthwith by my servant--Pray, how far may be her house?"

"Oh, not above five miles certainly," replied the worthy surgeon.

"Five miles!" said Burrel; "that is a tremendous way to roll in any thing but a cabriolet after eating. I shall certainly die of an indigestion if I trust myself to a hack post-chaise in a state of repletion."

The man of medicines grinned at what in his ears sounded something very like a professional joke, but assured Burrel at the same time that his apprehensions were vain, for that Mrs. Darlington's invitations always implied a bed at her house.

"That alters the case," replied Burrel; "for I expect some horses down to-night, and will ride over and dress before dinner."

The doctor, who felt that a vast accession of dignity would accrue, if he could expose himself to the wondering eyes of Emberton, in close companionship with the young and fashionable stranger, proposed to drive him over in his pony chaise; but this honour Burrel declined, replying quietly, that he would prefer riding; and, after one or two faint efforts towards discovery of all the hidden things appertaining to the young traveller, the surgeon, finding that the conversation began to fall continually to the ground, took the hint and retired; and Burrel proceeded to change his shooting-dress for one better suited to the town.

Leaving him, however, to make this alteration, and to send off his answer to Mrs. Darlington's invitation, we shall now beg leave to follow home Captain Delaware and his sister, and--as every thing in a tale like the present should be as clear as possible, without the slightest mystery or absurd concealment--shall explain a few things that may have hitherto appeared strange in the conduct of that family.

The spot at which Burrel had that morning met his travelling companion, was not more than a quarter of a mile from the mansion, and the brother and sister walked on directly towards one of the smaller doors in the park wall, and, passing through, turned their steps homewards. They proceeded, however, in silence; for there was something evidently in their rencontre with Burrel unpleasant to them both, nor was that unpleasant sensation perhaps relieved by the aspect of their paternal dwelling, or the grounds that surrounded it. Without entering into the painful details of a family's decay, it is sufficient to say, that the whole place bore the character--not of neglect--but of means incompetent to ward off the constant, unremitting, insidious assaults of time. They passed a temple in the park, which had been built in imitation of some famous specimen of Grecian architecture, and now came nearer still to the original by its decay. A large mass of the frieze had fallen, and over the green and disjointed steps the brambles were shooting their long thorny arms. The path itself, too, which wound on towards the house, was half overgrown with grass; and where an effort to hoe it up had been begun, it had speedily been abandoned, from the necessity of employing the man in some more useful service. The mansion, too, more than half closed, had about it all--not the aspect of ruin, for it had by no means reached

that pitch--but a look of desertion and of poverty which contrasted painfully with the splendour of the original design.

To the eye of Miss Delaware and her brother, all this was customary; but yet it struck them both, after their meeting with Burrel, perhaps more forcibly than it had ever done before; and there was something like a sigh escaped the lip of each, as, opening the large door, they passed on into what had once been a splendid vestibule. The day was a sultry one, and the door of a room, entering immediately upon the hall, was open when Captain Delaware and his sister entered. The step of Miss Delaware as she walked on caught the ear of some one within, and a voice, in the tone of which there was the slightest possible touch of impatience, was heard exclaiming "Blanche! is that you, my love?"

The young lady, followed by her brother, immediately turned her steps into the fine old library from which the sound proceeded, and found reading, at a small table near one of the long many-paned windows, a person who--however contrary to rule--deserves a more particular sketch of his mental and corporeal qualities, and of his previous history, than we may find it convenient to give of any other person connected with this book.

Sir Sidney Delaware had set out in life a younger son. His father, Mr. William Delaware, had been a man of great talents, and very little common sense, who, by the help of his abilities, and considerable family influence, had been raised to offices in the state, conferring large revenues, which he squandered profusely. Mr. William Delaware, however, kept up the appearance of a man of fortune; and as his uncle, the then possessor of Emberton Park, was unmarried and advanced in life, his prospects were admitted on all hands, even by Jews and money-lenders, to be good. Be it remarked, nevertheless, that though he was the direct male heir to his uncle's property, there were two other persons who more than equally shared in his uncle's favour--his own first cousins, and equally the nephews, (though by the female line,) of the Sir Harcourt Delaware, who then held the lands of Emberton. These were Lord Ashborough and his brother, the Honourable Henry Beauchamp. However, he did not let any thing disturb him, but continued to live splendidly and well; gave his eldest son a commission in a crack regiment of cavalry, and sent his second son, Sidney, to Christ Church.

At Christ Church there were two or three peculiarities observed in Sidney Delaware;--With his scholastic education we shall have nothing to do, being no scholars ourselves. The first of these peculiarities was an uncommon degree of accuracy in paying his bills, and living within his income; and his elder brother was wont to say, that Sidney was so sick of seeing nobody paid at home, that he was resolved to pay every one to the uttermost farthing. The next trait remarked by his fellow-collegians, was his extraordinary good nature; for was any one in difficulty or distress, Sidney Delaware would help them to the very utmost of his power, though in many instances he was known to hate and condemn the very men he assisted;--and the third quality was a talent for satire, and a faculty of vituperation, which might have been envied by Gifford amongst the dead, and two or three we could name amongst the living.

The secret of his character, perhaps, was the combination of an extraordinary sensibility of the absurd, with a high and severe moral feeling. He studied for the church, however; and as he did so, many of the injunctions of that divine book, to which his mind was naturally turned continually, appeared so contrary to the asperity of his sarcastic disposition, that he determined to make a powerful effort to restrain the bitterness of speech and writing to which he had before given way. Time and years too had their effect, and the biting satire that used to hang upon his lip, remained hidden in silence, or only broke forth casually, when he was off his guard. He tried to banish from his heart that feeling of contempt and scorn which he experienced whenever any thing mean, or false, or base, met his eyes; and perhaps the very good-natured facility with which he could be induced to assist any one, might spring from an apprehension lest the scorn he felt for all that was pitiful in others, might affect his own actions, and render him uncharitable himself. His elder brother died before he himself was ordained; and, on the persuasion of his father, he abandoned his purpose of entering the church, travelled for several years, and then studied for the bar. His next step was to marry, and he was a widower with two children at the time that his father succeeded to Sir Harcourt Delaware. The baronet, however, in dying, had given to his two nephews, Lord Ashborough and Mr. Beauchamp, who had been very constant in their attentions, a far larger share of his fortune than he left to him who was to inherit the baronetcy; and thus, the latter, having counted largely on his future fortune, found himself more embarrassed than relieved by the death of his uncle. The estate that was left to him was also entailed by the will of the last possessor; and his only resource to free himself from the most pressing difficulties, was to engage his son to join him in raising money upon annuity. Sidney Delaware consented with a heavy heart, and the money was borrowed, much against his will, from his father's cousin, Lord Ashborough, between whom and the young heir of Emberton a quarrel had previously taken place, of a nature not likely to admit of reconciliation. For the pitiful sum of twenty-five thousand pounds, the estate of Emberton was charged with an annuity of two thousand per annum; and scarcely had that sum been swallowed up by his father's debts, when Sidney Delaware succeeded to a splendid name and a ruined property.

Griefs and disappointments had impaired his health, had broken his spirit and crushed his energies; and, dwelling almost in solitude, he had given himself up to the education of his children, forgetting that a time would come when the acquaintances which he was losing every day, would become necessary to his children in the world. In bitterness of heart, too, he often thought that his friends were neglecting him, when in fact he was neglecting them; and

exclaiming, "Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos!" he shut his doors against the world, believing that his poverty would meet with nothing but contempt.

As time wore on, however, he found that he erred in not exerting his abilities, in order to remove the encumbrances which his father had incurred. His son grew up and entered the navy, and half the interest of a small sum which had been his wife's fortune, afforded sufficient to maintain the boy in that service. But it was when his daughter also grew towards womanhood, that Sir Sidney Delaware felt most severely that he had committed an error. His son, he thought, had an honourable profession, and by his own high merits and activity was making rapid progress. At the death of Lord Ashborough, too, the annuity which swallowed up almost the whole rents of his estate would lapse, and his heir would have enough. But Lord Ashborough was scarcely an older man than himself; and when he gazed upon his daughter, and saw her growing up with all her mother's beauty and grace, with every quality fitted to charm and to attach, and at the same time remembered that she was to live, cut off from society, during all those brighter days of youth and hope which lie between sixteen and five-and-twenty, he would have given his right hand to have recalled the years which, by active exertion, he might have employed to remove the difficulties that held him down. Now, however, he felt, or persuaded himself, that it was impossible to seek society. He could not mingle with persons in his own rank of life upon an equality, and he would not mingle with any other class, or, with them, in any other manner. Few of these old friends existed for him, on whose generous feelings he could fearlessly rely, and feel certain, from a knowledge of their nature, that no thought even would ever cross their minds, which could have wounded him if spoken. Thus, he had no old channel of communication with the world still open, and pride, rendered irritable by disappointment, as well as the circumstances in which he was placed, prevented him from seeking any new connexion with society. Could he in any way have given his son and daughter the means of mingling with the world, while he himself shunned it altogether, he would have snatched eagerly at the opportunity; but that of course was out of the question, and day went by after day, and found them all in the same situation.

Such was still the case, at the time of my present tale; and when Miss Delaware and her brother entered the library, in which their father was, as usual, driving away thought by reading, they found him seated near the open window with Pope's Essays in his hand. His hair, which had once been dark brown, was now nearly white--in fact, much whiter than his years would warrant. Yet, though the body was in some degree broken *curis et laboribus*, still temperance and fine air had done much to counteract even grief. His countenance was florid, his eye was clear, and he appeared a hale, healthy man, though six or seven years older than he really was.

Long conversations being, like love and marriage, excessively tiresome to every one but those concerned, a summary of what followed will be better than a chapter; and it is quite sufficient to say, that the rencontre of the brother and sister with Mr. Burrel, soon became the principal topic of conversation. Captain Delaware, whose loves were very *first-sighty*, dashed at once into such an encomium of his stage-coach companion, that an arch smile, at this pouring forth of his well-known enthusiasm, played for a moment on the lip of Blanche Delaware. Her father, however, looked grave, and said he was sorry that they had met him at all. "This young man," he went on, "seems to be a person of fortune and station, whom, in happier times, we might have been delighted to see; but you are well aware, William, that under our present circumstances, it is perfectly impossible to invite a man of horses and dogs, and guns and servants, to this house.--Did he seem so very charming to you, Blanche?"

Miss Delaware replied, that her brother's acquaintance had not appeared either quite so handsome or quite so fascinating in his shooting-jacket as her brother had described him in his travelling costume.--"But at all events," she added, "his appearance savoured nothing of arrogance or presumption."

"Alas! my dear Blanche," said her father, "you do not know what a man of the world is. Every point in the situation of a poor gentleman is painful, but none so much so, as the having to endure the compassion of fools and puppies."

Captain Delaware turned to the window, and, after looking out for a moment or two, left the room. Blanche remained, but dropped the subject, and it was no more resumed.

CHAPTER III.

After having undergone the visit of the surgeon, Burrel, as we have stated, changed his dress; and, having given some directions to his servant, strolled out alone upon an expedition, in which it may be necessary to follow him. Crossing the bridge--upon which he paused for a moment to gaze up the long vista of the park--he proceeded to the extremity of the wall which formed the

enclosure, and then turning through a shady lane, formed by that boundary on one side, and a steep bank and hedge on the other, he strolled on with an air of absent thoughtfulness, that made more than one milkmaid, whom he met returning with her brimful pails from the neighbouring fields, conclude, with the true sentimentality of a Molly, that "the gentleman must be in love!"

Sad, however, to say, Burrel was not the least in love in the world; and though of a somewhat enthusiastic and Quixotical character, he would probably have been obliged, like the hero of La Mancha himself, to think some time before he could possibly have discovered any one in the sphere of his acquaintance, whom he would have considered worthy of the honour and the trouble of falling in love with. Still more melancholy to relate, so far from any fair image filling his mind with dreams ambrosial, and making him stumble over the stones in his way, he was at that moment thinking of money--base, unwholesome money. His meditations were of Cocker; and many a sum, both of addition, multiplication, and subtraction, together with various computations of interest, and now and then a remote flash of vulgar fractions, passed across his mind, in all of which he displayed a talent for accounts somewhat more clear and accurate than that of Joseph Hume, thank God--though not quite so neat and rapid as that of ever-lamented Windham.

Thus he walked along under the wall of the park till the park wall ended, and then taking a narrow and overhanging road, which descended into a sweet wild valley--through which a brook meandered on, till it lost itself in the sands upon the sea-shore, about five miles to the east--he proceeded on his way without doubt or question, as if he had known the whole country from his boyhood. The opposite bank of the valley was thickly covered with trees and shrubs; and about half a mile from the spot where the road entered it, the summit of what seemed a tall old-fashioned farmhouse, of cold grey stone, rose above this sort of verdant screen. Within a few hundred yards of this building, the road climbed the bank, and passed before the door, which was painted of a bluish gray, like that of a French country house, and offered an aspect of untidiness and discomfort, not often seen in an English dwelling. No roses decorated the porch, no clematis festooned the windows; stone walls surrounded that which was, or had been intended for, a garden; and the gruntings and squeaks which echoed from within that boundary, spoke the character of the domestic animals chiefly cultivated at Ryebury.

Undeterred, however, by the inhospitable appearance of the building, or by the wailings of the beast that never chews the cud, Burrel approached the door, and, laying his hand upon a bell, made sure that if any one was within half a mile he must be heard; and then, turning round to gaze upon the prospect, continued to hum "Dove sono," with which he had been beguiling the way for the last ten minutes. While thus employed, one of the high windows almost immediately above his head was thrown open, and the upper part of a woman-servant, who would have been pretty enough had she not been disguised in indescribable filth, was protruded to reconnoitre the stranger's person. The moment after, another head was added, almost as dirty, but neither pretty nor young, being the dingy white superstructure of an old man's person, who looked not at all unlike Noah, unwashed since the Flood.

A long and careful examination did these two respectable persons bestow upon him who so disturbed the quiet of their dwelling, while Burrel, though perfectly conscious, from the groaning of the upheaved window-frame, that he was undergoing a general inspection, continued indefatigably to hum "Dove sono," till opining that the inquisition had continued sufficiently long, he again applied himself to the bell, which once more responded to his will with "most miraculous organ."

"Run down, Sarah! Run down!" cried the elder phantom, "and open the door.--Ask him who he is, and what he wants, and then come and tell me.--But stay, I will go down with you to the parlour!"

The bell was once more in Burrel's hand, when the door yawned, and displayed to his view a great part of the person and adjuncts dependent upon the female head which had been criticising him from above. It is scarcely necessary to say more than that she was a slut of the first quality, with dirt, *ad libitum*, spread over the whole person--various triangular tears in the printed cotton that covered her--much white lining protruding through the chasms in her shoes--and a cap as yellow as a pair of court ruffles. Without waiting for the categories that were to be addressed to him, Burrel at once walked into the house; and, telling the dirty maid to inform her master that Mr. Burrel desired to speak with him, approached the door of the parlour, where the person he sought--not confiding in his servant's powers of recapitulation--was listening with all his ears to the catechism he proposed that the stranger should undergo. As soon, however, as he caught the name of Burrel, he emerged and met that gentleman in the passage with many a bow. His dress was clean enough, and in style and appearance was upon a par with that of a country attorney's of about twenty or thirty years ago--black, jet-black from head to heel, except the worsted stockings, which were dark grey. The whole was well and economically worn, but his face evinced small expense of soap, and his beard that he wore out no razors--upon his chin at least. In person he was a short thin man, of about sixty-five or six, with a reddish tip to a long nose, set on upon a pale many-furrowed face. He stooped a little towards the shoulders, and there was that sort of bending droop about the knees which betokens a decrease of vigour. His clear grey eye, however, had something in it both eager and active, and the heavy penthouse of long black and white hair that overhung it, gave a sort of fierce intensity to its glance.

"Your name, sir, is Tims, I presume?" said Burrel, eyeing him with a good deal of that cool nonchalance which is no doubt very disagreeable. The other bowed to the ground, and his visiter

continued--"My name is Burrel, and Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson, my solicitors, have doubtless written to you concerning"----

"Hush! Hush!" exclaimed the other in a subdued voice, at the same time raising his eyebrows, and opening his eyes with a stare of wondering deprecation. "We will speak about it presently, sir, if you please. I received theirs in due course, and expected to have heard of your coming sooner, sir; but shall be very happy, indeed, if we can do business together. Do me the honour, sir, to walk in. Sarah, bring this gentleman a glass of--of--wine," he added, after a moment's hesitation and a glance at the stranger's dress; "but perhaps you would prefer ale, Mr. Burrel, after your walk?"

"I take nothing, sir," answered Burrel, evidently to the great satisfaction of the other, "and having but a few minutes to stay, merely wish to speak with you concerning"----

But his host again cut across him, appearing to think that all matters in which the very name of money was to be mentioned, had better be talked of in private; and hurrying Burrel forward into the parlour, he begged him to be seated, adding almost in the same breath--"Sad times, indeed, sir, as you say--rate of interest falling terribly--hardly four per cent to be got on good security,--sad times, indeed, sir, as you say!"

"I do not say the times are bad at all, sir," replied Burrel gravely, "nor that four per cent cannot be got for money on good security. You must mistake me, I believe, for some more plaintive person. But to the point, Mr. Tims. I think my solicitors wrote to you that I had twenty-five thousand pounds lying uninvested, which I was willing to lend at five or four and a half per cent. This sum they had heard you were seeking for some gentleman in this neighbourhood who could give good security--Sir Sidney Delaware, I think, was his name."

"Oh but, sir, I am afraid"--answered Mr. Tims, shaking his head, "I am afraid that business is off. It won't do, sir, I am afraid--It won't do--Can't manage matters there, I am afraid!"

"And pray why not, sir?" demanded Burrel. "I shall not feel very well pleased if I have been brought down here by your report to examine the matter myself, and am disappointed."

"Oh! no fear of that, sir," replied the other; "no fear of finding plenty of others. Besides, I should think, with submission, that you might make Sir Sidney pay--as you say--your expenses, loss of time, &c. &c. He gave me full powers--and as you say"----

"I do not say any thing of the kind, sir," replied Burrel sternly. "Be so good as not to put words into my mouth which I have never spoken. Rather let me hear why, and how, the proposed arrangement cannot have effect, and then we will consider other matters after we have fully canvassed the first."

"Quite right, sir! Quite right!" replied Mr. Tims, not in the least discomposed by Burrel's rebuke. "Quite right, indeed! Always right to have every thing clear by itself! Why, you must know the simple fact is this. The property of Emberton, as you say, is burdened with an annuity to the amount of two thousand pounds per annum on the life of the present Lord Ashborough, the sum given for which was only twenty-five thousand pounds--and that nearly twenty years ago, when Lord Ashborough was about forty, and his life was worth at least twenty years' purchase. Well, having to speak with Sir Sidney some time ago on some road business, the transaction came up, and I asked him why he did not pay off the annuity, by raising money on mortgage, which he could do at five per cent. His son, the Captain, too, was present; and, as the entail ends with the Captain, the matter would be easily done--though it had never struck them--always provided, nevertheless, that the annuity was redeemable. The arrangement would save them a thousand a-year you see, sir, and so they agreed to give"----

"To give you how much, sir, for the job?" demanded Burrel.

"Only a fair commission for raising the money," replied the other; "and as Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson, your worthy and excellent solicitors, had been making enquiries about this very estate, as it would happen--I cannot think how or why--I wrote to them about it, and the matter was soon arranged; but then Captain Delaware was obliged to go to London to speak with my Lord Ashborough--an excellent gentleman--and on his return, it was found that the annuity deed, by some strange accident, contained no clause of redemption. Indeed, none could have been stipulated, for I know the person who drew it, and who is as accurate as Duval."

"And pray, sir, who did draw it?" demanded Burrel.

"My own nephew, sir--my own nephew--Peter Tims, Esq." replied his companion; "Peter Tims, who succeeded me in my chambers at Clement's Inn; and who was fortunate enough to secure the patronage and friendship of Lord Ashborough."

"Ha!" replied Burrel dryly; "so then you think the annuity cannot be redeemed?"

"Afraid not, sir! Afraid not!" replied the retired lawyer, or, as he was commonly called by the villagers, the miser. "Afraid not; but as I was saying, there are plenty of other properties susceptible of mortgage in this neighbourhood, and some," he added, closing one eye, and fixing the other on Burrel's face with the look of a tame raven that has just hidden a silver spoon, "and

some where there is a strong ultimate prospect of a foreclosure and sale at excessive reduction. There is the estate of Sir Timothy Ridout--who wants now to borrow twenty thousand pounds--well worth an hundred. By a little management one might get hold of it, and"----

"I have no such views, sir," replied Burrel gravely; "and as the other business cannot apparently be arranged, I shall invest the money in other property. But, tell me, did Lord Ashborough refuse to redeem?"

"Yes, sir! Yes, flat, downright!" replied the miser; "and very right, too. He could not get near the interest even now. But you had better think of the business of Sir Timothy Ridout. Such a thing is not to be got hold of every day."

"I shall never give it another thought," replied Burrel coldly; and, rubbing his boot with his cane, unconscious of what he was about, he remained for several minutes thinking deeply, while the miser sat upon the edge of his chair, marvelling that any human being could let slip the tempting bait of Sir Timothy Ridout's estate; and beginning to entertain strong doubts as to whether Burrel was really a wealthy man, from the indifference he showed to the prospect of increasing his wealth. "I am sorry," he thought, "that I told that servant of his that he might shoot over the Ryebury fields: I will write to Peter by the next post, and make him fish out of Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson whether he really has money. I might have made a cool five hundred by that Ridout business."

While he thus thought, and Burrel's meditations continued, though of a very different nature, a sudden ring of the bell roused them both from their reveries; and, after a short *reconnoissance* through the window, the miser exclaimed, "It is Sir Sidney Delaware, I declare!"

"Then you will be so good, Mr. Tims," said Burrel, in a tone sufficiently peremptory, "not to refer or allude to me, in any shape or way, as the person who wished to lend the money."

"Oh, certainly not! certainly not!" replied the miser with a shrewd glance; "it is a bad speculation that--but the Ridout business, if you will but think over it--Will you see this Sir Sidney?"

"I have no objection," answered Burrel; and the miser bidding his dirty maid show the gentleman in. Sir Sidney Delaware was ushered into the parlour the moment after.

As soon as he saw that there was a stranger present, the baronet paused, and for an instant seemed as if he would have drawn back, saying, "You are engaged, Mr. Tims; I was not aware you had any one with you."

"Not at all; not at all, my dear sir!" said Mr. Tims. "Sir Sidney, Mr. Burrel--Mr. Burrel, Sir Sidney Delaware!"

"I am happy to have an opportunity, sir," said Burrel, "of returning you my personal thanks for the permission to shoot over your grounds, which you were kind enough to grant me."

"Where there is no obligation conferred, sir," replied the baronet somewhat distantly, "there can be no occasion for thanks. I do not shoot--my son has not this year taken out a license; and it is quite as well that the game should be shot by you, who ask permission, as by those who do not ask at all." He paused for an instant, while the colour deepened in Burrel's cheek; but the baronet's heart instantly reproached him for an uncourteous reply, and he added, "I hope you have found sport."

"Plenty of game," answered Burrel; "but the birds are very wild."

"That is a very natural consequence," said Sir Sidney Delaware, "of the immense number of persons whose notions of property are daily growing more limited."

"I trust, indeed, that something may soon be done," replied Burrel, "to correct the extensive system of poaching."

"Probably we shall soon have one of those beautiful pieces of legislation on the subject," replied Sir Sidney, "which will prevent people from committing the crime, by rendering it none in the eye of the law--But, Mr. Tims, as I have a little business of a private nature on which I must speak with you, I will probably call upon you to-morrow if you are likely to be disengaged."

"No delay must take place on my account," said Burrel, rising. "My business with this gentleman is over; and therefore I will leave you."

Thus saying, he turned, and, wishing the baronet good-morning, quitted the house, ushered to the door by Mr. Tims; who, though still doubtful as to the young stranger's wealth, followed him with many a lowly bow, fearful of losing by any indiscretion the sums that might accrue from the good management of the Ridout business. Burrel, in the mean time, took his way once more through the valley, musing as he went upon his late interview with Sir Sidney Delaware, with somewhat more deep and curious speculation than entered into the thoughts he bestowed upon the old miser, of whose general character he was before aware.

In the manner and tone of Sir Sidney Delaware, however, there was something that he felt to be repulsive and unpleasant, which, to a man of Burrel's character, was extremely painful. His first determination--if that can be called a determination which, formed upon impulse, does not last ten minutes--was to set out for London, and forget that such a place as Emberton, or such a person as Sir Sidney Delaware, was upon the face of the earth. Burrel, however, to use Sterne's expression, was a great motive-monger, but with this peculiarity, that he was fully as fond of examining his own motives as those of other people; and, in the present instance, the small still voice whispered something about offended pride, which made him enquire into his own heart a little more strictly.

He found then, upon reflection, that however much he might fancy himself perfectly indifferent, he was in fact angry, and the primary cause of this anger was as usual mortified vanity. He--accustomed to be courted and sought, to choose at will his acquaintances, and to keep at arm's length all those he did not particularly like by a cool tone of indifference, which had something in it of scorn--had come out of his stronghold, and--as he could not but acknowledge--had gone as far as he well could, to seek the acquaintance of Sir Sidney Delaware. That gentleman was evidently not disposed to give it him; and though Burrel felt in some degree the motives which might and did actuate him, yet a knowledge of the degree of scorn which mingled with his own coolness towards others, would not let him believe that some portion of contempt did not also exist in the indifference with which Sir Sidney Delaware treated his advances.

It is in general the natural refuge of mortified vanity, to persuade itself that it retorts contempt upon those that show it, and to pass off upon itself the anger it feels for the more dignified passion of scorn. A slight touch of this sort of feeling had been experienced by Burrel; for there are few bosoms, of whose passions we may not say, *castigata remordent*; but his nature was too generous to entertain such feelings long, and, before he had reached the door of good Mrs. Wilson in Emberton, his first angry resolution was changed, and a more firm determination adopted, to remain in the village the time he had at first proposed, and without seeking any more an acquaintance which was evidently withheld intentionally, to see whether chance might not furnish him with some opportunity of gratifying a more generous purpose.

"For the sake of that gallant lad," he thought, "I will not give it up so easily."

CHAPTER IV.

On his return home, Burrel found that the horses which he expected from London had arrived in high condition, having performed the journey by slow and careful stages. The appearance of this new accession to his dignity was not, of course, without its effect upon the good people of Emberton, and "Have you seen Mr. Burrel's beautiful horses?" was a general question amongst the male part of the inhabitants; while all the ladies of the place, of course, were not in the least anxious to see the tall, dark, handsome, mysterious stranger ride forth upon some one of those three steeds whose fame already filled the town.

Those who had such expectations, however, were long disappointed, for during the whole of the following morning, Mr. Burrel never set foot beyond his door; and it was near four o'clock when his servant, on horseback, proceeded towards Mrs. Darlington's with a small travelling portmanteau, thus giving notice that the master himself was soon to follow. About half past four, or a quarter to five, a groom appeared at the door with a splendid dark bay horse, and a moment after Burrel himself came forth, looked at the girths, the stirrups, and the curb, and then putting his foot in the stirrup, swung himself easily into the saddle. The horse stood as still as marble till it felt, its master's heel, and then, as if cut out of one piece, away went both--without the slightest regard to high-road--straight across the country towards Mrs. Darlington's house, which was seen crowning the distant hill.

"Happy Mrs. Darlington!"--thought the ladies of Emberton as they gazed out, and saw the horseman clear the fence at a bound, and then canter lightly over the sloping fields that led away towards her dwelling. "Happy Mrs. Darlington!" and Mrs. Darlington was a happy woman;--but as there are at least a thousand ways, in this intellectual world, of being happy, we shall take leave to give a slight sketch of *Mrs. Darlington's way*.

Mrs. Darlington was a widow, and her happiness was farther increased by being a widow with a large fortune. Nor was her fortune alone derived from her *ci-devant* husband, for she had passed through all the three stages of female felicity--that of co-heiress, heiress, and rich widow with a very slight taste of the necessary purgatory preceding the last happy climax. Who was her father matters not to this book; he was dead, and his ancestors had him in the dust,--for as the Spectator says, "He had ancestors just as well as you and I, if he could but have told their

names." This, however, it was supposed, from some defect in the family memory, he could not do; but in regard to his daughter, who was neither very handsome nor very ugly, the defect was soon remedied. She had every sort of instruction that the known world could produce; her father luckily died early; she had no relations to make her vulgar; she married Mr. Darlington, a man of rank and station--easily acquired the slang and ease of fashionable life; and adopted boldly, and without remorse of conscience, the whole of her husband's relations. Her husband found that his wife brought him fortune, good luck, and no family. His affairs, to use the seaman's term, righted, and after four years' marriage he died, leaving her out of pure gratitude, widowhood, fortune, and his relations.

Mrs. Darlington, having penetrated into the arcana, and got all she wanted--an introduction and a station in society--determined to taste no more of matrimony herself; though with laudable zeal she was ever willing to promote it amongst her friends and neighbours. She was naturally of somewhat a sentimental turn, but mingled and kept down by so sufficient a portion of small sensualities--I mean the eating, and drinking, and soft-lying, and, in short, the comfortable sensualities, nothing worse--that the sentimentality never became vulgar or troublesome. Nay, indeed, I might say, it never became apparent, and showed itself rather as a convenient sort of tender consideration for the wishes and feelings of young people of suitable ages and descriptions, and likely to fall in love with each other, than as any thing personal. In most other things, she was one of those very ordinary persons, perfectly ladylike and at their ease, with a small degree of taste in the fine arts--drew tolerably, liked music, and would sometimes play on the piano--was fond of fine scenery--spoke French well, with the exception of a slight confusion in the genders--had an idea or two of Italian, and had sketched the Colosseum. Added to all these high qualities, she was extremely good-natured, very fond of her friends and of herself; quiet, in no degree obtrusive, with a sufficient share of vanity never to fancy herself neglected, and yet not enough to run against the vanity of any one. A little tiresome she was, it is true, from a potent mixture of insipidity; but who is there so splenetic as not to forgive the only evil quality over which one can fall sound asleep, and wake without a headach?

Mrs. Darlington's common course of life was to travel during six months of the year, accompanied by as many young marriageable friends as she thought might do credit to her taste and kindness; and as she had a very extensive circle of acquaintances, at whose dwellings she was always welcome, these journeys were generally pleasant, and sometimes fortunate. Of the other six months, two were spent in London, where Mrs. Darlington, dressed by Carson, in the manner at once the most splendid and the most becoming her age, figured at dinner and evening parties, and was exceedingly useful both as a chaperon and a fill-up; while the other four months were passed at her estate near Emberton, with a house seldom entirely vacant, and dinner parties renowned for the delicacy of the *manger*.

Such was the lady to whose house Henry Burrel, Esq. had received an invitation, solely upon the strength of the gossip of the village, and a vague report, that Captain Delaware had met him at the Earl of Ashborough's. The fact indeed was, that Mrs. Darlington's house was completely vacant at the time, or she might have felt some scruples as to asking a stranger, without some farther information regarding his station in society than could be derived from the panegyric of the doctor, whose knowledge of him went no farther than the cut of his coat. She did, indeed, feel a little apprehensive after she had despatched the invitation, but the appearance of Burrel's servant, who brought her his reply, the form of the note that contained it, and the very handwriting, all convinced her that Henry Burrel must be a gentleman, though it was in vain that she racked her imagination to find out which of all the Burrels it could be.

When, about half-past four, Mr. Burrel's servant arrived, and proceeded to prepare the room assigned to his master with a sort of ceremonious accuracy, which argued the constant habit and custom of ease and care, the footman, feeling for the anxiety of his mistress--for footmen and lady's maids know every thing--communicated to Mrs. Hawkins, his mistress's maid, the result of his own observations; and Mrs. Darlington sat down, with a composed mind, to finish a sketch of the west shrubby walk, till Mr. Burrel should arrive; while, of the rest of the guests she had invited, some had not appeared, and some had retired to dress.

At length her eye caught from the window the apparition of some person on horseback approaching the house, and in a few minutes Mr. Burrel was announced. Graceful, easy, *posé*, Burrel's whole appearance carried its own recommendation with it. He was one of those men who, in speaking little, say much, and in a very few minutes he was in high favour with Mrs. Darlington.

It now became necessary for him to dress, as he well knew that a lady whose fondness for the good things of this life was so admitted as Mrs. Darlington's, would not brook the spoiling of her dinner; and accordingly he rang, and was shown to his room. His toilet, indeed, was not very long; and a few minutes after six, the hour named, found him entering the drawing-room.

There were four persons already assembled, of whom Mrs. Darlington herself was one. The face of the young lady who sat by her on the sofa, was, he thought, familiar to him; but it cost him more than one glance, ere he recognized in the beautiful girl he now beheld, and who was certainly as lovely a thing as ever the female part of creation produced--It is saying a great deal, but it is true, nevertheless--It required more than one glance, I say, before he recognized in her, the lady he had seen hanging upon the arm of Captain Delaware on the preceding day.

Burrel, however, never looked surprised; and his claim upon Miss Delaware's acquaintance was immediately admitted with a degree of frank and smiling kindness, which arose partly, perhaps, from the high character her brother had drawn of his stage-coach companion, but more still, in all probability, from feeling that her father's reserve might have given pain and offence. While he was still speaking with Mrs. Darlington and Miss Delaware, and was just at one of those before-dinner pauses, in which the conversation flags, some one laid his hand upon Burrel's arm, and turning round, he confronted a thin, but hale elderly man, dressed in black, on whose fine gentlemanly countenance was playing a smile, which had as much archness in its composition as habitual gravity of expression would allow.

"My dear Henry," said the clergyman--for no one could look in his face for a moment and doubt that he was a clergyman;--"my dear Henry, what have you been doing with yourself this many a day?"

The first look had shown Burrel an old and dear friend, and he shook his hand heartily as Dr. Wilton.--"I am still, I believe, acting as one of what Tillotson calls '*fools at large*,'" replied the young stranger, "and wandering about the world doing nothing."

"Nay, nay, Henry!" replied the other, "your report of yourself was always less favourable than you deserved. You are not one to wander about the world doing nothing--but speak to me a moment," and he drew his younger companion gently towards the hollow of the bay window, where they conversed for a few moments in a low tone, while one or two of the neighbouring gentlemen and ladies were announced and entered the room.

The dinner bell rang immediately after; and the doors being thrown open, Burrel advanced and took in Mrs. Darlington, though he would, perhaps, have preferred a nearer place to Miss Delaware. But Dr. Wilton took the end of the widow's table, and laughingly secured the younger ladies to himself; so that Burrel was obliged to content himself with talking elaborate nonsense to Mrs. Darlington, which, to do him all manner of justice, he executed with great gravity and success.

"I do not like this Mr. Burrel," thought a sensible middle-aged county woman, who sat next to him on the other hand. "He's a coxcomb!" thought a rough, shrewd, wealthy proprietor opposite. The shy young fox-hunter, who sat a little farther down, and whose ideas were strangely confined to horses, and dogs, and fences, and five-barred gates, was inclined to cry with Mungo, "D--- his impudence!" and, in short, at the end of the table at which he himself sat, Burrel most perversely contrived to give very general dissatisfaction to every one but Mrs. Darlington. With her he ran over the slang of cookery, and criticism, and ton, with the most wonderful emptiness.

There is certainly some strange perversity in the human heart, which renders it so pleasant sometimes to make one's self disagreeable--ay, and, for the express purpose of doing so, to assume a character totally different from one's own. So, however, it is; and perhaps Burrel was especially giving himself forth as a fop at the one end of the table, because he very well knew that Dr. Wilton would not fail to portray him differently at the other.

Such, indeed, was the fact. Blanche Delaware was a sort of pet of the worthy clergyman; and he used to declare that he was always the proudest man in the county when in company with her, for that he was the only man she ever was known to flirt with. The affectionate term, "My dear," which he always applied to Miss Delaware, was felt by her as he intended it; and she looked up to him as, in some degree, a second parent. His conversation with her almost immediately turned to Burrel, whose appearance there had evidently surprised him.

"You seem an old friend of his?" said Miss Delaware, as soon as the soup was gone, and a general buzz suffered her to ask the question without particular notice. "Pray, is he so very admirable and charming as he has convinced my brother he is, in a short journey of a hundred miles?"

"He is something better than charming, my dear," replied Dr. Wilton. "He is one of the noblest-hearted, finest-minded men in England."

At that very moment there was one of those unhappy breaks which make low voices loud; and Burrel was heard descanting upon the merits of Madeira after soup. "For Heaven's sake, never think of taking sherry, my dear madam!" he exclaimed. "After soup or maccaroni, Madeira is the only thing bearable."

Blanche Delaware looked up in Dr. Wilton's face with a smile full of playful meaning. "Do not judge him by that," replied the clergyman, speaking to the smile's purport. "Do not judge him by that--I have known him from his boyhood. He was my pupil as a youth, and has been my friend as a man--and"----

"And that is evidence beyond rejection that he is all that is good and amiable?" said Miss Delaware seriously.

"Ay, and though he can talk her own kind of nonsense to a worthy lady like that," replied Dr. Wilton, determined to revenge himself on Miss Delaware for her smile, "he can talk nonsense equally agreeable to younger and fairer ladies, my dear Blanche. So take care of your little heart, my pretty dame."

Miss Delaware laughed gaily, in the full ignorant confidence of a heart that had known no wound; and the conversation dropt as far as it regarded Burrel. He himself prolonged the idle gossip with which he was amusing himself for some time; but finding, or fancying, that the elder lady who sat next to him possessed a mind that could appreciate better things, he gradually led the conversation to matters of more general interest than *pieds de cochons à la St. Menehould*, or the portraiture of gravel walks.

It is the most difficult manœuvre in the tactics of conversation, and shows greater skill, when executed neatly, than any other evolution whatever, to change at once from the flimsy and the foolish to the substantial and the good, without deviating into the heavy--to slide down the diapason from the high notes of commonplace chatter, to the fine tenor of calm and sensible discourse, touching each semitone and enharmonic difference as one goes, till the change is scarcely felt, though the music may be richer. Burrel could do it when he liked; but now he overdid it. From French dishes he speedily got to France and the French people, and thence to the difference between the French and English character, with an easy facility, that made the alteration of the subject seem nothing strange; but then he went a little beyond.

"The French," he said, in answer to a question from his neighbour, "have nothing of that sort of thing that we would call national modesty. They would look upon it as *mauvaise honte* and each Frenchman thinks himself fully justified in praising his own country to the skies. It is they who believe it, that are foolish. They, the French, call themselves the most civilized, well-informed people in the world; and yet go into the provinces, and you will find a peasantry more generally ignorant, than perhaps any other country can show. I myself resided for many months in a part of one of the most cultivated Departments of France, where the farmer on either hand of the house in which I dwelt during the hunting season--each renting many hundreds of acres of land--could neither read nor write. Where could such a thing be found in England?"

"Ay, sir," cried the wealthy country gentleman opposite; "but their laws, sir, their laws--their wise and equitable courts of justice--their civil and political liberty, sir--a model for all nations; and which I hope some day to see fully adopted in this country."

"May God forbid!" cried Burrel. "As to their political liberty, we cannot speak of it; for a thing that has never existed for ten years together, without deviating into anarchy on the one hand, or sinking before tyranny on the other, is something very like a nonentity. As to civil liberty, they have no such thing; and may heaven avert the day when an Englishman's house will be open to domiciliary visits at the caprice of any man or body of men, or when he cannot ride for twenty miles without being subjected to interruption, and a demand for his passport!"

He now found that his conversation was getting too heavy, and would fain have dropped it; but the other urged him somewhat warmly with, "Their laws, sir--their laws! their courts of justice!" and Burrel resolved that he should not rest even upon that.

"As to their courts," he replied, "I have been in many, and never did I see the forms of justice so completely mocked. The judge renders himself a party, and that party the accuser. The unhappy man who is to be tried, placed on an elevated station in face of all the court, is himself cross-examined, and tortured by interrogations without end; every tittle of the evidence against him is urged upon him by the judge; he is obliged to answer and to plead to the accusation of each witness on the adverse part, and woe be to him if he trip in the smallest particular. If ever there was a plan invented for condemning the innocent and the timid, and letting the guilty and the daring escape, it is that of a French trial. The only security is in the individual integrity and discrimination of the judges--in general most exemplary men."

"That may be all very true, sir," replied the other, who, like many of our countrymen, had been talked into believing the French system very fine, without ever taking the trouble of examining accurately what the French system is, "That may be all very true; but yet their laws, sir--their laws!"

"I think," replied Burrel more calmly than he had before spoken; for the commonplace absurdity of the other's commendation of what he did not understand, had thrown even his cool mind off its guard--"I think, if you will take the trouble of reading the book which contains their codes, you will find that it is confined both in scope and detail; and to show how iniquitous as well as absurd their laws are, we have only to look at their law of succession, which prevents a man from disposing of his property at his death, according to his own judgment and inclination, whether he have acquired it by his personal labour or by inheritance."

"A foolish law it is indeed," said Dr. Wilton, who had been listening attentively; "and would be a disgrace to the common sense of any nation under the sun."

"Already," continued Burrel, "although the time since its enactment has been so short--it is beginning to paralyze industry and commerce in France--to degrade the higher orders, and to starve the lower."

"They must repeal it!" said Dr. Wilton; "They must repeal it, if they be sane!"

"But there are some points, by dear sir, on which whole nations become insane," replied Burrel laughing, "and none more than the French. One thing, however, is evident. They must

either repeal it, or it will effect the most baleful change that country ever underwent. Already one sees every where fields no bigger than a handkerchief, which in the next generation will have to be divided again between three or four sons. Every thing else is split in the same way; and the argument which the French hold, that commerce and industry will remedy the effects of this continual partition, is a vain absurdity; for the natural tendency of the partition itself, is, by want of capital, to ruin the commerce and paralyze the industry which they think will remove its evils. Under its influence, the French must gradually decline till they become a nation of beggars--universal beggary must beget universal ignorance--and thus from a nation of beggars they must become a nation of barbarians, with a country too small to support their increased numbers, a fierce necessity of conquest, and the concomitant hatred of better institutions than their own. Then woe to Europe and the world! but beyond doubt--at least it is to be hoped--they will change a law, the glaring absurdity of which strikes every person of common understanding even in France."

"Why not let each individual control his property as he pleases?" demanded Dr. Wilton. "Though I cannot but feel that entails are often beneficial, let them be done away if they will but at least leave each man to dispose of his property as he judges best in its immediate transmission from himself to another."

"Nay, Mr. Burrel!" cried Mrs. Darlington, seeing him about to reply, "Nay, nay! have pity, I beseech you, upon us poor women."

"I must indeed apologize," answered Burrel laughing; "but, in truth, we live in such a scientific age, that railroads and steam-engines, geology and legislation, now form the staple chit-chat of society; and mathematics is the food of babes and sucklings."

"The matter has become perfectly absurd," said Dr. Wilton; "and whether from ignorance or design I know not, but those who cater for the lower orders in these things, instead of giving them those instructions which may be useful to them in their station, which would make them better, wiser, and more contented, choose for them alone that species of knowledge which may make them discontented with their state, without aiding to raise them honestly to a better."

"I will not be tempted any more to grave discussions, my dear sir," said Burrel laughing, and looking towards Mrs. Darlington; "yet I cannot help adding, that the new-fashioned education of children is just as ill adapted to children as the instruction forced upon mechanics is unfitted for them. Lord deliver us from the little pragmatistical race of half-learned pedants that are springing up! I understand that they have been obliged to dissolve one infant school in London, because it was divided into two such furious parties of Neptunists and Vulcanists; and the son of a cousin of my own talked to me upon reform the other day so like Lord John Russell, that I asked when the little legislator was to be breeched."

The conversation soon became more general, though the party consisted of ten, that most inconvenient of all numbers; and Burrel soon regained that middle strain, half playful half serious, which was calculated to be more generally pleasing. This continued till the ladies rose; and the few minutes that ensued ere the gentlemen followed them, were passed by Burrel and Dr. Wilton in calling up remembrances of old times, when they had lived together as pupil and preceptor.

"Well, my dear doctor," said Burrel, "I always thought that your head was fitted for a mitre; and I doubt not that we shall see it so adorned ere long."

"Not for a world!" cried Dr. Wilton; "and you, my dear boy, do nothing towards it, I insist. I would not change my present state, with all the blessed sufficiency that attends it--its opportunities of doing some good to my fellow-creatures in quiet and unassailed obscurity--for the painful, anxious, ill-requited life of a bishop, whom every rude, unprincipled, and vulgar churl dares to attack, solely because he knows that the churchman can neither rail again, nor chastise him as other men would do. I would not change it, I say, on any account whatever. I am happy as I am here in the country, and I want nothing more."

"Now I could understand that, Dr. Wilton," said the young fox-hunter, "if you ever mounted a red coat and followed the hounds. But you never hunt nor shoot; and, unless your magisterial capacity afford you some amusement, I cannot conceive how you can like the country, which, without hunting or shooting, is dull enough."

"Never dull to me!" replied Dr. Wilton; "never dull, and always tranquil; and in it shall I be well contented to pass my life away, saying with Seneca,

*'Sic cum transiérint mei
Nullo cum strepitu dies
Plebeius moriar senex!'*"

A Latin quotation was of course enough to put an end to the session, and the whole party rose.

It would seem that the purpose of assembling to dine together, the mere act and fact of which assimilates one to the hog--as somebody has said before me--is solely with a view to familiarize people with each other by the open submission to a general infirmity--teaching the most conceited that he must gulp and guzzle like the rest, and showing the most diffident that the

brightest and the best he can meet with, is but a beast of prey like himself. Men therefore assemble at dinner, and then generalize best. After dinner--when the tea and the coffee, and the various tables laid out with their various calls upon attention, prompt people to break into smaller parties--then is the time to choose your own little knot, and individualize.

It matters very little how or why--though the arrangement was made by the simplest process imaginable--but after dinner, Henry Burrel found himself seated, in the far part of the room, with a sofa-table, and innumerable books of drawings and prints upon it before him, and by the side of Blanche Delaware. It is wonderful what stepping-stones prints and drawings and annuals are to pleasant conversation, even though the first be not quite so well handled as the pictures of Prout or Stanley, and the latter contain nothing half so beautiful as Liddell's "Lines upon the Moors."

Burrel had managed his approaches well, though he did it unconsciously. He first stooped over the book of drawings that Miss Delaware was examining, to look at one of those fair Italian scenes where the long sunshine seems to stream forth from a spot beyond the picture, and pour onward, till one can absolutely see its wavy softness skip from point to point in its advance. He then spoke a few words, in a quiet everyday tone, upon Italian scenery. Miss Delaware said, that she had never had an opportunity of visiting Italy, but had often heard her brother speak of it, with all his own wild rapture. Burrel instantly took up the topic of her brother, well knowing that it was one, round which that tender-footed thing, a woman's heart, could play at ease; and while he spoke of Captain Delaware, he glided quietly into the vacant place by her side, and proceeded with a conversation which was destined to wander far and wide before it ended.

There was a kindly gentleness in Burrel's tone as he began, a sort of dreamy enthusiasm, slightly touched by a more gay and laughing spirit as he went on, together with a general leaven of the gentlemanly feeling that springs from a noble heart, softening and tempering the whole,--which united, addressed to Miss Delaware the most flattering compliment that woman can receive, by showing that he knew her to be worthy of very different conversation from that which he held with any one else. Such conversation is the adulation of respect, esteem, and admiration, expressed but not spoken.

Burrel's words were uttered with no particular emphasis--his eyes, fine and expressive as they were, gave no peculiar meaning to his sentences--the vainest beauty that ever grew old and ugly, could never have persuaded herself that he was making love to her--and yet Blanche Delaware could not but feel that there was a charm in the manners of Henry Burrel, which might turn the head of many a one, with a heart less cold and indifferent than her own. A cold and indifferent heart in a girl of nineteen! Ye gods! Such, however, she fancied it to be--and, consequently, she talked with Henry Burrel of poetry, and painting, and beautiful scenes, and sweet music, and noble deeds, and generous feelings, and all those whirling spots of brightness that dance unconnected through the sunshine of enthusiastic minds, with all the ardour of innocence and youth, and unblighted feelings, and never dreamed of its becoming any thing more. Mrs. Darlington, for her part, had soon perceived that Burrel and Miss Delaware were deep in what seemed interesting conversation. She did not pretend to divine what might happen--she prognosticated nothing--she took no notice, and let things take their course--but she carefully abstained from giving any interruption; and, by a few slight but skilful turns, prevented their little *tête-à-tête* from being broken in upon so soon as it otherwise would have been.

It was Dr. Wilton, who, in the simplicity of his heart, dissolved it for the night; for after having been talking earnestly for a few minutes with the little surgeon of Emberton, about some of his poor parishioners who were sick, his eye met that of Blanche Delaware, as she still sat beside Burrel on the sofa, and it lighted up for a moment with a glance of gay meaning, that called the blood into her fair cheek. Burrel marked it all; and the next two answers which Miss Delaware made to what he was saying were sufficiently *à travers* to show him that the conversation, on her part at least, rolled no longer at its ease. To prolong it under such circumstances would be a crime, as he well knew; and therefore he soon furnished her with an excuse to join Mrs. Darlington.

The evening then proceeded as such evenings usually do, partly in music and partly in idle gossip. Some stupid people played at whist; and at ten o'clock the carriages of those who returned home were announced. Dr. Wilton, who lived at twelve miles distance, and Blanche Delaware, who lived at five, remained with Mrs. Darlington and Henry Burrel; and the worthy clergyman, who felt himself in some degree bound to prove his former pupil as charming as he had depicted him, took care to lead the conversation to those subjects on which he well knew Burrel would shine.

He did shine, too, but without striving to do it; and the evening wore on, for another hour, as pleasantly as moments could fly. There is something in the last hour of the day, if it have been itself a happy one, which seems to concentrate all the pleasant things of the past. It is like a fine evening sky, calm, and sweet, and full of rays, that are all the rosier because they are the last.

I do not know whether it would be fair or proper to follow Blanche Delaware to her bedroom, and investigate what were her thoughts while she was undressing and falling asleep; but as no such considerations forbid with regard to Burrel, we may, for a moment, intrude upon his privacy, first premising, that his room entered very nearly at the top of the great staircase, the landing-place of which formed a sort of balustraded gallery, with a corridor running to the right and left. His first thought, as he sat down for his silent servant to pull off his shoes and stockings,

it must be allowed, was of Blanche Delaware, and he internally pronounced her a very charming girl. "It is not her beauty," he thought, "though she is very beautiful; but it is that freshness of mind, that fine unsophisticated heart, whose rapid emotions, sparkling up unchecked to that sweet face, and animating every movement of that fair form, give a thousand graces and lovelinesses that art could never reach. One might very well fall in love with such a girl as that. I must take care what I am about."

With this resolution to take care, Burrel would have dismissed the subject; but still he thought of Blanche Delaware a good deal more than was necessary; and, after having detained his servant full half an hour longer than usual, went to bed, thinking of her still.

CHAPTER V.

Although there was a good deal of noise in the house for some time, Burrel fell sound asleep in the midst of it. Whether he dreamed or not, I cannot tell; but after he had been in the arms of slumber, for a long while as it appeared to him, he awoke, and heard still some sounds of moving to and fro, although less loud than before. Moralizing upon that strange thing sleep, and its power of taking from us all consciousness of time's passing, he turned himself round to court the drowsy god again; but though the slight noises that had roused him, ceased in a moment altogether, the charm was dissolved, and he could not close an eye. His only resource was to think of Miss Delaware; and although he was obliged to own that the blessing of Heaven--in keeping her out of London and London life--had brought forth all those natural graces and charms which he so much admired, yet he could not but think it hard that such a flower should be born to blush unseen; neither could he help fancying that it would be no very unpleasant thing to transplant her to a more happy soil. Feeling all this, and feeling that he was feeling it, Burrel saw better than ever that it was necessary to take care what he was about; and, as the first step, he applied himself vigorously to go to sleep again. The night was oppressively warm, however, and it would not do. He began also to fancy that there was a marvellous smell of wood smoke; and he thought that, if Mrs. Darlington's housekeeper had begun already to provide for the *manger* of the next day, Mrs. Darlington's cook must have a hard place of it. So, stretching out his hand, he reached his watch, struck it, and found that it was just half-past two.

He now began to think the smell of smoke odd as well as disagreeable; and, raising himself on his arm, he found that it was more potent than he had at first perceived. There was also a sort of faint rushing sound, as of a draught of wind through long passages, and Burrel thought he heard a crackling noise also, which, after listening for a moment or two, determined him to rise and make a voyage of discovery. To guard against all contingencies, he partly dressed himself, put on his dressing-gown, and then opened the door. A loud roaring sound, and a still greater volume of smoke, immediately met him; but he found that there was yet another door between him and the corridor; and, as he was seeking for the lock, it was thrown open, by his own servant, so violently as almost to knock him down.

It wanted not the man's cry of "Sir, sir, the house is on fire!" to show Burrel what had happened. A red fearful glare, of bright flame shining through dense volumes of smoke, was seen below, from the edge of the sort of gallery on which he stood, while along the cornices and mouldings a number of detached spots of fire appeared running on before the great body of the conflagration, like light troops thrown forward to skirmish. The roaring and crackling too, which, as well as the suffocating smoke, had been, in a great measure, excluded from his bedroom by the double door, was now sufficiently distinct; and at one glance he perceived that the whole foot of the great oak staircase, near the top of which his apartment opened, was in flames. At the same time, as he looked along the corridor to the left, he saw another door open, which seemed to lead to the top of a different flight of steps; for he could distinctly see two or three figures in every state of dishabille running down as fast as possible, while his servant pulled him that way, begging him to come to the stone stairs.

All this was gathered in a moment, and Burrel demanded, "Have you seen any of the family?--Mrs. Darlington"----

"I saw her this moment, sir, running down with Dr. Wilton," replied the man.

"And Miss Delaware?" demanded his master.

"I don't know, sir--I don't know!" replied the man, hastening away himself. "The house will be down, sir, if you don't make haste."

A good sturdy housemaid, however, hurrying away from some of the upstairs rooms, caught

Miss Delaware's name, and cried out--without stopping in her flight, however--"Oh, dear! oh, dear! poor young lady--she will be burned to a certainty!"

"Which is her room?" demanded Burrel. But it was not till he had repeated his question in a still louder tone that the woman paused to point with her hand, exclaiming, "Up there, at the end of the wing!--she will be burned!--Oh, dear, she will be burned!"--and off ran the housemaid.

Burrel ran along the corridor like light. It was evident that--as is always the case in houses on fire--all the inhabitants had lost their wits for the time, and no one had even thought of Miss Delaware. Without ceremony, Burrel threw open the last door that he came to, in the direction which the servant had pointed out, but the glare of the flames was quite sufficient to show him that it had not been slept in that night. He tried the next, and instantly perceived all the little articles of a lady's toilet spread upon the table, while, by the drawn curtains of the bed, he doubted not that the sleep of its fair tenant had been undisturbed by the sounds which had woke himself.

The violence with which he threw open the door woke Blanche Delaware from the first sweet sleep of innocence and youth; and her voice demanding, in alarm, "Who is there?" immediately struck his ear.

He knew that not a moment was to be lost; and though he approached her bedside with a feeling of real pain, from the shock he was about to give her, there was but one course to be pursued; and, springing forward, he drew back the curtains. "Forgive me!" he cried, "but the house is on fire--not a moment is to be lost!--Your life is at stake, and you must pardon me if I use but scanty ceremony!"

"Leave me! Leave me then, Mr. Burrel, and let me rise!" she exclaimed, gazing in his face with all the wild surprise natural to one wakened from their sleep by such tidings.

"Miss Delaware, moments are life!" replied Burrel hastily. "Even while I speak our only chance may be cut off."

The gathering smoke and the rushing sound of the flames bore to his own ear, as well as to that of the fair girl who lay pale and trembling before him, the certainty that he spoke no more than truth; and, without farther pause, he stooped over her, wrapped the bedclothes round her as tenderly and delicately as a mother would wrap her young infant from the wintry wind, and, catching her up in his arms, he bore her out into the corridor. All before them was a scene of mingled smoke and flame. The wainscoting of the corridor, the balustrades, the cornices, were all charred, blackened, and catching fire in a thousand places. The blaze was rushing up from below, towards the skylight, which had unfortunately been left open, and gave an additional draught. Wherever an open door presented itself, the flames were seen rushing in, licking the door-posts and the wainscoting; the heat was scorching; the smoke was suffocating; and every step that Burrel took forward, he felt uncertain whether the beams over which he trod would not give way beneath his feet. Still, however, he strode on till he reached the spot where the flames were rushing up the great staircase more furiously than any where else, from the additional mass of fuel that there supplied the fire.--His foot was on the edge of the landing, to cross over towards the stone stairs; and he had just time--warned by a sudden crash--to draw back, when the whole staircase and part of the corridor above it gave way, and fell into the vestibule below. It was a fearful sight; but he was not a man to leave any chance of safety to be snatched from him by terror. The rest of the corridor beyond the gap appeared more sound than that he had already past. He remembered having seen a side-door in his own room, which he had just left behind; and retreading his steps, he entered the chamber, drove in the door he had remarked--which was but weakly fastened--with a single kick, and running through a room, the tenant of which had made his escape, he passed on into a dressing-room, and thence regained the corridor, beyond the point where it had been connected with the great staircase.

The fall of so much lime and rubbish had in a degree deadened the fire; and, striding on, Burrel reached the door which opened on the stone staircase. The rush of cool air and the joy of escape revived him, almost suffocated as he was with the heat and smoke; and, bending down his head over his fair burden, he said--the most natural thing in the world--"Dear girl, you are safe!"--Ay, though he had only seen her twice in all his life!

Though they were now in comparative security, the fire had made sufficient progress even there, to render haste imperative, and Burrel lost not a moment till he reached a small door which led out upon the lawn by some ascending steps. At about the distance of fifty or sixty yards, were assembled the whole of the late inmates of the dwelling--mistress, visitors, and servants, with twenty or thirty country men and women--all engaged in the laudable occupation of seeing the house burn.

Dr. Wilton was the only one in a state of activity; and he, in his shirt and breeches, which, with the exception of his shovel hat, were the only articles of apparel he had saved, was endeavouring to instigate some of the servants and peasantry to get up a ladder to the window of Miss Delaware's room, which--what between fear, wonder, and stupidity--they were performing with extraordinary slowness. At the same time, one of the Molly Dusters was corroborating to the rest of the company the assertion of Burrel's servant, who informed them that his master had gone to fetch Miss Delaware: and the very likely consummation that they would both be burnt together,

was prophesied manfully, just as he was making his way across the green towards them, to prove that he did not intend to participate in such a holocaust.

On seeing Burrel, and guessing what it was that he carried in his arms, Mrs. Darlington, who was really a good-tempered woman, gave way a great deal more to her feelings than her usual *bienseance* permitted, and literally screamed for joy. Since her escape she had found time to get cool in body if not in mind; and indeed the latter part of the mixed whole, was by this time sufficiently tranquillized, to admit the vision of a pretty little quiet romance to cross her mind concerning Burrel and Blanche Delaware, and to suggest the propriety of letting her house burn away in peace, while she took shelter, and guarded against taking cold, in the cottages just below the lodge. Thither, too, she requested Burrel, who would give up his fair burden to no one, to follow her; and she herself led the way, with a thousand encomiums on his heroic gallantry, mingled with thanks to heaven that all her title-deeds were at the banker's, and manifold aspirations concerning the fire-resisting powers of the plate-chests.

Burrel thought of nothing but her he carried in his arms. It was not love he felt, but it was intense interest; and I will defy any man to carry a beautiful girl that he has already admired and liked, through dangers such as those, pressed close to his own bosom, and with her heart beating against his, without feeling very different towards her from what he ever did before. He had, however, a quality which few young men possess much of--considerable delicacy of mind; and, as soon as he had placed Miss Delaware in safety in the cottage, he left her with Mrs. Darlington, without any of the troublesome enquiries about her health and comfort which some foolish people might have made.

He then hastened back as fast as possible towards the house, with a determination of doing all that he rationally could to save whatever portion of it remained, but without the slightest intention in the world of bringing his life into jeopardy, or enacting wonders worthy of a demigod, either to preserve the property of a rich old widow lady about whom he did not care a sixpence, or to astonish worthy Dr. Wilton and half-a-dozen lackeys and cowherds who were looking on. When he arrived at the spot, however, he found that the occupation which he had proposed to himself, had been already seized by a stout agile young fellow, in a sailor's jacket and trowsers, who had arrived on the ground during his absence, and had inspired one or two of the peasantry with some activity.

The efforts of this young man were energetic, bold, and cleverly executed; but, from being ill directed, did little comparative good, while his own life was every moment hazarded. Indeed, personal security seemed the last thing that he considered; and perhaps this somewhat superabundant display of daring, might do some good, if only by stirring up the more slothful to a tolerable degree of activity. Burrel paused and looked on for an instant, but not from either over-prudence or laziness. What is best to be done may be always better considered before doing any thing than after, provided too much time is not bestowed upon it; and, in the single moment that Burrel gave to consideration, he perceived that the young sailor was not only doing no good, but running himself and others into certain destruction, by continuing to labour at the centre of the house--the interior of which was completely consumed, and the roof of which threatened to fall--while, by cutting off the communication between the *corps de logis* and the wings, a considerable part of the building might be saved. The moment his mind was made up, he entered the principal door, and catching the young sailor by the arm, as he stood in what had been the vestibule, he called upon him to desist.

The lad, for he was scarcely a man, turned round upon him for a moment with a countenance, which haste, heat, and impetuosity of disposition, rendered somewhat furious at the interruption; but a few calm, reasonable words from Burrel, at once showed him the rationality of what he proposed, and after a single oath, escaping, as it were, by the safety valve of his tongue, he agreed to follow. Burrel then hastened to get out of the stifling heat and smoke; but finding that the other still lingered, he turned again at the door. The sailor had paused to recover a bucket, and was at the very instant taking his first step after Burrel, when a small quantity of heated rubbish came pattering from above, and then, with a considerable crash, a thick beam detached itself from the roof, caught upon the ruins of the staircase, and swung blazing for a single instant above the vestibule. The young man sprang forward towards the door; but he was too late to escape entirely. The beam came thundering down--it struck him, and he fell.

Something more was now at stake than the bed and table linen of an old woman. A life is always worth the peril of a life, and Burrel at once plunged in again, and dragged him out, though certainly at the risk of much more than he would have hazarded to save Mrs. Darlington's abode, or any inanimate thing it ever contained. He was scarcely clear of the doorway when the roof fell in, and the rush and the roar, and the subsequent silence, and the suddenly smothered flame, showed him what he had escaped, and made him pause for an instant with a thankful exclamation to that Being, before whose eyes, a sparrow falls not to the ground unheeded.

Henry Burrel then drew the man he had rescued forward, beyond the influence of the heat. I say drew, because he evinced a strange inaptitude to voluntary locomotion, from which Burrel did not augur very favourably; and being within an inch of six feet high, with a very tolerable proportion of sinew and muscle, he was not quite so portable in one's arms as Blanche Delaware.

"Now, my good friends," said Burrel, laying the lad down upon the smooth turf of the lawn, and addressing those who crowded round, "if you want really to render any assistance, get what

axes, picks, crows, and other things of the kind you can, and break down entirely yon little gallery which lies between the house and the right wing. You run no risk; for the fire has not yet caught the gallery, and you will save the wing. Never mind this young man, I will attend to him. Here, Harding," he added, speaking to his servant; "you are a cowardly ----. Take care of yourself, the next time I meet you in a house on fire, that I do not throw you into the flames, to prevent your running away when I want your assistance."

The man replied nothing, as usual, and his master proceeded, "Have you a penknife in your pocket?"

"No, sir," answered the servant; but Dr. Wilton supplied the deficiency.

"Here, here is one!" he cried, groping in his breeches pocket; "What are you going to do, my dear Harry? The poor lad seems dead."

"Only stunned, I hope," replied Burrel; "but, at all events, the best thing one can do for him is to cut the artery in the temple, and let him bleed freely. If he be dead, it can do him no harm; if there be any life left, it will recall it."

Thus speaking, with little ceremony, he drew the penknife sharply across the artery, much to the wonder of the bystanders, some of whom thought him a fine, bold gentleman; some, concluded that he was but little troubled with that civil understrapping virtue of discretion. The effect, however, soon became visible. The blood at first hardly flowed, but, in a moment after, it burst forth with rapid jerks. A deep sigh followed from the hurt man, and in an instant after he looked faintly round.

"I thought I was gone!" he cried, raising himself on his hand, and looking towards the fire. "My head's bad enough still; but I rather think I owe you my life, sir. Well, there is an old woman down in the village, will pray God bless you."

Burrel now endeavoured to stanch the blood; but, like many other persons, he had not previously calculated all the consequences of what he was going to do; and he might have found the undertaking somewhat difficult, had it not fortunately happened that the flames of Mrs. Darlington's villa had alarmed the whole of the little town and neighbourhood of Emberton, and thus people were flocking up both on foot and on horseback. Amongst the first that arrived, was of course her late guest the village surgeon--one at least of the learned professions being more peculiarly and unhappily obnoxious to Rochefoucault's sneering assertion, that there is always something pleasant to ourselves in the misfortunes of our friends. The surgeon then was amongst the first of course, sparing not his horse's breath in order to condole and sympathize, and look grave, and set a limb or tend a bruise, or dress a burn, or, in short, perform any of those small acts which are the sources of emolument, present or future, to a country apothecary. His arrival happened at a fortunate moment for Burrel's patient; and, after having ascertained that no one of more consequence was hurt, he complimented the young stranger highly on his prompt and skilful treatment of poor Wat Harrison, as he called him, suffered the bleeding to continue for another moment, merely to show how much he approved of what had been done, and then proceeded to stop it.

The adventures of the night were now soon concluded. By Burrel's directions, and the exertions of the peasantry, stimulated at last to some degree of activity, one wing of the house, as well as the stabling and offices, was saved; and, from the part thus preserved, apparel was procured sufficient to clothe the half-naked bodies of those who were its late denizens. This apparel, indeed, was of somewhat an anomalous description, and the metamorphoses produced were rather strange; for though Miss Delaware came out most beautifully, as a pretty dairymaid; and Mrs. Darlington did not look ill, as a housekeeper; yet Dr. Wilton had a somewhat fantastic air, when a footman's great-coat was added to his black breeches, silk stockings, and shovel hat. Burrel himself adhered to his own dressing-gown, though many a hole was burnt in the gay flowers that covered it, and many a stain and scorch obscured the original colours. A general smile, which even the serious calamity that had reduced them to that state could not repress, played upon the lips of the whole party, as they met in such strange attire at the door of the cottages, just as the pale light of the morning was pouring faint and bluish through the air. On the countenance of Blanche Delaware, however, that smile, mingled with a flickering blush as she answered Burrel's enquiries concerning her health; and Burrel, though he could not but think it as beautiful a thing as ever the eyes of the morning rested on, hastened, by quiet and easy words of deep but unceremonious respect, to remove the glow with the embarrassment that caused it.

By this time all sorts of chaises and vehicles had arrived from Emberton, and Mrs. Darlington's own carriage and horses had been brought up from the stables. Burrel handed the two ladies in to proceed to the village, the inn of which place, Mrs. Darlington declared, should be her abode for the next day or two. He declined, however, a seat beside them; and bidding his servant take care of his horses, and bring them down afterwards, he himself--the fire having nearly expended itself--got into a hack chaise for Emberton, and, accompanied by the young sailor who had been hurt, drove slowly down into the valley.

Dr. Wilton, whose living lay at a considerable distance in a different direction, had before taken leave of him with many a pressing invitation to the rectory, and had preceded him in departing. One by one, the people from the town returned, and the peasantry dropped away; and,

with one man left to keep watch, the ruins of Mrs. Darlington's house remained smouldering in silent solitude, like the history of a battle, which, full of fire, confusion, and destruction, while it lasts, leaves, after the lapse of a few years, nothing but vacancy, ruin, and the faint smoke of fame.

CHAPTER VI.

It is quite wonderful what a fund of conversation one has with one's self, when one is left alone for a few minutes, after an hour or two of that excitement, during which the mind at one moment has enough to do in calculating what the body is to do the next. This conversation is sometimes pleasant of course, and sometimes severe, according to the circumstances of the case, and character of the person, or rather of the persons concerned. I hold the plural to be the right number in speaking of such conversation; for therein, more or less, the two spirits which Araspus, and every other man felt and feels in his own bosom, hold commune with each other; and--being two twin brothers, who, though good and evil in their several natures, have still a bond of kindred sympathy between them--although they wrangle and oppose each other in the busy strife of the world, yet, when they thus calmly meet in solitude and silence, to talk together over the past, there is a strain of melancholy affection mingles with their intercourse, which renders it always pleasing, though sometimes sad. The good spirit--for it is his moment of power--rebukes his evil brother gently for every abuse of his sway; and the evil one bows contrite, or playfully evades the charge.

All this, however, has very little to do with Henry Burrel, (some persons may think,) who, in companionship with a hurt lad, half peasant half sailor, was slowly winding onward, in a creaking post-chaise, towards the small town of Emberton. Nevertheless, notwithstanding that fact--and whether any one understands some of the foregoing sentences or not, which probably they will not do without reading them over twice--Nevertheless, Henry Burrel's thoughts were suffered to flow, hardly interrupted--for the young sailor was still in a dozy, half lethargic state--and the two spirits, though the good one could scarcely be said to have lost its ascendancy during the hours lately passed, had full leisure for conversation in his bosom.

"I must take care what I am about," thought Burrel, as soon as he had fallen back in the chaise, after a few kindly words to his poor companion, which remained half unanswered; "I must take care what I am about," and it may hardly be necessary to inform the reader, that he was thinking of Blanche Delaware. "And yet," he continued the next moment, half smiling, "why should I take care?--whom have I to care for but myself?"

That was one point gained at least! It was settled, thenceforth and for ever, that there was no reason on earth why he should not fall in love with Blanche Delaware, if he liked it. By the way, men very seldom get so far as that without being somewhat in love already. Few people think of attacking a fort without being in the army. The next step to be taken by a reasonable man--and Burrel was one of those people whose natural inclination to act by impulse was so strong, that he was very anxious, on all occasions, to give impulse a good reason, lest she should act without one, and then laugh at him for his pains--The next step to be taken was to find some good and legitimate cause, altogether independent of passion, why such a cool and considerate person as Henry Burrel looked upon Henry Burrel to be--and which he really was by habit, though not by nature--should fall in love with Blanche Delaware; and as it is not very easy mathematically to find a sufficient cause for falling in love at all, Burrel was obliged to proceed cautiously in the matter, from axiom to postulate, and so on.

He accordingly set himself to think over all he had seen of Blanche Delaware; and he did not find it in the least difficult to imagine, to assume, to demonstrate, that she had plenty of virtues and high qualities, (independent of her beauty,) to make her a desirable wife for any man. He next considered the question of marriage in the abstract, and was naturally led to conclude, with St. Paul, as cited by the Book of Common Prayer, that it is a state honourable among all men. All these steps being taken, he next looked into his own condition, and found that marriage might do him a great deal of good, and could do him very little harm. Then putting the points already gained in relative position with his own situation, he deduced the following: Marriage is good and honourable in all men--marriage in his own case was peculiarly advisable--and Blanche Delaware was peculiarly eligible for any man as a wife.

So far all was fair and prosperous, and he was like a ship with full sails and a favourable wind, dancing over a sunny sea towards the port of matrimony; and a very comfortable port, too, let me tell you. However, there was still one little obstacle to be got over, which the reader unless he be an under-graduate, will never divine. The fact is, that no man who has been long at either of the two learned universities, can bear the idea of falling in love. He looks upon it as a sort of

disgrace; and Burrel, who was Christ Church, would not admit for a moment that he was the least little bit in love in the world. At the the time, with that sort of odd perversity, which, on some subject or another, is to be found in the breast of every one, he had no idea of any one marrying without being in love, unless, indeed, some point of honour or propriety required it. This latter opinion came of course from reading novels and romances, plays, poetry, and such trash; and, in his course through the world hitherto, these contending principles, always in opposition to each other, had kept him safe, sound, and unmarried, up to the respectable period of seven-and-twenty years. His Master of Arts degree, had acted as a shield to his heart from the many arrows which had been directed against it; and a romantic disposition had guarded him against that sort of abstract matrimony which is undertaken without love.

"He was an odd man this Mr. Henry Burrel!"

"He was so, sir! Just such another bundle of contrarieties as you or I, or any one else. We are all odd men, if you look at us closely."

The simple fact of Burrel's situation at that moment was merely this--He was not over head and ears in love with Blanche Delaware. He had not had time, sir! A man does not fall in love by steam! No; but he had at least advanced two or three steps in that quagmire, and he was not very likely to get out of it in a hurry. If any one who reads this book--and pray heaven they may be many!--have ever ridden a thorough-bred horse over a shaking moor, he will have seen that the animal, at the first two or three steps over the boggy ground, trembles at every limb, and if you let him, he will sink to a certainty. Your only way is to stick your spurs into his sides, keep a light hand and his head up, and gallop as hard as you can till you get upon firm ground. Now Burrel felt very much inclined to gallop. He got a little frightened at his situation, especially when he found himself stringing together so many reasons for marrying Blanche Delaware, and it was even betting, whether he staid to fall in love, or got into the ten o'clock stage, and dined in London.

The way that Love got over it was as follows: Burrel began to think about the events of the foregoing night, and the remembrance of saving the life of Blanche Delaware; and carrying her out through the flames in his arms, was, of course, too pleasant a little spot for memory, not to pause upon it agreeably. The flickering blush, also, which had risen in her cheek when she had seen him afterwards, rose up sweetly; and his next thought was to consider whether it would be more delicate again to apologize for entering her chamber in the middle of the night, or to leave it in silence, and never mention it at all. That was soon settled; but he then thought, "The story will, of course, be told about the country--ay, and with additions and improvements, which may very likely injure that sweet girl, and will, at all events, hurt her feelings if she should hear them. I would not have it so for a world--and yet what can one do to prevent it?"

At that moment, connecting itself with the blush, by one of those fine invisible links of thought, which defy all grasp, for who can

"Trace to its cloud the lightning of the mind?"--

At that moment, the few words he had spoken, at the top of the stone staircase, when he first found they were in safety--the outpouring of joy which had sparkled over the lip of the cup--the "Dear girl you are safe!"--were gathered up by memory and held up to his sight; and Burrel, who was a gentleman, and considered the point of honour more sacred and more delicate towards a woman than even towards a man, believed that he had said too much, not to say more, if he found that to say it, would not offend.

"Doubtless she will forget it!" he said to himself; "Doubtless she will never think of it more; but yet I have spoken what was either an insult or a declaration, and for my own honour's sake I cannot quit the country till I have pursued it farther."

Well done, Maître Cupidon! Strangely well managed for a little blind gentleman, strongly suspected of being lame in one leg! But 'tis time to give over gossiping, for I have a long story to tell, and very little space to tell it in; and if we stop investigating every thing that passes in the mind of all the principal personages in this tale, we shall never get half through all the perils, and dangers, and hairbreadth escapes, which have not yet begun.

Well, the chaise rolled on; but as, for the sake of his hurt companion, Burrel had ordered it to roll slowly, his own thoughts rolled a considerable deal faster, and he had got happily over the above cogitations, and a great many more to boot, before the vehicle entered the little town of Emberton. All the good folks in the place were agog with the joy and excitement of a fire, and the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures; and although it had been discovered, by the arrival of Mrs. Darlington's carriage, that unfortunately no one had been killed, yet every body looked out anxiously for the next comers from the scene of action, in order to have the pleasure of hearing a detailed account of the property destroyed. Good Lord! what a pleasure and satisfaction it was to the ladies of Emberton to commiserate Mrs. Darlington! There is certainly no affection of human nature half so gratifying as commiseration! It raises us so infinitely above the object we commiserate; and, oh! if that object have been for long years a thing or person to be envied!--Ye gods! quit your nectar, for it is not worth a sup, and learn to commiserate one another!

"Poor Mrs. Darlington! Only think how unfortunate to have her fine place entirely destroyed!" cried Commiseration.--"She that was so smart and gay, and held her head so high!" observed Envy.--"No great harm; it will lower her pride!" said Hatred.--"They say all her title-deeds are burned, and she is likely to lose the whole estate!" whispered Malice.--"It was ill enough got, I dare say!" added All Uncharitableness; "for no one could tell how her father made his money!"--And thus the matter being settled to the satisfaction of every one who had lungs to cry out, "Poor Mrs. Darlington!" the good people of Emberton waited anxiously for the next arrival, to see whether it would afford them any thing equally new and pleasant to say upon the subject.

The next arrival, as we before hinted, was that of Henry Burrel, Esq., carrying in the post-chaise along with him, "Poor Wat Harrison," as the surgeon had called him; and this conjunction of two such very opposite planets in one post-chaise, was wonderfully prolific of agreeable speculations to the folks of Emberton. Some declared that Poor Wat Hanison, or Sailor Wat, as he was called, had been detected in plundering the house, and had been brought down in irons. Some vowed that he had insulted Mr. Burrel, and had been knocked down by that gentleman with a blow which had fractured his skull. One little boy, who saw him pass with a bloody handkerchief round his head, ran across to his father on the other side of the way, crying out, "Oh, papa, they have brought home the widow's son, at the end of the lane, with his throat cut! You used always to say he would be hanged!"

Besides this gentle vaticination of his ultimate destiny, various were the reports that his appearance in Burrel's post-chaise produced. Nevertheless, the chaise rolled on, and, passing through the town, turned up the lane leading by the park wall towards the mansion-house, and, after proceeding about a couple of hundred yards, stopped at the door of a neat cottage, humble and small, but clean and decked with flowers.

"Stay, and let me help you out!" said Burrel to his companion, as the postilion opened the door.

"No, no!" cried the lad, rousing himself from the sort of dozing state in which he had hitherto continued. "It will frighten her.--Let me get out myself.--She has had frights enough already."

He was next the door, and he staggered down the steps with an effort; but, before his foot touched the ground, a female figure appeared at the entrance of the cottage. It was that of a woman of about forty years of age, with traces of considerable beauty, less withered apparently by time than by sorrow; for the braided hair upon her forehead was but thinly mingled with gray, the teeth were fine and white, the eye clear and undimmed. But there was many a line about the mouth which seemed to hold every smile in chains, and there was an expression of deep, habitual anxiety in the eyes, fine as they were, that can only be fixed in them by care. They seemed always asking, "What new sorrow now?" She was dressed in the garb of a widow--not deep weeds--but those habiliments which might still be worn as marks of the eternal mourning of the heart, after time and the world's changes had banished the memory of her loss from every bosom but her own. They were neat and clean, but plain and even coarse; and her appearance--and it did not belie her state--was altogether that of a person in the humbler class of life; but with a mind, and perhaps an education, in some degree superior to those of her own station.

As the young man got out of the chaise, she took two or three quick steps forward to meet him, exclaiming, with an anxious gaze at his face, "Oh, my boy! what has happened now?"

"Nothing mother, nothing!" answered the young man, "A knock on the head! That's all! Nothing at all! It will be well to-morrow;" and he strove to pass into the house, as if to hide himself from the anxious eyes which were scanning his pale face, dabbled as it was with blood.

Burrel sprang out of the chaise; and, putting his right hand under the lad's elbow, so as to support him steadily, he gently displaced his mother's hand by taking it in his own, and leading her on with them into the cottage, saying, as he did so, "Your son, my good lady, has had a severe blow on the head, from the falling of a beam, as he was aiding gallantly to extinguish the fire at Mrs. Darlington's. We have been obliged to bleed him; but, as you see, he is much better now; and I doubt not, with care and good medical advice, will soon be quite well."

By this time he had got the young man into the cottage, and seated him on a wooden chair near the door; but the words of comfort that he spoke seemed to fall meaningless on the ears of the widow, who stood and gazed upon her son's face, with an expression of anxious care which we must have all seen at some time or another, but which is hardly describable. It was not only the sorrow and the anxiety of the moment, but it was the crushed heart, prophesying many a future woe from long experience of grief--it was the waters of bitterness, welling from the past, and mingling its gall with all things present or to come.

Her son was her first thought, but she marked Burrel's words, though she answered them not; for the next moment she said, as if speaking to herself--for distress had done away with courtesy, for the moment--"Where am I to get good medical advice?"

"That shall not be wanting, my good lady," replied Burrel kindly. "Come, come, the matter is not so bad as you think it. Get your son to bed, and as soon as Mr. Tomkins the surgeon returns, he shall have my orders to give him every attention. He will soon be better, so set your mind at ease."

"Oh sir!" answered the widow, looking, for the first time, at the person who spoke to her, "I have not known what a mind at ease is, for many a long year. But you are very good, sir, and I ought to have thanked you before."

"That you ought mother," said the young man, "for he got me out of the fire, and saved my life. God bless you, sir! I can be thankful enough for a good turn, in spite of all that the people of this place may say against me. They first drove me to do a wrong thing, and then gave me a worse name for it than I ever deserved."

"I believe it is too often so," answered Burrel, laying his hand with a gentle motion upon his arm; "and many a man like you, my poor fellow, may be driven from small faults to great ones. But it is never too late to correct one's mistakes; and as I will bear witness to your gallant exertions to save Mrs. Darlington's property, you will now have a good foundation to raise a better name for yourself than you seem to say, you have hitherto obtained. Let this make a new beginning for you, and I will take care you shall not want encouragement."

The young sailor suddenly grasped his hand, and wrung it tight in his own. "God bless you, sir!" he said, "God bless you!" and Burrel fully understood that the words of hope he had spoken, had found their way straight to a heart that might have gone astray, but was not entirely corrupted. After a few more kind words to the widow and her son, he got into the chaise again, and returned to his lodging. His first care was to provide medical aid for the young sailor, and he sent immediately for Mr. Tomkins, the surgeon, who had by this time returned. After giving full orders and authority to see the young man, God willing, completely restored to health, with all the necessary attendance and medicaments to be charged to his account, Burrel learned from the apothecary the history of the young sailor, which is as simple a one as ever was told.

His father and mother had married young, principally upon the strength of that camelion fricasee--hopes and expectations; and his father had settled in a small shop in Emberton, became bankrupt, and died. There is nothing wonderful in that; for oxalic--nay, prussic acid itself, has no advantage over broken hopes, except in being a quicker poison. If one takes up the Gazette, and looks at the names of the great bankers and merchants that have figured in its sad list during the last twenty years, we shall find that two out of three, have not survived their failure three years. Well, he died; and his widow did hope that the liberal creditors would allow her the means of carrying on her husband's trade again, or at least supporting herself and her child. But no. The world is a very good world, and a liberal and generous world, *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*; but let no one, as they value peace, count upon its kindness or generosity for a moment. The liberal creditors left her not a shred on the face of the earth that they could take, and turned her and her beggar boy into the street. To the kindness of Sir Sidney Delaware she owed the small cottage in which she dwelt; but Sir Sidney, God help him! had hardly enough for himself; and though many a little act of comforting kindness was shown by the poor family of the park to the poor family in the cottage, yet that was not enough for support, and want was often at the door. As the boy grew up, his heart burned at his mother's need; and in an evil hour he became connected with a gang of poachers--plundered the preserves of Sir Timothy Ridout--was detected--resisted. The gamekeeper was struck and injured in the affray, and poor Wat Harrison, as he was called, was nearly finding his way to Botany Bay; when, by some kind management, he was allowed to go to sea, and remained in Captain Delaware's ship till she was paid off, a few months before the time of which I now write.

It has before been shown, however, that Wat Harrison had established for himself a bad character in the little town which saw his birth. To such a degree even had he done this, that the peculiar class of wiseacres, who have a prepossession in favour of hanging, uniformly agreed that poor Wat Harrison would be hanged. Such a reputation once established, is not easily shaken off; and although, at his return, he bore a high character from Captain Delaware, who reported him--what he really was--a brave, active, gallant lad, somewhat rash and headstrong, and with a disposition that, in good guidance, might be led to every thing good and noble--still the wiseacres shook the knowing head, and declared that all that might be very true, but that bad company would soon make him as bad as ever.

Burrel listened to the story with some attention; but by this time he had resumed his impenetrability, which had been a little shaken within the last four-and-twenty hours, and the good doctor could by no means discover what Henry Burrel intended to do in favour of poor Wat Harrison, or whether he intended to do any thing.

It is not improbable that, as the surgeon was really a kind-hearted man, he would have given what medical aid was required by the widow's son, even had no pecuniary remuneration brightened with its golden rays the horizon of a long attendance; but the unlimited order he received to do every thing that was necessary for the youth's complete recovery, inspired a new alacrity into all his movements; for there is no charity which is half so active as that which is paid for. Away, then, hied worthy Mr. Tomkins, undivided surgeon to the whole little township of Emberton and its dependencies, to attend poor Wat Harrison, with as much eager zeal as if the lad had been a Calender, a king's son, instead of a poor widow's; and his prompt appearance, as well as several mysterious "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," which he joined to some mysterious words about her son having secured a powerful protector, served greatly to soothe the heart of poor Widow Harrison. In good truth, much did it need soothing; for her only child had soon fallen into the same fearful drowsy state again, from which his first arrival at her humble dwelling had roused him, and either left her questions unanswered, or answered *à tort et*

à travers. This had terrified and alarmed her to a dreadful degree; and the assurances of the surgeon, that her son would do well, joined to the hints he gave, that her future prospects were brightening, brought the first rays of the blessed daystar of joy to shine in upon her heart, which had found their way through the casement of her cottage for many a-year.

The lad was by this time in bed, and a second bleeding relieved him; but it was now discovered that the beam had struck his side as well as his head, and there appeared some reason to fear inflammation from the feverish state of his pulse. Cooling drinks and refrigerants of all kinds were recommended; and as Mr. Burrel's orders had been dictated in a spirit of liberality, to which the mind of the village surgeon was averse to set bounds, yet afraid to give full course, he deemed it best to wait upon that gentleman, and state what he thought necessary.

"In regard to medicines, and every thing of that kind, my dear sir," replied Burrel, who was found with half a dozen half-written letters before him; "in regard to medicines, and every thing of that kind, I must let him trust to you. As to diet, the *juvantia* and *lædentia* must be explained to my man, who shall have full orders to provide all that is necessary for him."

The letters on the table were a sufficient hint to a man, a part of whose profession it is to understand hints quickly; and after the words of course, he took leave once more, and departed.

A short time after, Burrel's silent servant, Harding, appeared at the cottage, bringing with him all that could make a sick man comfortable. He himself was active and attentive; and, considering his wonted reserve, Master Harding might be looked upon as loquacious. He showed none of those airs which the servants of fine gentlemen sometimes affect, when called upon to attend the poor or sick, in any of those cases in which their masters find it convenient to do the less pleasant parts of charity by deputy; but, sitting down by the bed of the sick man, he asked kindly after his health--talked over the accident which had occasioned the injury from which he suffered--turned up his nose at his own master, when Widow Harrison called down blessings on Burrel's head--declared that the time was fast coming when such men would find their right level--and hoped in his days to see the national debt wiped away with a wet sponge, and a reasonable limit fixed to the fortunes of private men, so that no such unequal distribution, of things that were naturally in common, should take place.

Widow Harrison was silent from astonishment, and her son was ill, and not logical; so that the oration of silent servant passed unquestioned, and he returned to his master's lodging, where, to do him all manner of justice, although he was perfectly respectful, his lips did not overflow with any of those warm professions of attachment and devotion which used to characterize the determined rascal in days of old. It is to be remarked here, that the character of the scoundrel, the pickpocket, and the thief, has changed within the last five or six years most amazingly; and that the leaven of liberal sentiments, of one kind or another, which has been so industriously kneaded up with the dough-like and ductile minds of Englishmen, has been naturally communicated in a greater proportion to the thieves, pickpockets, cheats, and valets-de-chambre, than to any other class in the state.

Far from finding fawning and cringing in the knavish valet--far from meeting courtesy and gentleness in the highwayman--far from being treated with urbanity and persiflage by the swindler--the first, when about to steal his master's silver spoons, discusses the origin of the idea of property; the second, when he lays you prostrate with a club, or blows your brains out with a pistol, swaggers about the rights of the people, while the swindler is sure to cheat you under the guise of a lecture on political economy; and the man who meditates cutting your throat in your bed, views you with cool indifference--reads Cato before he goes to rest--and, ere he sets to work, lies down to take an hour or two of sleep, and dream of Brutus. Oh, ye gods, it is a goodly world! and those who see most of the march of intellect, begin to suspect that its progression is somewhat like that of a crab.

CHAPTER VII.

About three o the clock of the day at which we are still pausing, the sky began to show a strong disposition to weep. A heavy shower came on, and if there were a spark left till then unextinguished amongst the blackened remains of Mrs. Darlington's house, there certainly now came down from above the wherewithal to drown it out effectually. The whole heavens became black and gloomy, and for about an hour there was nothing to be seen but a scanty allowance of prospect, half obscured by the gray drizzle. Shortly after, however, a yellow break made its appearance on the south-western edge of the horizon, and the rays of a September sun, mingling with the falling shower, poured through the streaks of rain, and seemed to fringe the cloud with an edging of spun glass. Moving slowly onward, the heavy mass of vapours left room for the

evening sun to burst forth, and, while the rainbow waved its scarf of joy in the air, the whole world sparkled up refreshed and brightened by the past rain.

It was just about the same moment that Henry Burrel, rising up from a desk at which he had been writing, closed it, rang the bell, and, giving two letters to his servant for the post, ordered him to bring his hat and stick.

It happened, of course, that at the very same time the whole of the most gossiping heads in Emberton were at the windows of their several dwellings, endeavouring to ascertain if it were going to turn out a fine evening, and, of course, their speculations were soon confined to Burrel, who was seen to walk slowly along the street, to stop for ten minutes at the principal inn, either--as it was conjectured by the spectators--for the purpose of giving some orders, or of enquiring after the health of Mrs. Darlington, and then to proceed leisurely across the bridge, turn the corner of the park, and approach the widow's cottage.

The cottage itself being, as I have before said, two or three hundred yards removed from the town, in the turnings of a narrow road, was out of sight. But there was a house, which stood at the corner of the bridge, on the opposite side to the park, commanding a view of a considerable part of the grounds; and--from the windows of the first floor, a female figure having been seen walking quickly down amongst the trees on the left, while Burrel was pausing at the inn--Miss Mildew, the fair tenant of that story--a lady of about fifty-nine, who had exercised millinery, and had had her heart broken several times by the perfidy of man--put on her bonnet, and ran across the street to tell a congenial spirit, from whom she concealed nothing, that Miss Delaware was just going down to give the strange gentleman a meeting at the widow's cottage. Both held up their hands, and sighed mournfully over the depravity of the world, and the sad decline of female modesty in this latter day.

In the meanwhile Burrel pursued his way, and, entering the open door of the cottage, knocked at that of the room in which he had before seen the widow. Another door opposite, however, was immediately opened by Widow Harrison, and Burrel, entering the room with that pleasant and unpretending easiness of demeanour, which is always received as a kindly compliment by the lower classes, found himself, to his surprise, in the presence of Miss Delaware.

Although her mind was too little acquainted with evil in any shape to lead Blanche Delaware to fancy for a single instant that any one would put a wrong construction on her actions, yet there was something, she knew not well what, in all that had passed between Burrel and herself since their first meeting, that called up into her cheek a slight blush, unconnected with any unpleasant feelings, as soon as she beheld him--Those blushes are great tell-tales, and will often let out the secret of a woman's heart, before she herself knows that there is any secret in it; but we shall have more to say of them hereafter.

The blush instantly passed away, however; and, as Burrel advanced to speak to her, it was all gone.

"I am delighted to see you, Miss Delaware," he said; "for I really had hardly time to convince myself this morning that you had neither suffered from cold nor from alarm in all the terrible adventures of last night."

"Not in the least," answered Miss Delaware; "and I have to thank you, Mr. Burrel, for life. For, certainly, had it not been for your prompt and generous assistance, I must have perished by a miserable death. As it was," she added with a smile, which was followed by a blush again, "As it was, your assistance was so prompt, and I was so sound asleep, that I had not time to be frightened till I was safe. However, I must trust the expression of my gratitude to those who are more capable of doing justice to it. My brother, I believe is now gone to call upon you."

Widow Harrison had stood by, listening respectfully, but there was many a shade of care removed from her face since the morning; and as soon as Miss Delaware had ended, and there was a pause--for Burrel, feeling that he would a thousand times sooner be thanked by her own lips than by those of her brother, halted at his reply--the poor woman joined in to express her gratitude too. A degree of embarrassment, however, as to the manner, made her do it somewhat obliquely, and she exclaimed, addressing Blanche Delaware:--"Oh, ma'am! this gentleman is good and kind to every one! This is the gentleman I was telling you brought home my poor boy, and sent Doctor Tomkins and his own servant too; and has been so kind!"

Blanche Delaware looked up in Burrel's face with one of those sparkling smiles--as brilliant and more precious than a diamond--the beaming approbation of a good heart, at the sight of a good action.

Now, the good-natured world may say, if it list, that this chapter is all about blushes and smiles; but let me tell it, that, rightly valued and rightly read, there are not such beautiful or interesting things on the earth. A dimple is fair enough on a fair face, but it means little or nothing; but the smiles and the blushes of a fine and bright mind, are lovely in all their shades and expressions: they are the first touching tones of nature in her innocence--the sweet musical language of the heart.

And Blanche Delaware's smile was the sweetest that it is possible to conceive, and none the

less so because it beamed upon as fair a countenance as the eye of man ever rested upon. Altogether, it was like the sunshine upon a beautiful country--lovely in itself, and lovely by that over which it played. "I thought it was the same, Margaret," she replied to the widow; "I thought it was the same, because--because--there was no other stranger at the fire, that I heard of at least."

Burrel might well ask his heart what it was about!--though it was a day too late; for by this time it was determined to have its own way. However, he knew more of the world than Blanche Delaware, and the knowledge of good and evil has always the same effect that it had at man's first fall. "And they knew that they were naked," says the Book of Genesis; and in that simple record, the main motive and hidden cause of all that class of weaknesses and follies is to be found which teach man to conceal his actions, his thoughts, and his feelings--to shrink from public censure, or fear the opinion of the world. The knowledge of the good and evil that is in the world, teaches even the noblest mind to know the proneness of all nature to wickedness, and makes it hasten to clothe itself in a seeming not its own. Burrel knew the world and its evil, and felt that, however pleasant it might be to stay where he was, and enjoy the conversation of Blanche Delaware for an hour, for her sake it would be better for him to refrain; and therefore, after visiting the young sailor, who was in bed in the next room, and bidding his mother ask frankly for every thing that was necessary for his comfort or recovery, he took leave of Miss Delaware, telling her that he would bend his steps homewards, in the hope of meeting her brother.

Ere he had crossed the bridge, his hand was clasped in that of Captain Delaware, who was, in fact, infinitely glad of an opportunity of drawing closer the acquaintance which he formed with his stage-coach companion. He thanked him animatedly and warmly for his gallant conduct in saving his sister, and apologized for the fact of his father not calling on him that night, on account of slight indisposition, adding, however, that it was his purpose to do so on the following morning.

To the latter annunciation Burrel merely bowed; but to the first he replied, with a smile, that he believed he owed Miss Delaware an apology more than she owed him thanks, for having so impudently walked into her room in the middle of the night; although, he believed, they would have been both burned if he had paused much longer to consider of proprieties or improprieties.

Captain Delaware laughed. "Blanche," said he, "though even I, her brother, cannot help owning that she is a very *witching* little person in her way, when she likes it, has no great desire to pass through such a fiery ordeal as that from which you relieved her; but if you will come with me to Widow Harrison's cottage she will thank you herself."

"I have already had the pleasure of seeing her, and have been thanked far more than necessary," replied Burrel; "for I certainly did no more than I would have done to serve any lady in similar circumstances; though I cannot deny that the merit of the action was greatly decreased by the object of it being Miss Delaware."

Captain Delaware paused for a moment, and then, catching his companion's meaning, replied, smiling at his momentary dulness, "Oh! I understand you! I understand you! But indeed, my dear sir, you must give me notice next time you intend to leave the complimentary part of your speech implied rather than understood; for, at first, I understood your meaning to be, that you would rather have served any other person than my sister."

"Quite the contrary," replied Burrel. "The pleasure I felt in serving your sister, took away all merit from the act--but compliments at all times are very foolish things, so I will have done with them; and only say most truly, that I was delighted to serve your sister."

"I understand you now," said Captain Delaware; and then added, laughing, "but you are accustomed to fine speeches, and I am not; so, forgive my first stupidity. I take your compliment at its proper value; and will--as the merchants tell us when we put into a strange port--discount it to my sister at the current exchange."

"Do not give her less than the amount," answered Burrel; and he spoke so seriously, that even Captain Delaware, though he was not very quicksighted in such matters, thought it better to let the subject drop. However, there was something in Burrel's tone, that for the first time made him think seriously of his sister's situation, and made him feel a pang, which he had never before felt, at the low ebb to which his house's fortunes had been reduced. Had there been in Burrel's conversation one tittle of presumption--had the pride of riches or of station shown itself by a word, by a very tone--pride, irritated by poverty, might have risen up in his bosom, and taught him to hold the stranger at arms-length, even though he had sacrificed what he believed would prove one of the most agreeable acquaintances he had ever made. But, on the contrary, though every thing in Burrel's appearance, manners, and establishment, showed habitual affluence, such a total disregard of the idle world's prosperity in others, evinced itself in his whole conversation--he seemed so thoughtful of wealth of mind and manners, and so disregarding of the poorer wealth, that Captain Delaware, feeling himself by nature, education, and habit, that noble thing--a gentleman--would not have hesitated to have introduced Burrel to a cottage, and said, "This is my home;" convinced that his companion would hardly see what was around him, provided some weak vanity on his own part did not call his attention irresistibly to the painful spectacle of pride endeavouring to hide poverty.

While such conversation had been passing between them, and such thoughts had been busy in Captain Delaware's bosom, Burrel, without any definite purpose, made a wheel upon the bridge; and, in a moment after, they were walking through the town together, towards the lane which led to the widow's cottage. Captain Delaware remained silent, as he continued meditating for two or three minutes, till remembering that the name of his sister--for whom he had a fund of deep love and respect, which influenced all his actions, even without his knowing it--had been the last upon their lips; and, feeling that some inference of deeper moment might be drawn from his silence than he could desire, he changed the subject, abruptly enough indeed, to make his sudden fit of thoughtfulness more liable to remark than if it had continued twice as long.

"Your servant," he said, "is certainly a descendant, not of Œdipus, but of his friend the Sphinx--which, by the way, our sailors, when we were at Alexandria, used always to call the Minx. I did not think I showed any very impertinent curiosity, but he could neither tell me where you had gone--which way you had turned when you left the door--when you were to be back--or, in short, any other fact concerning your movements this evening: for, feeling deeply indebted to you on poor Blanche's account, I wished to unload my bosom of its thanks."

"Oh, he is a discreet and sober personage, Master Harding," answered Burrel. "One of those men who have a great idea of not committing themselves; and I like him infinitely better than a plausible, fair-spoken knave that I had lately, who would not, or could not, loose my horse's girths, if the groom were out of the way, and who left me because I did not allow my servants Madeira."

"I hope you threw him out of the window?" cried Captain Delaware, giving way to a burst of honest indignation.

"Oh dear, no!" answered Burrel, "I saw him depart through the usual aperture, with a degree of coolness and fortitude he did not expect; and after trying another, whom I *did* kick out, I was soon supplied with the present rascal, who is useful, silent, and circumspect. He cheats me in about the same proportion as the others, or rather less; is so far more honest, that he never pretends to honesty; and I have never yet discovered that he lets any other person cheat me besides himself."

"No very high character, either!" answered Captain Delaware.

"I beg your pardon!" cried Burrel. "Sufficient for a prime minister, and more than sufficient for a member of parliament.--But here we are at the cottage; I wonder if I dare intrude again upon Miss Delaware's presence?"

Captain Delaware made no difficulty, and a few minutes afterwards the whole party were observed--with Blanche hanging upon her brother's arm, and Burrel walking by her side, his handsome head bent down to speak and hear with the more marked attention--walking slowly along the lane under the park wall, till they reached the small door nearest to the mansion. There Burrel raised his hat, and took his leave; and while Miss Delaware and her brother entered the park, he drew up his head, threw wide his shoulders, and, resuming his usual gait, returned to the town.

The person who had observed all this, and who declared positively that she had not walked that way on purpose, reported it all fully to the honest folks of Emberton, who instantly prognosticated a marriage. How desperately they were mistaken, remains to be shown.

Burrel returned to his house, dined without the slightest symptoms of love being discernible in the removed dishes; and ended the day by sleeping as devotedly as if he had been a sworn votary of Somnus, first telling his servant to see that all the fires were put out, as he had not the slightest inclination to be woke from his rest again. A fire on two consecutive nights, however, is not a piece of good fortune that happens to every man; and Burrel, after having slept one third of the round dial undisturbed, woke the next morning, and sat down to breakfast, asking himself, what was to occur next?

Every man must find that there come moments in the dull lapse of life, when---as we feel that nothing can stand still--we are certain that something must happen, however small and trifling in itself, to change the monotonous course in which things are proceeding, and lead us to a new train of events. Did you ever trace the current of a small stream, reader, from its earliest gush out of the green swampy turf, or the little rugged bank, to its confluence with some other water? Do! It is amusing and instructive. At its first burst into existence, you will find it generally rushing on in gay and bounding brightness, fretting at all that opposes its course, and dashing over every obstacle that would retard its progress. Gradually as one obstruction after another meets and impedes its onward flow, slower and more slow becomes its current, till a mere molehill will divert its course, and send it wandering far in the most opposite direction to that which it originally assumed. But, after all, I am stealing an image; for some poet--I forget who--has said something very like it. Nevertheless, I make no apology for the robbery. The illustration suits my purpose, and I take it. Let every man steal as much as he likes; but put it in inverted commas, and it is all according to act of parliament.

It matters not that the thought be old: the figure is fully as appropriate as if it were new; and any one who has watched the progress of a stream, must have said in his own heart--"This is life!"

Well, Burrel, as he sat down to breakfast, had just come to one of those slow spaces in the current of existence, where he felt that some bank, or stone, or molehill, must turn the stream; and, as I have before said, his first thought was, What is to happen next?

Oh, that curious question, which has puzzled the wisest from the beginning of the world, and will puzzle them still, till the last day solves it for ever! What is to happen next?

It had scarcely passed, through Burrel's brain, when the door opened, and Sir Sidney Delaware was announced. He entered the room slowly, as was his custom; but, as he did enter, Burrel at once perceived that a certain air of coldness--which, like the mithridate of the ancients, defied all analysis from the multitude of ingredients that composed it--was altogether gone, and in its room there was a frank bland smile, as he greeted him, which unloaded the baronet's brow of the wrinkles of full ten years.

"I have come to visit you, Mr. Burrel," said Sir Sidney Delaware, "at an unusual hour, solely because I wished to see you; and, if you will give me leave, I will take my coffee with you," Burrel rang the bell, and the necessary additions to his breakfast-table were soon completed, while he expressed politely, but neither coldly nor cordially, his pleasure at the visit of Sir Sidney Delaware.

"My first task, Mr. Burrel," said the baronet mildly and kindly, "is to express my gratitude for the salvation of my dear child; and allow me to say, that no one who does not love her as I do, can feel what that gratitude is."

When a poor man and a proud man condescends to pour forth his feelings to his equal in mind and station, and his superior in more worldly wealth, it is a compliment which deserves instant return, and Burrel--though he had been unwilling to risk for a moment a fresh advance, to be again repulsed--felt, from the whole tone and manner of his companion, that the barrier was broken down between them. To have held back would have been an insult, and he instantly replied, not in the set form which means no more than a copy-line to a schoolboy, but in those words and accents that conveyed fully to Sir Sidney Delaware, that he had felt a real and personal pleasure in serving his daughter in the manner that he had done. He spoke frankly, though guardedly, of the charms and graces of Miss Delaware's conversation and demeanour--he spoke more boldly and feelingly of the impression that the blending of sailor-like candour with, gentlemanly feeling, in Captain Delaware, had produced upon his mind--and although Burrel alluded to these things in the tone of a man of the world, who had found out a treasure in pure nature that he had never before discovered, he did so without the slightest assumption of superiority; and both his words and his manner expressed alone unfeigned pleasure in the acquaintance he had made, and the service he had rendered.

"Enough, enough!" cried Sir Sidney Delaware, interrupting him as he was going on in his encomiums. "I came here to thank you for what you have done for one of my children, not to hear praises of both, that might perhaps make my old eyes overflow. But, as you speak of my son, I must not only confess that I owe you thanks, but an apology which I have promised him to make you, for not calling on you before. In that voluminous catalogue of lies, which, like hackney-coaches on a stand, are ready at the beck of every one, I might find a hundred excuses ready made to my hand, which you would be bound to receive as current; but my principles do not admit of my making use of them, and when I apologize at all, it must be by telling the truth. Unfortunate circumstances, Mr. Burrel," he added in a grave and somewhat sad tone, "have placed a painful disparity between the fortune and the station of my family. For myself, I do not covet wealth, neither do my children; but we have never sought, or even admitted, the society of any one who was likely to differ from us in our estimation of our own situation."

"Although such an apology is far more than I either deserve, or could expect," replied Burrel; "yet I own I am glad to find that you did not at all hate me for my own sake. As to my feelings and principles--if, as I hope, this acquaintance stops not here--you will soon find, my dear sir, that I am far too aristocratic in my own nature to dream that wealth can make any addition to rank--far too liberal in my own sentiments to dream that either wealth or rank can make any addition to gentlemanly manners and a gentlemanly mind. Do not mistake me, Sir Sidney Delaware," he added, seeing a slight shade come over the baronet's countenance; "I have every reverence for the institutions of society, and for those grades, which society can never be deprived of, without sinking gradually into barbarism of manners, if not barbarism of mind. All I mean to say, is, when I pay reverence to rank, it is a tribute I render to society--when I pay reverence to the individual, it is a tribute I offer to virtue, and that tribute will be offered to either, under all circumstances, and at all times; but I have no idea of bowing low to the purse in a man's pocket, or fawning upon the bottle of Lafitte that graces his sideboard."

Sir Sidney Delaware smiled. "I am afraid, then," he replied, "you are unlike the majority of our young men at present. The worst kind of aristocracy--because it must always be too new a garment to sit easily--the aristocracy of wealth, is springing up each day as the idol for worship; and I am afraid every one who may be said to have a golden calf in their house, will find plenty of our Israelites willing to commit idolatry, though to the worship of wealth in others may be applied the memorable words with which Sallust stigmatizes avarice itself--'Ea quasi veninis malis imbuta, corpus animumque virilem effæminat, semper infinita insatiabilis est; neque copiâ, neque inopiâ minuitur.' My own race have been too little followers of the blind god--I mean Plutus, not Cupid--and the effects you will see, if you do me the favour of dining in my poor house

to-morrow."

"If I see yourself and family there, Sir Sidney Delaware, I shall certainly see nothing amiss, and probably nothing else; though," he added, feeling that the subject was one which had better be led into some other, as soon as possible, "though the house appears to be a very perfect and beautiful specimen of the peculiar kind of architecture to which it belongs."

"It is, indeed," replied the baronet, instantly mounting the hobby that Burrel set before him; "it is, indeed, perhaps the most perfect specimen of the architecture of the early part of Henry VIII. now in existence. It shows the first step from the pure Gothic to the pure Vandal, if I may so call it, which succeeded."

"Without pretending to be a connoisseur," replied Burrel, "I am certainly a great lover of architectural antiquities of all sorts; and I must endeavour to seduce you into pointing out all the peculiar characteristics of the place."

"I shall be delighted!" exclaimed Sir Sidney Delaware. "Let me beg you to come to-morrow early--come to breakfast--and give us your whole day, if you can spare so much of your time, which is doubtless valuable."

"Perfectly worthless!" replied Burrel. "So, remember if you find that I take you at your word, and bestow my whole day of tediousness upon you, it is your own fault; for you have invited me; and I shall look jealously for every yawn."

"No fear, no fear, my dear sir!" said the baronet. "I do not know how, Mr. Burrel, or why, but something in your aspect and manner makes me feel as if you were an old friend."

"May you always feel so!" replied Burrel, with a smile of pleasure, which vouched that the words were more than mere form.

"Even your face," continued Sir Sidney, "comes upon me like a dream of the past, and I feel, in speaking with you, as if I had just got my studentship at Christ Church, and were in those bright days again when the boy, standing on the verge of manhood, grasps at the crown of thorns before him, as if it were a diadem of stars. However, I feel towards you like an old friend, and shall treat you as such, which means--as one of the flippant books of the present day asserts--that I shall give you a very bad dinner."

"Do! do!" cried Burrel, shaking the hand his guest held out to him as he was about to depart. "Do! do! and I will find a way to avenge myself without difficulty."

"How do you mean?" demanded the baronet, pausing.

"By coming for another very soon," answered his companion. "So, I dare you to keep your word."

"I certainly shall," rejoined Sir Sidney Delaware, "if such be the penalty;" and they parted with feelings entirely changed on both sides since their meeting at the house of Mr. Tims.

CHAPTER VIII.

Whether the succeeding hours of the day on which Sir Sidney Delaware first visited Henry Burrel, did or did not pass with any degree of impatience, felt on the part of the latter, it is difficult to say. Burrel had an habitual dislike to the display of what he felt and except on special occasions, where the stirred-up feelings broke through all customary restraint, there might be many far deeper things passing in his bosom than the eye of a casual observer could discover from his face.

The hours of that day seemed to fly in perfect tranquillity. He visited the widow's cottage twice, and marked with pleasure that a change for the better had taken place in her son; he called upon Mrs. Darlington at the inn, gossiped over a thousand subjects of tittle-tattle, and sketched out a plan for rebuilding her house--a consideration which seemed to give the good lady so much pleasant occupation, that Burrel could scarcely find it in his heart to regret that her house had been burned at all. He then strolled home to write letters, remarking with little farther comment, as he did so, that his silent servant, Harding, was walking on the other side of the way, in quiet conversation with the vulgar person who had been for a short time one of his own companions in the London coach.

Nothing, in short, through the whole day, or the ensuing evening, could betray that the hours were at all weary to Henry Burrel; and the only circumstance which led his servant--who had eyes sufficiently inquisitive and acute--to believe that his master looked upon the approaching visit with more than ordinary interest, was, that the next morning, instead of sleeping soundly as usual till he was called, he rang his bell somewhat impatiently full five minutes before his ordinary hour of rising.

Giving the necessary orders for his dressing apparatus to be brought up to the mansion before dinner, Burrel sallied forth as soon as he was dressed, and took his way towards the park gate. He paused upon the bridge, however, and for a moment gazed up the long open space of park lawn, broken by old elms and oaks, with the stream flowing calmly on in the midst, and the swans dipping quietly into its waters, and the whole, in the soft morning sunshine, bearing an air of peace, with which even the gray building at the end of the vista harmonized full well.

With what other thoughts there might be in Burrel's bosom--and there were a good many different threads that ran across the web in various directions--we will have nothing to do here, but will follow the one continuous line which we began to trace before, and only consider the psychological phenomena that were passing in his heart, as far as they related to Blanche Delaware. That Burrel had thought of her a great deal since last he saw her, there can be no doubt; and he had thought of his own situation too, and what he was about, with a degree of human perversity that was quite extraordinary in a hero of romance. As the beginnings of love must always be imaginative, and as Burrel had got into a bad habit of laughing at most things under the sun, by feeling that few were worth considering seriously--from the effects of which bad habit, be it remarked, he himself, his own mind and peculiarities, were not at all exempt--as a consequence of all this, he had chosen, in the present case, to image the predicament in which he stood to his own fancy, under a thousand different forms, most of them, indeed, ludicrous or trivial. He had been now the moth fluttering round the light--now the trout rising to the hook--but, more frequently still, he had painted himself to himself, as the fly upon the edge of a plate of honey, tasting and retasting the tenacious sweets till his feet become glued to the place, and he is forced to remain and die amidst the plundered stores of the bee. There are several great uses in thus learning to laugh at ourselves. In the first place, we know all that the world--the good-natured world--may, can, might, could, would, should, or ought to say of us. In the next, we can flatter ourselves that we have looked at the most disagreeable, that is to say, the sneering side of things; and lastly--the story of galloping across the swamp, comes over again, and we get over a great deal of ground easily, which it would not do to stay and examine seriously.

Whether it was from any or all of these motives that Burrel acted, or whether it was a mere affair of habit, does not much matter; for when he set out on that morning to breakfast at Emberton Park, and looked up the calm expanse towards the dwelling Blanche Delaware inhabited--when he entered the old gates, and strolled leisurely up amongst the shady trees--when he thought of how fair and how gentle she was--and when he felt conscious that he was only walking up those paths the first time out of many that fate, or love, destined him to tread them--he perceived that the matter was somewhat more serious--that it was too weighty to be raised upon the wings of a light laugh, or rolled about by an idle sneer.

There was something startling in the sensation; and he felt that where the happiness of the whole of that space out of eternity, which we are destined to pass amidst the warm relationships of earth, is concerned, the matter is grave when rightly considered, if not solemn. But then, as he went on thinking--even though the morning, pouring through the dim old trees, had something serious in its very gray tranquillity--yet the object that connected itself with every idea, the sweet form, the bright sunshiny smile of Blanche Delaware, came flitting across his dreams, and cast a light from itself over the whole future prospect. Then would Burrel look around him, and weave many a fairy project of conferring happiness; and he would twine, in fancy, many a jewel and a wreath to bind the fair brows of the fair girl he thought of, and would lead her through scenes of splendour, and of beauty, and of joy, to mansions of domestic happiness and bowers of tranquil repose.

Thus went it on, till at length he woke up at the door of the dwelling-house, and found himself as great an enthusiast at heart as ever lived and loved. Ascending the steps from the terrace, he rang the large bell, which was answered in a moment by the appearance of an honest-faced country servant, who was the only male domestic in a house which, had it been all inhabited, would have required a dozen at least. A little to the man's surprise, Burrel, who was still thinking of something else, and whose heart beat more than he thought proper, walked directly forward to the door of the library, and was raising his hand to open it too, when, recollecting himself, he paused, and suffered the servant to announce him. His hand was cordially shaken by Captain Delaware, almost as he entered; and there was a glow of pleasure on the face of the young sailor, not only because he was really glad to see a man whom he personally liked, but that what he looked upon as a reproach to the hospitality of their house was wiped away.

Sir Sidney Delaware was at the further end of the room, which was well furnished--for books are always furniture--and they were many and choice. He, too, immediately rose, and advanced to welcome his guest most cordially; for the service that Burrel had rendered his child had completely opened his heart; and, when it was once opened, there was room enough within, though the door had been somewhat narrowed, in order to shut out the cold air of the world.

Burrel's eyes ran round the library, but Blanche Delaware was not there; and though he would

have probably laughed, had any one called him a modest man, yet he found that he could not enquire after her with so easy an air as he might have done two or three days before, and therefore he did not enquire after her at all, expecting every instant to see her appear. He felt uncomfortable, however, when her father at length proposed that they should go to the breakfast-room; and he asked himself whether she could be absent from home.

Burrel's mind was put at ease the moment after; for, on passing forward to the little breakfast-room--to which he seemed to find his way instinctively, without his host having to say, "Turn here" or "turn there!"--the first object that presented itself was Blanche Delaware, on hospitable thoughts intent, making the tea, and--as probably Eve was the most beautiful creature ever created--looking as like Eve as possible.

But let us pause one moment, and expatiate upon an English breakfast-room. There is nothing like it in all the world besides. It is an emanation from the morning-heart of Englishmen.--It is a type of the character of the people. Good Heaven! when one comes down on a fine autumn morning, and finds the snowy table-cloth, the steaming urn, the clean polished furniture, the simple meal, and all the implements for dispensing it, shining in the morning sunshine, as if the Goddess of Tidiness had burnished them; together with a rich English landscape looking in at the windows, and, round the table, half a dozen smiling faces, and fair forms, all arrayed in that undeviating neatness which is also purely English, how the heart is opened to all that is good, and kindly, and social--how it is strengthened, and fortified, and guarded against the cares and labours and ills of the ensuing day!

Blanche looked up as Burrel entered, and there were one or two slight circumstances which might have made him believe that his presence was not unpleasant to her, had he been in a mood to remark any thing but the simple fact of her being there. There was the same fitful blush, the same sparkle of the eyes, that would not be repressed, the same sweet smile, as he gave her the morning's greeting, which he had seen separately before; but, what was more to the purpose, she withdrew the tea-pot before she remembered to stop the urn, spilt the water on the table-cloth, and got into some confusion both at her embarrassment and at its cause. Captain Delaware smiled; and Blanche, though she knew that her brother was not very, very learned in woman's heart, attributed more meaning to his smile than it deserved, and would have been more embarrassed still, had there not been a degree of warmth, and a subdued tenderness in Burrel's manner, that was very consoling. Now, had Blanche Delaware laid a systematic design against Burrel's heart, and had she endeavoured to make herself appear the very wife suited to him, from every thing she had seen of his character, she would have taken great care not to let the urn deluge the table-cloth, and would have believed her whole plan ruined for ever, if she had done so; for Burrel had certainly, at Mrs. Darlington's, affected a sort of fastidiousness--altogether in jest, but done seriously enough to deceive--which would have rendered such a little accident fatal. But Blanche Delaware had not the slightest idea of such a design in the world. Burrel, it is true, was the handsomest man in person, and the most elegant man in manners, that she had ever met with. His character she had heard from Dr. Wilton--one she was accustomed to reverence. His conversation had pleased, amused, and fascinated her. At the risk of his own life he had carried her close to his heart, through the midst of a tremendous fire. He had saved her life, and, in the enthusiasm of doing so, had called her "Dear girl!" and had perhaps pressed her a little closer to his bosom, when he found that they were safe. Of the last particular, however, she was not quite sure; but so much does the heart of man expand to those we protect and save, that, even if he did, it was quite natural. All this had given her different feelings towards Burrel, from those that she experienced towards any other man; and though she kept a tight rein upon imagination, and would not even suffer the sweet folly of castle-building to enter her heart in this instance, yet she felt sufficiently agitated and pleased by his presence, to become alarmed at her own sensations, and to feel unwittingly consoled by the marked difference between his manner to herself, and to others. She was therefore vexed at the little accident it is true, but she was vexed solely because she thought it might betray more agitation than she believed that she felt; not because she feared, by a trifle, to lose a heart for which she had set no traps, and of whose possession she was determined not to dream at all.

So much for nothings! But as nothings are the small casters on which the great machine of the world goes lumbering along, one may pause to remark them for a moment, without a fault.--But now to more serious matters. Burrel soon recovered that degree of ease which he had never lost in the eyes of any other person, although he felt the loss himself, and the breakfast past over in that sort of light and varied conversation, which allows all to shine in turn who are capable of shining.

It was about the time of some serious disturbances in France; and those events naturally suggested themselves, at least to the three gentlemen, as the most interesting topic of the day.

"What think you then, Mr. Burrel," demanded Sir Sidney Delaware, "of La ---- coming forth in his old age to renew the scenes which, in his youth, he first excited, and then lamented?"

"The great misfortune is," replied Burrel, "that his name should be able to do so much, when he himself is unable to do any thing."

"You mean that he is in his dotage," said Captain Delaware. "Is it not so?"

"I mean merely," replied Burrel, "that he is in that state of mental decrepitude where the

plaudits of a mob of any kind, either of porters or peers, would make him commit any folly for the brief moment of popularity. With poor old La ---- it is only now the fag-end of the great weakness of his life, vanity--that sort of gluttonous vanity, that can gorge upon the offal of base and ignorant applause."

"Ay, there lies the fault," replied Sir Sidney Delaware. "The man who seeks the applause of the good, the wise, and the generous, is next in honourable ambition to him who seeks the approbation of his God; but he whose depraved appetite finds food in the gratulating shout of an assemblage of the ignorant, the base, and the vicious--like--like--I could mention many, but I will not--he, however, who does so, is a moral swine, and only swills the filth of the public kennel in another sense."

"Papa, papa!" cried Blanche Delaware. "In pity, let me finish breakfast before you indulge in such figures of rhetoric. William, in mercy change the subject! Cannot you tell us some of those pretty stories about Sicily and its beloved *Mongibeddo* with which you charmed my ears when first you came from the Mediterranean?"

"Not I, indeed, Blanche!" replied her brother; "for, on the faith of those stories, you had nearly persuaded my father to go abroad, which would not suit my views of promotion at all."

"And did Miss Delaware really wish to visit foreign lands?" demanded Burrel, "We should not easily have forgiven you."

"It was but to see all those things one dreams so much about!" replied Blanche Delaware, "and to return to my own land after they were seen; for I can assure you, I have neither hope nor wish, ever to find any country half so fair in my eyes as our own England."

"That is both just and patriotic," answered Burrel; "more than one-half of what we like in any and every land, is association, and if, without one classic memory of the great past, you were to visit Italy itself, half the marvels of that land of beauties would be lost. The Colosseum would stand a cold brown ruin, cumbering the ground; Rome, a dull heap of ill-assorted buildings; the Capitol a molehill; and the Tiber a ditch. But under the magic wand of association, every thing becomes beautiful. It is not alone the memories of one age or of one great epoch that rise up to people Italy with majestic things; but all the acts of glory and of majesty that thronged two thousand years, before the eye of fancy, walk in grand procession through the land, and hang a wreath of laurels on each cold ruin as they pass. Yet it is all association; and where can we find such associations as those connected with our native land?"

The question was tolerably general, but the tone and the manner were to Blanche Delaware; and she replied, "It would be difficult, I am afraid, to raise up for any country such as those you have conjured up for Italy; but still I should never be afraid of forgetting England. It is where I was born," she added, thinking over all her reasons for loving it, and looking down at the pattern on the table-cloth, as she counted them one by one; "I have spent in it so many happy hours and happy days. Every thing in it is connected with some pleasant thought or some dear memory; and the associations, though not so grand, would be more sweet--though not so vast, would be more individual--would not perhaps waken any very romantic feelings, but would come more home to my own heart."

Burrel answered nothing; but when she raised her eyes, which had been cast down while she spoke, they found his fixed upon her; and she felt from that moment that she was beloved.

Blanche Delaware turned very pale, though the consciousness was any thing but painful. It was so oppressive, however, that the agitation made her feel faint; but her brother's voice recalled her to herself.

"Well spoken, my dear little patriot sister!" he said; "but if you had been a sailor, like your brother, you would have added, that England is not wanting in associations of glory and freedom, and noble actions and noble endeavours; and in this view, the associations connected with our native land are more extended than those of any other country; for in whatever corner of the world an Englishman may be, when he catches but a glimpse of the salt sea, the idea of the glory of his native land rushes up upon his mind, and he sees, waving before the eye of fancy, the flag that 'for a thousand years, has stood the battle and the breeze.'"

Burrel smiled; but there was no touch of a sneer in it. "The song from which you quote," he said, "must have been written surely under such enthusiasm as that with which you now speak. I know scarcely so spirit-stirring a composition in the English language. Indeed, all Campbell's smaller poems are full of the same *vivida vis animi*."

"And yet," said Sir Sidney Delaware, "you, as well as I, must have heard fools and jolterheads say, that Campbell is no poet, because now and then, in his longer pieces, when he gets tired of the mere mechanism, he suffers a verse or two to become tame--out of pure idleness I have no doubt."

"Those who say he is no poet, do not know what poetry is," replied Burrel, somewhat eagerly, "Scattered through every one of his poems there are beauties of the first order; and almost all of his smaller pieces stand perfectly alone in poetry. He has contrived sometimes to compress into four or five of the very shortest lines that can be produced, more than nine poets out of ten could

cram into a long Spenserian stanza with a thundering Alexandrine at the end."

"Do you know Mr. Campbell personally?" asked Miss Delaware.

"I do," answered Burrel laughing; "but do not suppose my praise of him is exaggerated from personal friendship. On the contrary, I am bound, by all the laws and usages of the world in general, to hate him cordially."

"Indeed! and why so?" demanded Blanche, half afraid that she had touched upon some delicate subject.

"Simply because we differ on politics," answered Burrel. "Can there be a more mortal offence given or received?"

"As we are speaking of poets, however," continued Miss Delaware, "I will ask you one more question, Mr. Burrel--Do you know Wordsworth?"

"I am not so fortunate," answered Burrel; "for, though we should as certainly differ as we met, upon nine points out of ten, yet I should much like to know him."

"Then you know and esteem his works, of course?" said Miss Delaware.

"I know them well," replied Burrel; "but I do not like them so much as you do."

"Nay, nay!" said Blanche Delaware. "I have said nothing in their favour. What makes you believe I admire them more than yourself?"

"Simply because every body of taste must esteem them highly," replied Burrel; "and women who do esteem them, will always esteem them more than men can do. A woman's heart and mind, Miss Delaware, by the comparative freshness which it retains more or less through life, can appreciate the gentle, the sweet, and the simple, better than a man's; and thus, while the mightier and more majestic beauties of Wordsworth's muse affect your sex equally with ours, the softer and finer shades of feeling--the touches of artless nature and simplicity, which appear almost weak to us, have all their full effect to you."

"But if you own that, and feel that," said Blanche Delaware, "why cannot you admire the same beauties?"

"For this reason," replied Burrel, "man's mental taste, like his corporeal power of tasting, gets corrupted, or rather paralyzed, in his progress through the world, by the various stimulants he applies to it. He drinks his bottle of strong and heady wine, which gradually loses its effect, and he takes more, till at length nothing will satisfy him but cayenne pepper."

"But if he appreciates gentler pleasures," said Captain Delaware, "he must be able in some degree to enjoy them."

"Of course," replied Burrel, "there are moments when the cool and pleasant juice of a peach, or the simple refreshment of a glass of lemonade, will be delightful; and in such moments it is, that he feels he has stimulated away a sense, and a delightful one. Thus with poetry, and literature in general, the mind, by reading a great many things it would be better without, loses its relish for every thing that does not excite and heat the imagination--which is neither more nor less than the mental palate;--and though there are moments when the heart, softened and at ease, finds joys in all the sweet simplicity which would have charmed it for ever in an unsophisticated state, yet still it returns to cayenne pepper, and only remembers the other feelings, as of pleasures lost for ever. With regard to Wordsworth's poetry, perhaps no one ever did him more injustice than I did once. With a very superficial knowledge of his works, I fancied that I despised them all; and it was only from being bored about them by his admirers, that I determined to read them every line, that I might hate them with the more accuracy."

Blanche Delaware smiled, and her father spoke, perhaps, the feelings of both. "We have found you out, Mr. Burrel," he said; "and understand your turn for satirizing yourself."

"I am not doing so now, I can assure you," replied Burrel. "What I state is exactly the fact. I sat down to read Wordsworth's works, with a determination to dislike them, and I succeeded in one or two poems, which have been cried up to the skies; but, as I went on, I found so often a majestic spirit of poetical philosophy, clothing itself in the full sublime of simplicity, that I felt reprov'd and abashed, and I read again with a better design. In doing so, though I still felt that there was much amidst all the splendour that I could neither like nor admire, yet I perceived how and why others might, and would, find great beauties and infinite sweetness in that which pall'd upon my taste; and I perceived, also, that the fault lay in me far more than in the poetry. The beauties I felt more than ever, and some of the smaller pieces, I am convinced, will live for ages, with the works of Shakspeare and Milton."

"They will, indeed," said Sir Sidney Delaware, "as long as there is taste in man. Nevertheless, the poet--who is perhaps as great a philosopher, too, as ever lived--has sacrificed, like many philosophers, an immense gift of genius to a false hypothesis in regard to his art; and has consequently systematically poured forth more trash than perhaps any man living. His poems,

collected, always put me in mind of an account I have somewhere read of the diamond mines of Golconda, where inestimable jewels were found mingled with masses of soft mud. But you have long done breakfast, Mr. Burrel. Come, Blanche, I am going to take Mr. Burrel to the terrace, and descant most dully on all the antiquities of the house. Let us have your company, my love; for we shall meet with so many old things, it may be as well to have something young to relieve them!"

It required but a short space of time to array Blanche Delaware for the walk round the terrace that her father proposed. In less than a minute she came down in the same identical cottage bonnet--the ugliest of all things--in which Burrel had first beheld her with her brother; but, strange to say, although on that occasion he had only thought her a pretty country girl, so changed were now all his feelings--so many beauties had he marked which then lay hid, that, as she descended with a smiling and happy face to join them at the door of the hall, he thought her the loveliest creature that he had ever beheld in any climate, or at any time.

The whole party sallied forth; and as people who like each other, and whose ideas are not commonplace, can make an agreeable conversation out of any thing, the walk round the old house, and the investigation of every little turn and corner of the building, passed over most pleasantly to all, although Blanche and her brother knew not only every stone in the edifice, but every word almost that could be said upon them. They were accustomed, however, to look upon their father with so much affection and reverence; and the misfortunes under which he laboured, had mingled so much tenderness with their love, that "an oft told tale" from his lips lost its tediousness, being listened to, by the ears of deep regard. Burrel, too, was all attention; and, while Sir Sidney Delaware descanted learnedly on the buttery, and the wet and dry larder, and the priors parlour, and the scriptorium, and pointed out the obtuse Gothic arches described from four centres, which characterize the architecture of Henry VIII., he filled up all the pauses with some new and original observation on the same theme; and though certainly not so learned on the subject as Sir Sidney himself, yet he showed that, at all events, he possessed sufficient information to feel an interest therein, and to furnish easily the matter for more erudite rejoinder.

By the time the examination of the house itself was over, however, Sir Sidney Delaware felt fatigued. "I must leave Blanche and William, Mr. Burrel," he said, "to show you some of the traces of those antique times which we have just been talking of, that are scattered through the park, particularly on the side farthest from the town. I myself think them more interesting even than the house itself, and wish I could go with you; but I am somewhat tired, and must deny myself the pleasure."

Burrel assured him that he would take nothing as a worse compliment than his putting himself to any trouble about him; and, perhaps not unwillingly, set out accompanied only by Blanche and her brother. It would have been as dangerous a walk as ever was taken, had he not been in love already. There was sunshine over all the world, and the air was soft and calm. Their way led through the deep high groves and wilder park scenery that lay at the back of the mansion, now winding in amongst hills and dells covered with rich short grass, now wandering on by the bank of the stream, on whose bosom the gay-coated kingfishers and the dark water-hens were skimming and diving in unmolested security. In the open parts, the old hawthorns perched themselves on the knolls, wreathing their fantastic limbs in groups of two or three; and every now and then a decaying oak of gigantic girth, but whose head had bowed to time, shot out its long lateral branches across the water, over which it had bent for a thousand years.

The whole party were of the class of people who have eyes--as that delightful little book the *Evenings at Home* has it--and at present, though there were busy thoughts in the bosoms, at least of two of those present, yet perhaps they strove the more to turn their conversation to external things, from the consciousness of the feelings passing within. Those feelings, however, had their effect, as they ever must have, even when the topics spoken of are the most indifferent. They gave life, and spirit, and brightness to every thing.

Blanche Delaware, hanging on the arm of her brother, and yielding to the influence of the smiles that were upon the face of nature, gave full way to her thoughts of external things as they arose; and, together with spirits bright and playful, but never what may be called *high*--with an imagination warm and brilliant, never wild--there shone out a heart, that Burrel saw was well fitted to understand, and to appreciate that fund of deeper feelings, that spring of enthusiasm, tempered a little by judgment, and ennobled by a high moral sense, which he concealed--perhaps weakly--from a world that he despised.

He felt at every step that the moments near her were almost too delightful; and, before he had got to the end of that walk, he had reached the point where love begins to grow terrified at its own intensity, lest the object should be lost on which the mighty stake of happiness is cast for ever.

Having proceeded thus far--which, by the way, is no small length; for the great difficulty, as Burrel found it, was to place himself fairly on a footing of friendship with Sir Sidney Delaware's family--we must unwillingly abandon the expatiative; and, having more than enough to do, leave the party on their walk, and turn to characters as necessary, but less interesting.

CHAPTER IX.

In the house of Lord Ashborough--which is situated in Grosvenor Square, fronting the south--there is a large room, which in form would be a parallelogram, did not one of the shorter sides--which, being turned to the north, looks out upon the little rood of garden, attached to the dwelling--bow out into the form of a bay window. The room is lofty, and, as near as possible, twenty-eight feet in length by twenty-four in breadth. Book-cases, well stored with tomes in lettered calf, cover the walls, and a carpet, in which the foot sinks, is spread over the floor. Three large tables occupy different parts of the room. Two covered with books and prints lie open to the world in general, but the third, on which stand inkstands and implements for writing, shows underneath, in the carved lines of the highly polished British oak, many a locked drawer. Each chair, so fashioned that uneasy must be the back that would not there find rest, rolls smoothly on noiseless casters, and the thick walls, the double doors, and bookcases, all combine to prevent any sound from within being caught by the most prying ear without, or any noise from without being heard by those within, except when some devil of a cart runs away in Duke Street, and goes clattering up that accursed back street behind.

Such were the internal arrangements and appearance of the library at Lord Ashborough's, on a morning in September of the same year, one thousand eight hundred and something, of which we have been hitherto speaking. The morning was fine and clear; and the sun, who takes the liberty of looking into every place without asking permission of any one, was shining strongly into the little rood of garden behind the house. The languishing plants and shrubs that had been stuffed into that small space, dusty and dry with the progress of a hot summer, and speckled all over with small grains of soot--the morning benediction showered down upon them from the neighbouring chimneys--no doubt wished that the sun would let them alone; and, as through an open passage-door they caught a sight of the conservatory filled with rich exotics, all watered and aired with scrupulous care, one of the poor brown lilacs might be heard grumbling to a stunted gray laburnum about the shameful partiality of the English for foreigners and strangers.

About eleven o'clock Lord Ashborough himself entered the room; and before any one else comes in to disturb us, we may as well sit down, and take a full-length picture of him. He was a man of about fifty-nine or sixty, tall and well-proportioned, though somewhat thin. His face was fine, but pale, and there was a great deal of intellect expressed on his broad brow and forehead, which looked higher than it really was, from being perfectly bald as far down as the sutures of the temples. From that point some thin dark hair, grizzled with gray, spread down, and met his whiskers, which were of the same hue, and cut square off, about the middle of his cheeks. His eyes were dark blue and fine, but somewhat stern, if not fierce, and in the space between his eyebrows there was a deep wrinkle, in which a finger might have been laid without filling up the cavity; the eyebrows themselves, though not very long, were overhanging; the nose was well-formed and straight, though a little too long perhaps; but his mouth was beautifully shaped, and would have appeared the best feature in his face, had he not frequently twisted it in a very unbecoming manner, by gnawing his nether lip. His chin was round, and rather prominent; and his hand small, delicate, and almost feminine.

It is all nonsense that a man's dress signifies nothing. It is--if he takes any pains about it; and if he takes none, it comes to the same thing--It is the habitual expression of his mind or his mood; and in the little shades of difference, which may exist with the most perfect adherence to fashion, you will find a language much easier read than any of those on the Rosetta stone. Lord Ashborough was dressed more like a young than an old man, though without any extravagance. His coat was of dark green, covering a double-breasted waistcoat, of some harmonizing colour, while his long thin, rather tight-fitting trowsers, displayed a well-formed leg, and were met by a neat and highly polished boot. Round his neck he wore a black handkerchief, exposing the smallest possible particle of white collar between his cheek and the silk; and on one of his fingers was a single seal ring. Taking him altogether he was a very good-looking man, rather like the late Mr. Canning, but with a much less noble expression of countenance.

Walking forward to the table, which we have noted as being well supplied with locks, Lord Ashborough opened one of the drawers, and, having rang the bell, sat down and took out some papers. The door opened; a servant appeared;--"Send in Mr. Tims!" said Lord Ashborough, and the man glided out. After a short pause, another person appeared, but of very different form and appearance from the servant; and therefore we must look at him more closely. He was a short stout bustling-looking little man, of about thirty-eight or forty, perhaps more, habited in black, rather white at the seams and edges. His countenance was originally full and broad; but the habit of thrusting his nose through small and intricate affairs, had sharpened that feature considerably; and the small black eyes that backed it, together with several red blotches, one of which had settled itself for life upon the tip of the eminence, did not diminish the prying and intrusive expression of his countenance. There was impudence, too, and cunning, written in very legible

characters upon his face; but we must leave the rest to show itself as we go on.

As Mr. Peter Tims, of Clement's Inn, attorney-at-law--for such was the respectable individual of whom we now treat--entered the library of Lord Ashborough, he turned round and carefully closed the double door, and then, with noiseless step, proceeded through the room till he brought himself in face of his patron. He then made a low bow--it would have been *Cow Tow* if it had been desired--and then advanced another step, and made another bow.

"Sit down, sit down, Mr. Tims!" said Lord Ashborough, without raising his eyes, which were running over a paper he had taken from the drawer. "Sit down, sit down, I say!"

Mr. Tims did sit down, and then, drawing forth, some papers from a blue bag which he held in his hand, he began quietly to put them in order, while Lord Ashborough read on.

After a minute or two, however, his lordship ceased, saying, "Now, Mr. Tims, have you brought the annuity deed?"

"Here it is, my lord!" replied the lawyer; "and I have examined it again most carefully. There is not a chink for a fly to break through. There is not a word about redemption from beginning to end. The money must be paid for the term of your lordship's natural life."

Lord Ashborough paused, and gnawed his lip for a moment or two. "Do you know, Mr. Tims," he said at length, "I have some idea of permitting the redemption? I am afraid we have made a mistake in refusing it."

Mr. Tims was never astonished at any thing that a great man--*i. e.* a rich man--did or said, unless he perceived that it was intended to astonish him, and then he was very much astonished indeed, as in duty bound. It was wonderful, too, with what facility he could agree in every thing a rich man said, and exclaim, "Very like an ousel!" as dexterously as Polonius, or a sick-nurse, though he had been declaring the same question, "very like a whale!" the moment before. Nor was he ever at a loss for reasons in support of the new opinion implanted by his patrons. In short he seemed to have in his head, all ticketed and ready for use, a store of arguments, moral, legal, and philosophical, in favour of every thing that could be done, said, or thought, by the wealthy or the powerful. In the present instance, he saw that Lord Ashborough put the matter as one not quite decided in his own mind; but he saw also that his mind had such a leaning to the new view of the matter, as would make him very much obliged to any one, who would push it over to that side altogether.

"I think your lordship is quite right," replied Mr. Tims. "You had every right to refuse to redeem if you thought fit; but, at the same time, you can always permit the redemption if you like; and it might indeed look more generous, though, as I said before, you had every right to refuse. Yet perhaps, after all, my lord"----

"Tush! Do not after all me, sir," cried Lord Ashborough, with some degree of impatience, which led Mr. Tims to suspect that there was some latent motive for this change of opinion, which his lordship felt a difficulty in explaining: and which he, Mr. Tims, resolved at a proper time to extract by the most delicate process he could devise. "The means, sir," added Lord Ashborough; "the means are the things to be attended to, not the pitiful balancing of one perhaps against another."

"Oh, my lord! the means are very easy," replied Tims, rubbing his hands. "You have nothing to do but to send word down that your lordship is ready to accept, and any one will advance the means to Sir"----

"Pshaw!" again interrupted Lord Ashborough. "You do not understand me, and go blundering on;" and, rising from his chair, the peer walked two or three times up and down the room, gnawing his lip, and bending his eyes upon the ground. "There!" he cried at length, speaking with abrupt rudeness. "There! The matter requires consideration--take up your papers, sir, and begone! I will send for you when I want you."

Mr. Tims ventured not a word, for he saw that his patron had made himself angry with the attempt to arrange something in his own mind which would not be arranged; and taking up his papers, one by one as slowly as he decently could, he deposited them in their blue bag, and then stole quietly towards the door. Lord Ashborough was still walking up and down, and he suffered him to pass the inner door without taking any notice; but, as he was pushing open the red baize door beyond, the nobleman's voice was heard exclaiming, "Stay, stay! Mr. Tims come here!" The lawyer glided quietly back into the room, where Lord Ashborough was still standing in the middle of the floor, gazing on the beautiful and instructive spots on the Turkey carpet. His reverie, however, was over in a moment, and he again pointed to the chair which the lawyer had before occupied, bidding him sit down, while he himself took possession of the seat on the other side of the table; and, leaning his elbow on the oak, and his cheek upon his hand, he went on in the attitude and manner of one who is beginning a long conversation. The commencement, however, was precisely similar to the former one, which had proved so short. "Do you know, Mr. Tims," he said, "I have some idea of permitting the redemption? I am afraid that we have made a mistake in refusing it;" but then he added, a moment after, "--for the particular purpose I propose."

Mr. Tims was as silent as a mouse, for he saw that he was near dangerous ground; and at that

moment six-and-eightpence would hardly have induced him to say a word--at least if it went farther than, "Exactly so, my lord!"

The matter was still a difficult one for Lord Ashborough to get over; for it is wonderful how easily men can persuade themselves, that the evil they wish to commit, is right; and yet how troublesome they find even the attempt to persuade another, that it is so, although they know him to be as unscrupulous a personage as ever lived or died unhung. Now Lord Ashborough himself had no very high idea of the rigid morality of his friend Mr. Tims's principles, and well knew that his interest would induce him to do any thing on earth; and yet, strange to say, that though Lord Ashborough only desired to indulge a gentlemanlike passion, which, under very slight modifications, or rather disguises, is considered honourable, and is patronised by all sorts of people, yet he did not at all like to display, even to the eyes of Mr. Tims, the real motive that was now influencing him. As it was necessary, however, to do so to some one, and he knew that he could not do so to any one whose virtue was less ferocious than that of Mr. Tims, he drew his clenched fist, on which his cheek was resting, half over his mouth, and went on.

"The fact is, you must know, Mr. Tims," he said, "this Sir Sidney Delaware is my first cousin--but you knew that before.--Well, we were never very great friends, though he and my brother were; and at college it used to be his pleasure to thwart many of my views and purposes. There is not, perhaps, a prouder man living than he is, and that intolerable pride, added to his insolent sarcasms, kept us greatly asunder in our youth, and therefore you see he has really no claim upon my friendship or affection in this business."

"None in the world! None in the world!" cried Tims. "Indeed, all I wonder at is, that your lordship does not use the power you have to annoy him!"

Mr. Tims harped aright, and it is inexpressible what a relief Lord Ashborough felt--one of the proudest men in Europe, by the way--at finding that the little, contemptible, despised lawyer, whom he looked upon, on ordinary occasions, as the dust under his feet, had, in the present instance, got the right end of a clue, that he was ashamed or afraid to unwind himself. Besides, the way he put it, gave Lord Ashborough an opportunity of *chucking* fine and generous, as the Westminster fellows have it; and he immediately replied--"No, sir, no! I never had any wish to annoy him. My only wish has been to lower that pride, which is ruinous to himself, and insulting to others; and I should not have even pursued that wish so far, had it not been that a circumstance happened which called us into immediate collision."

On finding that simple personal hatred and revenge--feelings that might have been stated in three words--were the real and sole motives which Lord Ashborough found it so difficult to enunciate, Mr. Tims chuckled--but mark me, I beg--it was not an open and barefaced cachinnation--it was, on the contrary, one of those sweet internal chuckles that gently shake the diaphragm and the parietes of the abdomen, and cause even a gentle percussion of the ensiform cartilage, without one muscle of the face vibrating in sympathy, or the slightest spasm taking place in the trachea or epiglottis. There is the anatomy of a suppressed chuckle for you! The discovery, however, was of more service than in the simple production of such agreeable phenomena. Mr. Tims perceiving the motive of his patron, perceived also the precise road on which he was to lead, and instantly replied, "Whatever circumstance called your lordship into competition with Sir Sidney Delaware, must of course have been very advantageous to yourself, if you chose to put forth your full powers. But that, let me be permitted to say, is what I should suspect, from all that I have the honour of knowing of your lordship's character, you would not do. For I am convinced you have already shown more lenity than was very consistent with your own interest, and perhaps more than was even beneficial to the object;--but I humbly crave your Lordship's pardon for presuming to"----

Lord Ashborough waved his hand, "Not at all, Mr. Tims! Not at all!" he said, "Your intentions, I know, are good. But hear me. We came in collision concerning the lady whom he afterwards married, and made a well-bred beggar of. He had known her, and, it seems, obtained promises from her before I became acquainted; and though a transitory fancy for her took place in my own bosom,"--and Lord Ashborough turned deadly pale,"--yet of course, whenever I heard of my cousins arrangements with her, I withdrew my claims, without, as you say, exerting power that I may flatter myself"----

He left the sentence unfinished, but he bowed his head proudly, which finished it sufficiently, and Mr. Tims immediately chimed in, "Oh, there can be no doubt--If your lordship had chosen--Who the deuce is Sir Sidney Delaware, compared"----&c. &c. &c. &c.

"Well, I forgot the matter entirely," continued Lord Ashborough, in a frank and easy tone, for it is wonderful how the lawyer's little insignificances helped him on. "Well, I forgot the matter entirely."

"But you never married any one else," thought the lawyer, "and you remember it now." All this was thought in the lowest possible tone, so that Satan himself could hardly hear it, but Lord Ashborough went on. "I never, indeed, remembered the business more, till, on lending the money to his father, I found from a letter which the late man, let me see that the present man, had not forgiven me some little progress I had made in the lady's affection. He said--I recollect the words very well--He said, that he could have borne his father borrowing the money at any rate of interest from any person but myself, who had endeavoured to supplant him--and all the rest that

you can imagine. Well, from that moment I determined to bow that man's pride, for his own sake, as well as other people's. I thought I had done so pretty well too; but, on my refusing to suffer the redemption--which no one can doubt that I had a right to do--he wrote me that letter;" and his lordship threw across the table, to his solicitor, the letter which he had taken out of the drawer, just as the other entered. It was in the form of a note, and couched in the following terms:--

"Sir Sidney Delaware acknowledges the receipt of Lord Ashborough's letter, formally declining to accept the offer he made to redeem the annuity chargeable upon the estate of Emberton. The motives, excuses, or apologies--whichever Lord Ashborough chooses to designate the sentences that conclude his letter--were totally unnecessary, as Sir Sidney Delaware was too well acquainted with Lord Ashborough, in days of old, not to appreciate fully the principles on which he acts at present.

"*EMBERTON PARK, 1st September, 18--.*"

"Infamous! brutal! heinous!" cried Mr. Tims. "What does your lordship intend to do? I hope you will, without scruple, punish this man as he deserves. I trust that, for his own sake, you will make him feel that such ungrateful and malignant letters as that, are not to be written with impunity--ungrateful I may well call them! for what cause could your lordship have to write to him at all, except to soften the disappointment you conceived he would feel?"

"You say very true, Mr. Tims," replied Lord Ashborough, with a benign smile. "You say very true, indeed; and I do think myself, in justice to society, bound to correct such insolence, though, perhaps, I may not be inclined to carry the chastisement quite so far as yourself."

"Nothing could be too severe for such a man!" cried Mr. Tims, resolved to give his lordship space enough to manœuvre in, "Nothing could be too severe!"

"Nay, nay, that is saying too much," said Lord Ashborough, "We will neither hang him, Mr. Tims, nor burn him in the hand, if you please," and he smiled again at his own moderation.

"A small touch of imprisonment, however, would do him a world of good," said Mr. Tims, feeling his ground--Lord Ashborough smiled benignly a third time. "But the mischief is," continued the lawyer, "he pays the annuity so regularly that it would be difficult to catch him."

"That is the reason why I say we have done wrong in refusing to allow the redemption," rejoined the peer. "Do you not think, Mr. Tims, some accident might occur to stop the money which he was about to borrow for the purpose of redeeming; and if we could but get him to give bills payable at a certain day, we might have him arrested, in default?"

The lawyer shook his head. "I am afraid, my lord, if you had permitted the redemption, the money would have been ready to the minute," he said. "My uncle, I hear, was to have raised it for him; and, as he was to have had a good commission, it would have been prepared to the tick of the clock."

"And was your uncle to have lent the money himself, sir?" demanded Lord Ashborough, with a mysterious smile of scorn. "Did your uncle propose to give the money out of his own strongbox?"

"No, my lord, no!" replied Tims, eagerly, "No, no! He would not do that without much higher interest than he was likely to have got. Had he been the person, of course your lordship might have commanded him; but it was to be raised from some gentleman connected with Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson--a very respectable law house, indeed!"

"Some gentleman connected with Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson!" repeated Lord Ashborough, curling his haughty lip; "and who do you suppose that gentleman is, but my own nephew Harry Beauchamp?"

The lawyer started off his chair with unaffected astonishment, the expression of which was, however, instantly mastered, and down he sat again, pondering, as fast as he could, the probable results that were to be obtained from this very unexpected discovery. Some results he certainly saw Lord Ashborough was prepared to deduce; and he knew that his only plan was to wait the development thereof, assisting as much as in him lay, the parturition of his patron's designs. But Lord Ashborough having spoken thus far, found very little difficulty in proceeding.

"The simple fact is this, Mr. Tims," he said; "Harry Beauchamp, full of all the wild enthusiasm--which would have ruined his father, if we had not got him that governorship in which he died--to my certain knowledge has gone down to Emberton, with the full determination of assisting these people, of whom his father was so fond. I have reason to think even, that the coming up of that young man, the son, was at Henry's instigation, although they affected not to know each other, and I am told carried their dissimulation so far as to pass each other in the hall as strangers. At all events, they went down together in a stage-coach, and are now beyond all doubt laying out their plans for frustrating all my purposes."

"Shameful, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Tims.

"On Harry's part," replied Lord Ashborough, affecting a tone of candour and moderation; "on Harry's part it is but a piece of boyish enthusiasm--a touch of his father's folly. I love the boy, who, as you know, will succeed me--when it pleases Heaven," he added piously--"to remove me from this life. I love the boy, and I do not choose to see him spend his splendid fortune, which will make a noble addition to the family estates, upon a set of mean and designing beggars; and I wish at once to punish them for their low and cunning schemes, and to save my nephew from their snares. Can we not, Mr. Tims, do you think, hit upon some plan by which this may be effected?"

"Why, my lord," replied Mr. Tims, hesitating slightly, for he was totally unprepared either for the intelligence he had received, or the demand that followed it; "why, my lord, your lordship's views are as kind and generous as usual; and doubtless--doubtless we may soon devise some means by which your lordship's nephew may be extricated from this little entanglement--but it will, of course, require thought--though perhaps your lordship's clear and perspicuous mind may have already devised some project. Indeed, I cannot doubt it," he added, seeing a slight but well satisfied smile cross the features of the noble earl. "Your lordship has so much of what Burke used to call creative talent, that I doubt not you have already discovered the fitting means, and only require an agent in your most devoted servant."

"Something more, Mr. Tims, something more than a mere agent," replied Lord Ashborough. "I require your legal advice. We must proceed cautiously, and not suffer either zealous indignation, or regard for my nephew, to lead us into any thing that is not quite lawful. A slight scheme of the matter may, indeed, have suggested itself to my mind, but I want you to consider it well, and legalize it for me, as well as some of the details. Could we not, I say--could we not--it is but a supposition you know, sir--could we not give notice to this Sir Sidney Delaware, that we are willing to permit the redemption; and even to give him time to pay the money, cancelling, in the mean time, the annuity deed"----

"Not before you have got the amount!" exclaimed the lawyer, in unutterable astonishment.

"Yes, sir, before I have got the amount," replied Lord Ashborough, phlegmatically, "but not before I have got bills or notes of hand, payable within a certain time, and with an expressed stipulation, that unless those are duly paid, the annuity itself holds in full force."

"Ay; but if they be paid, my lord," cried Mr. Tims, "the annuity is at an end; and then where is your lordship?"

"But cannot we find means to stop their being paid, Mr. Tims?" said Lord Ashborough, fixing his eyes steadily upon the lawyer. "In all the intricate chambers of your brain, I say, is there no effectual way you can discover to stop the supplies upon which this Delaware may have been led to reckon, and render him unable to pay the sum on the day his bills fall due? Remember, sir, your uncle is the agent, as I am led to believe, between this person and my nephew. Harry Beauchamp, forsooth, has too fine notions of delicacy to offer the money in his own person; but he is the man from whom the money is to come, and it has been for some weeks lodged in the hands of Steelyard and Wilkinson, his solicitors, awaiting the result--that is to say, the whole of it except ten thousand pounds in my hands, which I have promised to sell out for him to-morrow, and pay into their office. Are there no means, sir, for stopping the money?"

"Plenty, plenty, my lord!" replied the lawyer. "The only difficulty will be the choice of them. But, first, cannot your lordship refuse to pay the ten thousand?"

"That will not do," answered the peer. "I know Harry well; and his first act would be to sell out the necessary sum to supply the deficiency. You must devise something else."

"Let us make the bills payable at Emberton, my lord," said the attorney, "at the house of my uncle. Mr. Beauchamp must then either come to town for the money, or send some one to receive it; and in either case it may be staid."

"How so?" demanded Lord Ashborough. "If he come, the matter is hopeless. He has sold out of the army too; so there is no chance of his being called away there."

"Ay; but there is a little process at law going on against him, my lord," replied the attorney, of which he knows nothing as yet. "Some time ago, he threw the valet he had then, down stairs, head foremost, for seducing the daughter of his landlady. The fellow has since prosecuted him for assault, and served the process upon me, whom he employed in the affair. I am not supposed to know where he is, so that the matter may be easily suffered to go by default; and, one way or another, we can contrive to get him arrested for a day or two, no doubt--especially as it is all for his own good and salvation, I may call it."

"Certainly, certainly!" answered Lord Ashborough. "I should feel no scruple in doing so; for no one could doubt that I am actuated alone by the desire of keeping him from injuring himself. But suppose he sends, Mr. Tims?"

"Why, that were a great deal better still!" said the lawyer. "The only person he could send would be his servant, Harding, who owes me the place; and who, between you and I, my lord, might find it difficult to keep me from transporting him to Botany Bay, if I chose it. He would doubtless be easily prevailed upon to stop the money for a time, or altogether, if it could be

shown him that he could get clear off, and the matter would be settled for ever."

There was a tone of familiarity growing upon the lawyer, as a natural consequence of the edifying communion which he was holding with his patron, that rather displeased and alarmed Lord Ashborough, and he answered quickly, "You forget yourself, sir! Do you suppose that I would instigate my nephew's servant to rob his master?"

Mr. Peter Tims had perhaps forgot himself for the moment; but he was one of those men that never forget themselves long; and, as crouching was as natural to him as to a spaniel, he was instantly again as full of humility and submission as he had been, previous to the exposé which had morally sunk Lord Ashborough to a level with Mr. Tims. "No, my lord! No!" he exclaimed eagerly, "Far be it from me to dream for one moment that your lordship would form such an idea. All I meant was, that this servant might easily be induced to delay the delivery of the money, on one pretext or another, till it be too late; and if he abscond--which perchance he might do, for his notions concerning property, either real or personal, are not very clearly defined--your lordship could easily intend to make it good to Mr. Beauchamp."

"I do not know what you propose that I should easily *intend* Mr. Tims," replied Lord Ashborough; "but I know that it would not sound particularly well if this man were to abscond with the money, and there were found upon his person any authorization from me to delay discharging his trust to his master."

"Oh, my lord, that difficulty would be easily removed!" answered Mr. Tims. "The law is very careful not to impute evil motives where good ones can be made apparent. It will be easy to write a letter to this man--what one may call a fishing letter--to see whether he will do what we wish, but stating precisely that your lordship's sole purpose and view is to save your nephew from squandering his fortune in a weak and unprofitable manner. We can keep a copy, properly authenticated: then, should he abscond and be caught with the letter on him, your lordship will be cleared; while if, on being taken, he attempt to justify himself at your lordship's expense, the authenticated copy will clear you still."

"That is not a bad plan," said Lord Ashborough, musing. "But what if he draw for the money through your uncle, Mr. Tims? Do you think the old man could be induced to detain the money, or to deny its arrival for a day or two?"

"Why, I fear not, my lord," answered the other, shaking his head; "I fear not--he was five-and-thirty years a lawyer, my lord, and he is devilish cautious.--But I will tell you what I can do. I can direct him to address all his letters, on London business, under cover to your lordship, which will save postage--a great thing in his opinion--and, as he holds a small share of my business still, I can open all the answers. So that we will manage it some way."

Lord Ashborough paused and mused for several minutes, for though his mind was comparatively at ease in having found his lawyer so eager and zealous in his co-operation; yet a certain consciousness of the many little lets and hindrances that occur in the execution of the best laid schemes, made him still thoughtful and apprehensive. Did you ever knit a stocking? No! nor I either--nor Lord Ashborough, I dare say, either. Yet we all know, that in the thousand and one stitches of which it is composed, if a single one be missed, down goes the whole concatenation of loops, and the matter is just where it began, only with a ravelled thread about your fingers and thumbs, which is neither pleasant nor tidy. This consideration had some weight with the earl; so, after thinking deeply for several minutes, he rejoined,--"The matter seems clear enough, Mr. Tims, but I will put it to yourself whether you can carry it through successfully or not--Hear me to an end, sir--I will on no account agree to the redemption of the annuity, if you are not certain of being able to bring about that which we propose. So, do not undertake it unless you can do so. If you do undertake it, the odds stand thus--You have five hundred pounds in addition to your fees if you be successful, but, if you fail, you lose my agency for ever."

"My lord," replied Tims, who was not a man to suppose that cunning could ever fail. "I will undertake the business and the risk. But, of course, your lordship must give me all your excellent advice, and your powerful assistance. In the first place, you must allow me to bid my uncle send all his letters, and direct all the answers to be sent under cover to your lordship, and, in the next place, you must allow me to write immediately to this man Harding in your name."

"Not without letting me see the letter!" exclaimed Lord Ashborough. "But that of course; and if you succeed, the five hundred pounds are yours."

"Your lordship is ever generous and kind," replied Peter Tims, "and I will undertake to carry the matter through; but only"--and Mr. Tims was honest for once in his life, from the fear of after consequences--"but only I am afraid your lordship will not find the result put this Sir Sidney Delaware so completely in your power as you think."

"How so?" demanded Lord Ashborough, turning upon him almost fiercely. "How so, sir? How so?"

"Why, my lord," replied Mr. Tims, in a low and humble tone, "even suppose he is arrested, depend upon it, he will very easily find some one to lend him the money on the Emberton estates, to take up the bills he has given."

The earl's eye flashed, and the dark and bitter spirit in his heart broke forth for the first time unrestrained. "Let me but have him in prison!" he exclaimed, "Let me but have him once in prison, and I will so complicate my claims upon his pitiful inheritance, and so wring his proud heart with degradations, that the beggar who robbed me of my bride, shall die as he has lived, in poverty and disappointment!" and in the vehemence with which the long suppressed passion burst forth, he struck his hand upon the table, till the ink-glasses danced in their stand.

Mr. Tims could understand envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness; but he was cowed by such vehemence as that into which the bare thought of seeing his detested rival in prison, had betrayed his noble patron. Feeling, too, that he himself was not at all the sort of spirit to rule the whirlwind and direct the storm, he said a few quiet words about preparing every thing, and waiting on his lordship the next morning, and slunk away without more ado.

CHAPTER X.

This chapter shall be, I think, what that delightful wight, Washington Irving, would call a *Salmagundi*, or as it should be, perhaps, a *Salmi à la Gondi*; but having mentioned that name, Irving I dedicate this book to you. It is long since we first met--long since we last parted--and, it may be, long, long, ere we meet again. Nevertheless, Heaven speed you, wherever you are, and send you forward on your voyage, with a calm sea, and a swelling sail! In all the many that I have known, and amongst the few that I have loved and esteemed, there is not now a living man that can compete with you in that delightful conversation, where the heart pours forth its tide; and where fancy and feeling mingle together, and flow on in one ever sparkling stream. The dim Atlantic, whose very name sounds like that of eternity, may roll between us, till death close the eyes of one or the other; but till the things of this world pass away, you shall not be forgotten.

Although we have now brought up the events in London nearly to the same point as the events in the country, we must still leave Henry Burrel strolling on through Emberton Park beside Blanche Delaware, while we turn for a moment to his silent servant, who having, on the same morning, walked with his usual slow and quiet step to the post-office, brought home, and deposited upon his masters table, two or three letters, after first gleaning every possible information that their outside or their inside could furnish. He then proceeded to inspect the contents of another epistle, which bore his own name and superscription. The words therein written had a considerable effect upon him, causing more twitches and contortions of the muscles of his countenance, than was usually visible upon that still and patient piece of furniture. The first expression was certainly full of pleasure; but that soon relapsed into deep thought, and then a grave shake of the head, and close setting of the lower jaw, might be supposed to argue a negative determination. "No, no, Mr. Tims," he muttered, "that won't do! If one could make sure of getting clear off--well and good. But first, there is the chance of my not being sent for the money--then you would take good care to have me closely watched; and then, again, I do not know whether the chance here at Emberton may not be worth ten of the other--and I may come in for my share of the other too. No, no, Mr. Tims, it won't do!--so I will come the conscientious upon you." And down he sat to indite an epistle to Mr. Peter Tims, the agent of Lord Ashborough. It was written in one of those fair, easy, but vacillating, running-hands, which bespeak a peculiar and inherent gift or talent for committing forgery; and was to the following effect:--

"Emberton, *September*, 18--

"SIR--Your honoured letter was duly received this morning; and I hasten to reply, as in duty bound. I am very sure that such honourable gentlemen as my lord the earl and yourself, would not undertake any thing but upon good and reasonable grounds; but, hoping that you will pardon my boldness in saying so much, yet I cannot imagine that I have any other than a straightforward duty to perform--namely, when my master sends me for any sum of money, or other valuable thing, to hasten to give it up into his hands as soon as I have received it; which I would certainly do, in case he should send me up to London, although I do not think it probable he will. It is very true, certainly, that I do think our notions of property are very confined and wrong; and that no man should have at his disposal a superabundance, while another man is wanting the necessaries or even conveniences of life; and that, if things were equally distributed, a better system must spontaneously arise. This much I have learned by reading; and I heartily wish that the principles of regeneration, which are at present in active existence amongst the operative classes, may go on to complete a change of the old corrupt system. Nevertheless, until such time as the intellect of the country in general shall have worked such results, I can be doing no wrong in following the laws and usages established; and shall, consequently, abstain from acting upon the abstract principles of general utility, until such time as the general welfare may require a physical

demonstration of popular opinion.

"In regard to certain passages of my past life, to which you are pleased to refer; although I believe that I could perfectly justify myself upon my own fixed principles for every thing that I have done through life; yet I am sorry that any thing should have occurred to make you for a moment doubt the integrity of a person you strongly recommended to Mr. Beauchamp; and I am determined to do nothing that shall confirm any evil opinion you may have unfortunately been led to form, or to make my master regret having listened to the recommendation which you formerly thought fit to give your very humble and most obedient servant,

"STEPHEN HARDING."

Having penned this delectable epistle, and read it over more than once, with much genuine satisfaction at the skill with which he had endeavoured to raise his own character, while rejecting the offers of Mr. Tims, Harding sealed it up, and hastened to put it in the post. He then sauntered slowly through the town; and having visited the widow's cottage, and conversed for a few minutes with her son, he proceeded to walk on in the same direction, which we have seen Burrel pursue upon a former occasion, shortly after his first arrival at Emberton. The purpose of the silent servant, however, was not to visit the old miser of Ryebury in person; and, ere he had gone a quarter of a mile upon the road, he was joined by the same bold vulgar personage who had, during part of the journey, occupied a place in the stage-coach which brought his master to Emberton.

They met evidently as old and familiar friends, and with that sort of easy nonchalance which bespoke that their meeting was not unexpected. The servant pursued his way, scarcely pausing to say the necessary passwords of civility, and the other, turning onward upon the same path, walked by his side, with his arms bent behind his back, conversing, not exactly in an under voice, but rather in that between-the-teeth sort of tone, which renders what is said more difficult to be understood by any one not quite near, than even a whisper.

The terms in which they spoke, also, were somewhat enigmatical, and none, probably, but the initiated, could have discovered their views or purposes by such terms as the following.

"I have just been thinking last night. Master Harding," said his new companion, "that we had better get the other job done as soon as possible. We are wasting time, I think, and it seems to me as how you are growing something squeamish."

"You are a fool, Tony," replied Harding, civilly; "you are a fool for thinking any thing of the kind. I'll tell you what, you may count yourself extremely well off that you have fallen in with a man of principle and education like myself, or you would have put your neck in a noose long ago. You take no extended views of things; and, instead of acting upon principle, which would always make you cautious in regard to times and seasons, and means and methods, you go bolt on, and would run your head into the stone pitcher, if I were not by to pull you back by the heels."

"Well, I think you're a rum covey, now!" replied the other; and was proceeding in the same strain, when he was stopped by his companion exclaiming--"Hush, hush! Curse your slang, it will betray you as soon as the mark of the hot iron would. Look here, now. I am no more squeamish than you are. I always act upon principle; and as to the job before us, considering the sum of general utility that is to be gained, I see no objection to doing the matter completely--I mean, making a finish of it. You understand? But where is the hurry? Let us go cautiously to work, learn our ground, and get every thing prepared.--I say, where's the hurry?"

"As to the matter of that," answered the other, "there mayn't be no great hurry, to be sure. But we're both wasting our time somewhat; and, besides, they are looking out sharp after that other job--you see they have digged for the plate like mad--so that there is no use staying longer nor necessary, you know?"

"Don't be afraid!" answered Harding, coolly, "They can make nothing of that. Besides, look here, Smithson; if we wait four or five days longer, there will be five-and-twenty thousand pounds down from London."

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Anthony Smithson, laying one finger on the side of his nose. "That is a go! But are you sure?"

"I never say any thing without being sure," answered Harding, with laconic pomposity. "So make yourself easy on that score. I say there will be five-and-twenty thousand pounds down in three or four days; and, if I know the old man right, the larger half will be in gold. Have you tried Sally the maid?"

"It won't do!" answered the other, with somewhat of a rueful face. "She has lived long enough with that old fellow, to be as cautious as a beak."

"Well, I suppose I must do that too!" answered the valet; "though it is a little tiresome, Master Smithson, that all the hard work is to fall upon me."

"Why, how the devil can I help it, Harding?" replied the other, "If the girl will have nothing to say to me, what can I do, you know? No, no, when it comes to the real hard work, you never find me behind!"

"Well, well," answered his worthy coadjutor, "I must come round her myself somehow, though she be but a dirty trapesing slut, that a man of gentlemanly feelings will find some difficulty in making love to--but, nevertheless, when one acts upon principle, one learns to overcome one's repugnance to such things, from a consideration of the mass of general utility to be obtained by a trifling sacrifice."

His companion grinned, but he was too well accustomed to Mr. Harding's method of reasoning to express any farther surprise. After a few words more on both sides, however, as they judged it expedient to be seen together as little as possible, those two respectable persons separated, and, while Anthony Smithson returned to the town, Harding pursued his way onward; and having, on the strength of the communication he had received, determined to proceed to Ryebury, he took the same path that Burrel had followed before him. The beauties of nature occupied less of his thoughts than those of his master; and while, with solemn steps and slow, he wandered on his way, his ideas were much fuller of shillings and sixpences, and trips across the Atlantic, than of the verdant mead and purling stream.

As I believe I have before said. Master Harding was by no means an ugly person; and the charms of his good looks, together with a marvellous sweet voice, and a good deal more eloquence of its own peculiar kind than any one could have suspected him to possess from his usual taciturnity, he was what the French render, with somewhat profligate decency, by calling the persons so gifted, *un homme à bonnes fortunes*. His expedition against the heart of Sally, the miser's maid, was more successful than that of his companion had been, and he returned home flattering himself on having made more progress than he had anticipated. In fact, he had been fortunate in finding Mr. Tims out, and Sally at home; but as the intrigues of a slattern and a valet form no part of the staple of this book, we shall leave the matter as it is, without any farther elucidation.

In the meanwhile, Burrel--for so we shall still call him--had sauntered on, whiling away the golden minutes of a fair day, on the early side of thirty, in sweet conversation beside a beautiful girl. I have described what their conversation was like before, and I leave every one who can remember what were the sensations he experienced, when deep and fervent love just began to break upon his heart, to imagine how sweet were the winged minutes as they flew. Even the unspoken consciousness was not a burden, but a joy; and though Blanche Delaware might be said to tremble at the feelings that were growing upon her, yet there was a sort of vague internal conviction that those feelings were reciprocal--that they could not thus have crept over her heart unless some, nay, many of the signs of similar sentiments, on his side, had been sufficiently displayed to make her feel secure that she did not love unsought. Still there would every now and then come a shrinking apprehension across her mind, that she might be deceived--that it might be all, merely a courteous and engaging manner, the same towards every one, which she in her ignorance had vainly fancied particular to herself. But those thoughts were but for a moment; and as Burrel walked onward by her side, there was in his tone, in his manner, and still more in the current through which all his thoughts appeared now to flow, a balmy influence that seemed to soothe away every fear. She knew not well whence she derived that balm; for had she tried, which, by the way, she did not, she could not have found one particular word he spoke, which was more appropriate to the vocabulary of love than to Johnson's Dictionary. It was, perhaps--but she knew nothing about it--It was, perhaps, that pouring forth of the soul upon every topic, which can never take place but in conversation with one we love and esteem; for the hours of love are like a sunshiny day in the midst of summer, and all the flowers open, and the birds sing, and the bright things come forth through the hearts universe. It was this, perhaps, more than ought else in Burrel's manner, that made Blanche Delaware believe that she herself was loved.

It is sometimes a very difficult thing to get two people to acknowledge, in any language under the sun, the feelings that are passing in their hearts. It is more especially difficult in a book; for no author likes to tell how he and his managed the matter themselves--at least, if he be not an ass or a coxcomb--and any thing that is manufactured, is almost always "flat, stale, and unprofitable." A true story canters one easily over all such difficulties; and it so fortunately happened, that Henry Burrel and Blanche Delaware acknowledged it all without the slightest idea in the world that they were doing any thing of the kind.

There had been something spoken accidentally, that went too deep, and both felt, perhaps, though almost unconsciously, that nothing more could be said on that topic without saying more still; and as there was a third person by, of course the matter dropt, and equally of course, a long pause ensued, which grew unpleasant.

"I thought," said Burrel at length, "that we were to meet with some antiquities--even more interesting than the house itself--at least, your father said so;" and conscious that he had made an awkward speech, and very little to the purpose, Burrel looked up and smiled, though many other men would have looked down and coloured.

"You are not far from them," replied Captain Delaware--for Blanche's eyes were fixed upon the ground, and her thoughts were--not at Nova Zembla. "But surely you are not tired?"

"Nay, nay, any thing but tired," answered Burrel; "but your father declared he would catechize me upon these ruins severely, and I was only afraid that I should forget them altogether."

"A piece of inattention, which Blanche or I would excuse much more readily than my father," replied the good-humoured sailor. "But we are close upon them. You see those two wooded banks that fall across each other, with the stream flowing out in foam from between them? They form the mouth of a little glen, about a hundred yards up which, stands the Prior's Fountain, and farther still the Hermit's Chapel. In architecture, I believe, they are unique, and there is many a curious tradition about both."

"Hush, hush, William!" cried his sister, seeing him about to proceed, "Never tell the traditions but upon the spot. Oh, an old legend, in these days of steam and manufactory, can never be properly told, except under the gray stone and the ivy, where the memories of a thousand years are carved by the chisel of time on every tottering pinnacle and mouldering cornice, which vouch, by their unusual forms, for the strange stories of their founders!"

"Oh, let us go on, by all means!" said Burrel, smiling; "an old legend is worthy of every accessory with which we can furnish it.--But there it is," he added, as they turned the angle of the bank, and, entering the little glen, had before them a small Gothic building, covered with the richest ornaments of the most luxurious age of Norman architecture. "That, I suppose, is the Chapel?"

"No, that is the Prior's Fountain," answered Captain Delaware; "and certainly the monks must have attached some peculiar importance to it, from covering it over with so splendid a structure."

Another minute brought them near it, and Burrel found, that, under a beautiful canopy of stone-work, supported by eight cluster pillars, was placed a small stone fountain, full of the most limpid water, which, welling from a basin somewhat like the baptismal font of a Gothic church, poured through a little channel in the pavement, and thence made a small sparkling stream, which joined the larger one ere it had run fifty yards. Attached to the basin by an iron chain, was a cup of the same metal, of very ancient date, though, perhaps, more modern than the fountain. This cup, as soon as they approached. Captain Delaware dipped into the water, and, laughing gaily, held it to Burrel.

"You must drink of the Prior's Fountain, Mr. Burrel," he said; "but listen, listen, before you do so. The monks, you know, having vowed celibacy, found that the less they had to do with love the better; and it being luckily discovered that the waters of this well were a complete and everlasting cure for that malady, one of the priors covered it over, as you see, and enjoined that, on commencing his noviciate at Emberton, every pseudo monk should be brought hither, and made to drink one cup of the water. It is added, that the remedy was never known to fail, and now with this warning, Burrel, drink if you will."

Burrel by this time had the cup in his hand, and for a single instant his eyes sought those of Blanche Delaware. She was looking down into the fountain, with one hand resting on the edge. There was a slight smile upon her lip, but there was a scarcely perceptible degree of agitation in her aspect, at the same time, which Burrel understood--or, at least, hoped--might have some reference to himself, although she might believe as little as he did in the efficacy of the waters of the fountain.

"No, no!" he replied at once, giving back the cup to Captain Delaware, and laughing lightly, as people do when they have very serious feelings at their hearts, "No, no! I dare not drink of such waters. They are too cold in every sense of the word to drink, after such a walk as this.--The very cup has frozen my hand!" he added, to take out any point that he might have given to his speech.

"He is actually afraid, Blanche!" cried her brother, laughing. "Come, show him what a brave girl you are, and drain the cup to the bottom!"

"No, indeed!" answered Blanche Delaware. "Mr. Burrel is very right. The water is a great deal too cold;" and, as she spoke, she blushed till the tell-tale blood spread rosy over her fair forehead, and tingled in her small rounded ear.

"Cowards both, as I live!" cried Captain Delaware, drinking off the contents, and letting the cup drop.--"Cowards both, as I live!" and, springing across the little streamlet, he took two or three steps onward, towards the chapel.

"Let me assist you across!" said Burrel, offering his hand. As his fingers touched those of Blanche Delaware, to aid her in crossing the rivulet, they clasped upon her hand with a gentle pressure of thanks--so slight that she could not be offended, so defined that she could not mistake. The natural impulse of surprise was to look up; and, before she could recollect herself, she had done so, and her eyes met Burrel's. What she saw was all kind, and gentle, and tender; but she instantly cast down her eyes, with another blush that was painful from its intensity, and with a single tear of agitation--and perhaps delight.

CHAPTER XI.

Sir Sidney Delaware was a peculiar character; and, if I had time, I would go on and make a miniature of him. But I have not time; and therefore, though there might undoubtedly be a great deal of pleasure in investigating all the little complex motives which made him do this thing or that thing, which seemed quite contrary to his general principles--a great deal of pleasure in finding out the small fine lines that connected together actions that appeared as opposite as light and darkness--yet, having a long journey before me, and very little time to spare, I must refrain from taking portraits by the roadside, leaving every pleasant gentlemen of my acquaintance to say, "That is not natural--this is out of character!" if he like.

One thing, however, I must notice, which was, that Sir Sidney Delaware was in some degree an indolent man--there was a great deal of the *vis inertiae* in his constitution. His mind was naturally active enough, but the body clogged it, and even rendered it lazy too; and the opposition between a keen and powerful moral constitution, and an idle physical temperament, was the cause of many a contradiction in his conduct.

Such had been the case in regard to his daughter's visits to Mrs. Darlington. That good lady, when she first settled in the neighbourhood, had determined upon visiting the people at the Park; and though Sir Sidney for some time continued stiff, and cold, and stern--ay, and even rude--Mrs. Darlington persevered, and Mrs. Darlington carried her point.

The same now became the case with Burrel. He had been once received as an intimate in the house of the Delawares, and the door was open to him whenever he chose. There was something to be said, it is true, upon the score of a great service rendered, which, of course, formed a tie between him and every member of the Delaware family, which existed in no other case. But still there was a great deal of habit in the matter; and Burrel, having now his purpose to carry too, took care that the good custom should not drop.

He became almost a daily visiter. Many a long-ramble he took with Captain Delaware; many a sweet intoxicating walk beside Blanche. Many, too, were the long and pleasant discussions he held with Sir Sidney, upon every subject under the sun--the customs and manners of our ancestors--the glorious works of past ages--the stores of classical knowledge, or the beauties and perfections, follies and absurdities, of our own and other lands.

As some French writer has said, "C'est dans les petites choses que l'on temoigne son amitié. L'amour propre a trop de part à ce qu'on fait dans les grandes occasions;" and it is this truth that makes small attentions always pleasant to those who receive them--great services often painful. Burrel felt that it was so; and took infinite care to conceal that he had the slightest thought of relieving Sir Sidney Delaware from his difficulties; but, at the same time, by the display of elegant manners and a polished mind, and by the constant outbursts of a generous and a noble heart, he rendered himself both so agreeable and so much esteemed, that Sir Sidney learned to think, "If I required any great service, I would ask it of Henry Burrel sooner than of any other man I know."

Very soon the worthy baronet began to look for his appearance shortly after breakfast; and, as he had always something--perhaps of little consequence--but still something on which he wished to speak with him, he twice caught himself saying, when Burrel was a few minutes after the usual hour, "I wish Mr. Burrel would come;" and then remembered, with a sort of cynical smile, springing from very mixed feelings, that he had no right to expect that he would come at all.

Burrel always did come, however; and, finding that he was ever made most welcome by the baronet, greeted with a hearty shake of the hand by Captain Delaware, and found a bright, though timid, smile on the sweet lips of Blanche, he did not find it very difficult to assign motives for his each day's visit, or to discover an excuse for the call of the next morning. Sir Sidney Delaware soon began to give him stronger marks of his esteem; and on more than one occasion, when accidentally alone with Burrel, referred frankly to the state of his own affairs, and the causes which had combined to produce their embarrassment.

Burrel, on his part, of course found the subject difficult to converse upon, and the more so, perhaps, from the previous knowledge, which he did not choose to display. However, when on one occasion the baronet directly mentioned the annuity granted to the Earl of Ashborough, he replied--"But the interest is enormous, and the earl would, of course, suffer you to redeem it."

"I am sorry to say, my young friend," replied Sir Sidney, "that at the time you met William in the coach coming from London, the poor fellow was returning full of disappointment from an unsuccessful attempt to persuade Lord Ashborough to permit the repayment of the original sum. But his lordship refused in the most peremptory manner; and, on the deed being produced, no clause of redemption was found in it, although, in the original letter of instructions for the preparation of that instrument, the introduction of such a clause is expressly enjoined."

"If I might advise, Sir Sidney," replied Burrel: but then breaking off again, he added--"But perhaps I am taking too great a liberty with you, in even offering advice upon your private affairs."

"Not in the least, my dear sir!" replied the baronet. "Speak, speak, my dear sir! I have forgotten all my legal learning, and shall be very glad of any advice upon the subject."

"I know nothing of law, either," answered Burrel smiling; "but I know a little of Lord Ashborough, and I know the character he bears in the world. Of his faults and failings, I do not pretend to speak; but his lordship has, of course, his share. He has, however, always maintained a grave and dignified name, and high character in society; and it is very generally believed that his lordship values the reputation of a just, stern, upright peer, more than"----

"The reality!" added Sir Sidney Delaware, with one of those sneers which had made him many an enemy in his youth--Strange that a turn up of the nostril should make men cut each other's throats!

"I was not going to be quite so severe," said Burrel, somewhat gravely; "but I was going to add, that he values that reputation more than any part of his estate; and I should think that if your son were to go to London once more, and were to show him the letter of instructions for the preparation of the annuity deed, pointing out to him that the clause has been omitted, either by the mistake or the fraud of a lawyer, and hinting at the publicity of a court of justice--I think, I say--indeed I feel sure, that his lordship's care for his reputation, coming in support of what I believe to be his natural sense of equity, would make him at once accept the redemption."

"Perhaps you are right in regard to his care for his reputation, Mr. Burrel," replied Sir Sidney Delaware. "But I, who know him better perhaps than you do, cannot reckon much upon his sense of equity. I know him well--thoroughly! In early years, before these children were born, Lord Ashborough and myself were unfortunately involved in a dispute, which did not arise in any great demonstrations of a sense of equity on his part; and since that time, I have reason to believe that disappointment, added to a bitter quarrel, has caused him to watch an opportunity of treading on the head of one, against whom Time even--the great mollifier of all things--has not been able to abate his rancour."

"I would fain believe that you do not quite do him justice," replied Burrel. "May not a little personal dislike on your own part, my dear sir, influence your mind against him?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Burrel! No, indeed!" answered Sir Sidney Delaware. "I know him *intus et in cute novi*. He was, and is, and ever will be, the same man. The cause of our quarrel now lies in the cold forgetful dust, where all such dissensions cease. Besides, I was naturally the least offended of the two, being the injured person. I also was successful--he disappointed--notwithstanding all his arts; and therefore the matter with me was soon forgotten, while with him it has been, I am afraid, long remembered. Nevertheless," he added, "do not for a moment fancy that I am saying all this because I do not intend to follow your advice. Far from it--William shall go up. Indeed, I should think myself very wrong, were I to leave any means untried to remove those embarrassments which shut my children out from the society to which by birth they are entitled."

Captain Delaware soon joined the conference; and, although he shook his head at all idea of changing the determination of Lord Ashborough, yet he undertook to try, with a readiness that the cold and haughty demeanour which he described that nobleman to have maintained towards him, rendered a little extraordinary. The resolution, however, once taken, William Delaware was not a man, either by temperament or habit, to lose a moment in putting it into execution, and his place was instantly secured in the next morning's coach for London. Burrel agreed to dine at the mansion, and the day passed over with that additional drop of excitement, which renewed hope and expectation, however faint, are still sure to let fall into the cup of life.

Either it was really so, or Burrel fancied it, that Blanche Delaware was more lovely and more fascinating than ever; and, indeed, the feelings that had been growing upon her for several days, had added an indescribable and sparkling charm to all the attractions of youth, and grace, and beauty. The soul always did much in her case to increase the loveliness that nature had bestowed upon her face and form, and Burrel could not help imagining--even long before--that the graceful movement of each elegant limb, and finely modelled feature, was but the corporeal expression of a bright and generous mind within. But now the heart, too, was called into play, and all the warm and sunny feelings of a young and ardent bosom, sparkled irrepressibly up to the surface, calling forth new charms, both in their accidental flash, and in the effort to suppress them.

All Burrel's enthusiasm, too--brought as he was by every circumstance into nearer connexion with that fair being, than any other events could possibly have produced--having been admitted to that intimate friendship which no other man shared--having become the friend and adviser of her father and brother, and having saved her own life--all his own natural enthusiasm of character, therefore, unchained by any opposing motive, broke through all the habitual restraints of the state of life to which he had so long been accustomed; and during that afternoon, Henry Burrel, with very little concealment of his feelings, sat beside Blanche Delaware, full of that bright unaccountable thing--love.

The matter was so evident, and indeed had been so evident for the last two or three days, that the eyes of Captain Delaware himself--not very clear upon such subjects--had been fully opened; and now, as Burrel bent over his sister's drawing-frame with a look of tenderness and affection that would bear but one interpretation, he turned his eyes upon his father to see whether it were really possible that he did not perceive the feelings that were kindling up before him.

No one perhaps had ever in his day felt more deep and sincere love than Sir Sidney Delaware, yet--it is wonderful! quite wonderful!--Burrel might almost, as the old romances term it, have died of love at his daughter's feet, without his perceiving that any thing was the matter. Burrel was bending over Blanche Delaware with a look, and a tone, and a manner, that all declared, "Never, in the many mingled scenes which I have trod, did I meet with any thing so beautiful, so gentle, so graceful as yourself!" Captain Delaware, as I have said, turned his eyes upon his father; but Sir Sidney, with his fine head a little thrown back, a pair of tortoiseshell spectacles upon his nose, and his face to the bookcases, was walking quietly along, looking earnestly for Pliny.

Oh, had you not forgotten all your lessons in the natural history of the heart, you might have marked much. Sir Sidney Delaware, that would have given you more to study than could be found in Pliny, ay, or Plato either!

"I must look to it myself," thought Captain Delaware. "Poor Blanche! It would not do to have the dear girl's affections trifled with.--Yet, I do not think he is one to play such a part either--Oh, no!--yet I must speak to him!"

With this doughty resolution, and a thousand thoughts and difficulties in regard to what he was to say when he did begin, Captain Delaware sat down to dinner, somewhat absent and pensive; and after Blanche had left them, and Sir Sidney had retired to his dressing-room to indulge in a somewhat usual nap after dinner, the gallant officer invited his friend to ramble through the park till tea-time, fully prepared to do a great deal that a man of the world would never have thought of doing at all. Burrel saw that something was weighing upon his companion's mind; but as his own determinations in regard to Blanche were completely formed, and he feared no questions upon the subject, he did not anticipate any. He left Captain Delaware, however, to bring forth his own thoughts at leisure, and walked on by his side as silent as himself, though not quite so much embarrassed.

At length. Captain Delaware began--"I have wished," he said, "Mr. Burrel"----

Burrel started, for the epithet *Mister* had long been dropped towards him by his companion, and he evidently perceived that something very formal was working its way through his friend's mind.

"I have wished, Burrel," repeated Captain Delaware, correcting himself on seeing the surprise expressed by the other's countenance--"I have wished to speak with you about my sister;" and, as he mentioned that dear name, a sense of deep affection for her made him proceed more boldly, though his face glowed warmly as he spoke. "You have been much with her of late, and perhaps may be so for some time longer. Now--do not misunderstand me, Burrel--do not think I doubt you, or seek to question you: but I wish first to put you in mind that she sees very few persons besides yourself, and next to tell you--as most men of station and fortune expect to receive some portion with their wives--to tell you that the greater part even of the small sum which Blanche and I inherited from our mother, is engaged to support as far as possible, and that is little enough, our father's station in society."

"And did you, my dear Delaware, suppose for a moment"--said Burrel, in reply, "did you imagine, from what you have hitherto seen of my conduct and sentiments, that so long as I had enough myself to offer any woman I might love, I would consider her fortune for an instant?"

"No, no! I did not suppose you would," replied Captain Delaware, hesitating in some degree how to proceed. "But the truth is, Burrel, I have heard that women's hearts are delicate things, and as easily wounded as the wing of a butterfly. However, let us say no more of it. I begin to think that I have got out of my depth, and meddled with matters I had better have left to themselves."

For some reason, or reasons--from some simple or complex motive, which I do not know, and shall not stop to discover--men, however fully their minds may be made up in such matters as that on which I write, never like to be questioned upon the subject till they choose to explain themselves; and, although Burrel was fully determined to offer his hand to Blanche Delaware, as soon as he had convinced himself that not a shadow of hesitation on her part would hurt his pride; and though he completely understood Captain Delaware's feelings upon the subject, and was amused at his straightforwardness, yet some internal little devil of perversity made him feel almost offended at the sentences we have just recorded. He resisted, however, and the devil fled from him.

"My dear Delaware," he said, after a moment's pause, which he employed in clearing his bosom of the enemy, "although no man likes to make a declaration, except at his own choice and convenience, yet, situated as you are, I can enter into all your feelings for your sister. Set your mind at rest then," he added, laying his hand frankly and kindly on his companion's arm. "Set your mind at rest then, as far as I am concerned. It is my intention, as soon as I can entertain any

hope of success, to offer my hand to your sister. If she refuse me, it is not my fault you know; but this much you will, I am sure, take upon my word, that I would not presume for one moment to solicit the hand of a daughter of Sir Sidney Delaware, unless in rank I could aspire to that honour, and in fortune could maintain her in that circle which she is calculated to adorn. Let us say no more upon the subject, if you can trust me."

Captain Delaware grasped his hand warmly, "You have made me very happy," he said.

"Well, then, keep my secret," added Burrel with a smile, "and let your sister decide the rest."

William Delaware could well have told, at least he thought so, what his sister's decision would be; but delicacy prevented him from speaking his belief; and with a lightened heart he changed the subject, and returned with Burrel to the mansion.

CHAPTER XII.

William Delaware set out from Emberton, and arrived in London. His next step was to send a note to Lord Ashborough, informing him of his being in town, and requesting an interview the following morning; and in answer he received a very polite though somewhat formal billet, inviting him to breakfast in Grosvenor Square, and promising as long an audience after that meal as he might think necessary.

At the appointed hour--for Captain Delaware never considered that appointed hours mean nothing--he approached Lord Ashborough's house, and was ushered up stairs, where he found housemaids and empty drawing-rooms enow; and, planting himself at a window that looked out into the square, he gazed forth with somewhat unpleasant anticipations occupying his mind, and rendering his eye sightless as to all that was passing before it.

In a few minutes the housemaids withdrew from the farther rooms, and the whole suit became vacant for some time, till a light step caught Captain Delaware's ear, and, turning round, he beheld a young lady whom he had seen there before, when last he had visited London. At that time he had found her surrounded by a whole bevy of strangers, whose gay appearance and supercilious manner had somewhat repelled the young sailor, although Miss Beauchamp herself. Lord Ashborough's niece, had spoken to him with frank kindness, and claimed relationship with him at once.

Miss Beauchamp now advanced towards him, while he acknowledged her approach by a bow, which was stiff though not awkward. The young lady, however, held out her hand with a gay smile, and, as he took it, added, in a tone of playful sharpness, "Tell me, sir, are you my cousin, or are you not?"

"I believe I have some right to claim that honour," replied Captain Delaware.

"Well, then," continued the young lady, "lay aside, immediately, all that stiff, chilly reserve, or I will disown you henceforth and for ever." Captain Delaware smiled, and she continued. "I know that this house has a very icy atmosphere; but that does not extend to my part of it, and while my noble and stately uncle may be as frigid as the north pole in his peculiar territories, the library and the dining-room, I must have a pleasanter climate in my domains, the drawing-rooms and breakfast-room."

"Your own presence must always produce such an atmosphere," replied Captain Delaware. "But you must remember. Miss Beauchamp, that I have been but a short time within its influence, so that I have scarcely had leisure to get thawed."

"Oh, I must unfreeze you quite, ere long, my good cousin," replied Miss Beauchamp, laughing. "But now, listen to me for five minutes, for I have a great deal more to say to you than you know any thing about. Calculating that you would come early, when I heard that my uncle had asked you to breakfast, I determined to rise a full hour sooner than usual, on purpose to give you your lesson for the day."

Captain Delaware expressed his thanks as warmly as possible, acknowledging, however, that his gratitude was somewhat mingled with surprise, to find that his fair cousin was prepared to be interested in behalf of one, who, though akin by blood, was nearly a stranger as far as acquaintance went.

"That would be a severe reproach to my forwardness, William Delaware," replied the young lady, "if I had not a good motive *in petto*. Besides, I find, that in days of yore, when we were all

children, and my good father was alive, that you and I and Blanche, and my brother Henry, have had many a rude game of play amongst the old trees of Emberton Park. But, let us speak to the point, as we may have little time to speak at all--An old friend of yours and mine, good Dr. Wilton, has written to me a long letter, two or three days ago, giving me an account of all this unfortunate business between your father and my uncle, and desiring me, if you ever came to town again, to do my best to forward your views. Now, the truth is, I have no more influence with Lord Ashborough than that screen."

"With a thousand thanks for your kind interest," replied Captain Delaware; "I should still be sorry to owe, even to your influence, what I could not obtain from justice."

"Pride! Pride!" cried Miss Beauchamp, "the fault of men and angels! But let me tell you, my dear cousin, that no man or men have any right to be proud in a woman's presence; for ye are a mere race of bullies at the best, and bow like the veriest slaves whenever we chose to tyrannize over you. But to the point.--Listen to my sage advice. I was saying, that I had no more influence with my Lord Ashborough than that screen.--I am a mere piece of household furniture; and, I dare say, that I am to be found, written down in the inventory thus:--'Front drawing-room--Three tables, four-and-twenty chairs, four sofas, three chaises longues, a *niece*.'--I do believe, my uncle, when I refused the Honourable Mr. What's-his-name, the other day, which mortally offended his lordship, thought of having me transferred to the schedule of *fixtures* forthwith. But, nevertheless, as I am a hearing and seeing piece of furniture, I have learned that the only way to manage the Earl of Ashborough, is to be firm, steady, somewhat haughty, and a good deal stern. Remember all this, my dearly beloved cousin, and make use of the hint. But I hear his lordship's morning step, when the neat boot is first, for that day, fitted on to the neat foot. So I will to the breakfast-room; and do not forget, when you meet me, to wish me good-morrow in set form, and civil terms, and take care that you do not look conscious."

Thus saying, the gay girl ran lightly through the long suite of rooms, leaving Captain Delaware standing nearly where she had found him, with a good deal of admiration at her beauty, and a good deal of surprise at the mingling of kindness both with levity, and with the slightest possible spice of coquetry, which she had displayed in their brief conversation.

Ere she was well out of sight, the step that had been heard above, might be distinguished descending the stairs. There is not a little character in a step, and the sound of Lord Ashborough's was peculiar. Perhaps the enfeebling power of time--which, what with one aid or another, was not very apparent in his person--marked its progress more decidedly in his step than in any thing else. There was a certain degree of creaking feebleness in it, especially at an early hour of the morning, when he was just out of bed, which, joined with a slow precision of fall, indicated a declension in the firm and sturdy manhood. His lordship felt it, and in society he covered the slight falling off by an affectation of grave and thoughtful dignity of movement,--but his valet-de-chambre knew better.

Captain Delaware, however, did not; and as the earl entered the room, with a roll of papers in his hand, like Talma in *Sylla*--he acted a good deal, by the way--his young relative thought him a very grave and reverend signor; and would rather have lain for an hour along side an enemy's frigate, yard-arm to yard-arm, than have grappled with so stern and thoughtful a personage, on so disagreeable a business as that which he came to discuss. He had undertaken it resolutely, however, and he was not a man to flinch before any coward apprehensions, moral or physical.

The first expression of his lordship's countenance, when his eyes fell upon his visiter, was not certainly of a nature greatly to encourage him. For a moment--a single instant--nature got the better, and a slight shade of that loathing dislike, with which one regards some poisonous reptile, or the object of some peculiar antipathy, passed over Lord Ashborough's features. It was gone as quickly; and with a much more condescending and agreeable smile than he had bestowed upon him on his former visit, the earl advanced, and welcomed him to London.

Captain Delaware was of course very well disposed to welcome any show of kindness; and he said a few words in regard to his regret at having to trouble Lord Ashborough again.

"Oh! we will speak of all that after breakfast," said the earl. "When last I saw you I was hurried and fretted by a thousand things, and had no opportunity of showing you any attention. Indeed, I have but little leisure now, the duties of my office--he held a sinecure post, which required him to sign his name twice a-year--the duties of my office claiming great part of my time. But you must really, as long as you remain in London, spend your days here; and my niece, Maria, who has nothing to do, will show you all over the world, under the fair excuse of your cousinship. But let us to breakfast. Maria will not be down for this hour; but I never wait for that lazy girl."

Lord Ashborough was not a little surprised to find his niece in the breakfast-room, and praised her ironically on her habits of early rising; but Miss Beauchamp answered at once, "Oh! I had a reason for getting up soon to-day, otherwise I should certainly not have done so. To contemplate my dear uncle for an hour, with one foot crossed over the other, letting his coffee get cold, and reading the newspaper, is too great a treat to be indulged in every morning."

"And pray, my fair niece," demanded Lord Ashborough, smiling at a picture of himself, which was not without the cold sort of importance he chose to assume; "and pray, my fair niece, what was the particular cause of your infringing your ancient and beloved habits this morning?"

"First and foremost, of course," replied Miss Beauchamp, with a graceful bend of the head to her cousin, "to see Captain Delaware, whose visit you yesterday evening led me to expect; but, in the next place, my full resolution and determination was to take possession of your lordship during breakfast, and tease you in every sort of way, till you agree to leave this horrid place London, now that you are positively the last gentleman remaining in it, except the men in red-coats that walk up and down St. James's Street, and look disconsolate from June till January. But they are forced to stay, poor fellows! You are not."

"There is no use of going out of town, Maria, to come up again the next day," replied Lord Ashborough. "Parliament will certainly sit for a few days this month, and I must be present. But, in regard to your cousin, I intend to make him over to you for the whole day, as I have some business to transact; and, therefore, you see you would not have been deprived of his visit."

"Sad experience making me doubtful," replied Miss Beauchamp laughing, "in regard to how far your lordship's civility might extend to your kindred, I did not know whether I might ever see Captain Delaware again."

She spoke in jest, but it cut home, and Lord Ashborough, reddening, took his coffee and the newspaper, and left his cousin and his niece to entertain themselves, while he soon became immersed in the idle gossip of the day. After breakfast, he led the way to the library with renewed complacency, and, begging Captain Delaware to be seated, he listened to him calmly and good humouredly, while he spoke of the cause of his coming. He then read attentively the first instructions for the annuity deed, and returning the paper, fell--or affected to fall--into deep thought.

"Why, this certainly does make a great difference," he replied at length; "and I am sure, Captain Delaware, you will exculpate me from any desire to take advantage either of an accident or a misfortune. My plan through life has been to do clear and simple justice to all, and never to fall into the absurd error of mingling all the feelings of private life with matters of business. Matters of business should be transacted as matters of business, and without the slightest regard to whether you be my cousin or a perfect stranger. I can be generous when it is necessary, as well as other men; but you applied to me not on a point of generosity, but on a point of right and of justice, and therefore in that light did I consider and decline your last proposal. In the same light do I consider your present statement; but the paper you have produced, according to my present views, so far alters the question, that without returning you any direct answer at present, I will, in going out, call upon my solicitor, consult with him, and, if you will see him to-morrow at eleven o'clock, he shall tell you my final views, and, depend upon it, they shall be those of substantial justice."

Captain Delaware was somewhat disappointed; for, from the first impression which the production of the paper he had shown Lord Ashborough, had made upon that nobleman, he had concluded that the matter would be settled at once. He saw, however, that it would be useless to press the subject farther at the time; and, after promising to spend his days, though not his nights, at the house of his noble kinsman, during his stay in London, he left him in possession of the library.

Lord Ashborough almost immediately after mounted his horse, and rode slowly on down all those filthy streets and long, which conduct to Clement's Inn; in one of the dark and dusty staircases of which, stinking of parchment and red tape, he met the identical Mr. Peter Tims, of whom he was in search, and who led him instantly into the penetralia. Their conversation was keen and long, but a few sentences of it will be sufficient here. After relating Captain Delaware's visit, the earl demanded eagerly, "Now, Mr. Tims, can the matter be done? Have you seen to it?"

"I have, my lord, and it can be done," replied the lawyer. "I have this morning been at the house of Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson. Both partners are out of town, but their head clerk was there, and I have made the following arrangement with him"----

"You have not compromised my name, I hope," interrupted the earl.

"Not in the least, my lord," replied the other. "I explained to the clerk that you would sell out at this moment to a great disadvantage--that fourteen days would in all probability alter the position of affairs--and that therefore your lordship would give a bill at that date for the ten thousand pounds which you were to pay them for Mr. Beauchamp.

"But how will that forward the matter?" demanded the earl. "It will seem as if I were shuffling with my nephew concerning his money matters, and not promote the other purpose."

"Your pardon, my lord--your pardon!" cried the lawyer. "You shall demand of Sir Sidney Delaware to give you bills for the whole sum at a fortnight's date, and give him up the annuity deed at once, and we will arrange it so that you shall be out of town when the draft on you becomes due, so as to stop the ten thousand pounds at the very nick."

"Ay, but Harry will write up to know whether it be paid!" said the earl.

"I will write to him as soon as you have given the bill, my lord, telling him that the money is paid," answered the lawyer; "and I will direct the letter to his house in John Street, to be forwarded. I have a good excuse for writing, in regard to this business of the valet he kicked

down stairs--so there will be no suspicion."

"You know that he is a good man of business, Mr. Tims," replied the earl, doubtfully. "Do you think he will take your word without writing to enquire?"

"Oh yes, my lord!" answered the lawyer boldly. "You know your own plans, and therefore think he may suspect them. That is the way with all gentlemen, when they first do any little business of this kind. They always fancy that other people know that we are wanting to keep them in the dark. Remember Mr. Beauchamp has no suspicion.--He does not know that you know where he is.--He is not aware that you have heard he is going to squander away his money at all; still less, that you are good enough to take such pains to prevent him. He will believe it at once, that the money is paid, and will simply give a draft for it on Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson when the money is wanted. Besides, from all I can learn, although he be in general a good man of business enough, I hear he has got hold of one of those pieces of business that put every thing else out of a man's head altogether."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the earl, in a strong tone of aristocratical pride; for there was a sort of sneer upon the countenance of Mr. Tims, which he did not at all admire, coupled with the mention of his rich nephew--and here, he it remarked, that it made a great difference in Lord Ashborough's estimation, whether the person spoken of was a rich or a poor nephew. He had a sort of indescribable loathing towards poverty, or rather towards poor people, which was only increased by their being his relations. He hated poverty--he could not bear it--in his eyes it was a disease--a pestilence--a vice; and therefore--although, had his nephew been poor, Mr. Tims might have sneered at him to all eternity--as he was rich, Lord Ashborough felt very indignant at the least want of reverence towards him. The tone in which he demanded, "What do you mean, sir?" frightened Mr. Tims, who hastened to reply, that he had heard from his respected and respectable relative in the country, that the Mr. Burrel who had proposed to lend the money to Sir Sidney Delaware, was now continually at Emberton Park; and that it was very well understood in the country that he was to be married immediately to Miss Delaware.

Lord Ashborough gazed in the face of the lawyer, with that mingled look of vacancy and horror, which we may picture to ourselves on the countenance of a person suddenly blinded by lightning. When he had collected his senses, it was but to give way to a more violent burst of rage, and, with clenched hands and teeth, he stamped about the office of the attorney, till the clerks in the outer room began to think that he was breaking the hard head of their master against the floor. A few words, however, served to give vocal vent to his fury. "The hypocritical, artful, despicable race of beggarly fortune-hunters!" he exclaimed; and, turning out of Mr. Tims's office, impelled by the sole impetus of passion, he was standing by his horse almost ere the attorney knew he was gone. The groom held the stirrup tight, and Lord Ashborough had his foot on the iron, when cooler thoughts returned, and, walking back to the chambers, he again entered the lawyer's room.

"Do all that you proposed, Mr. Tims," he said; "get the bills--retard the payment--arrest the old reptile--manage it so that he may not get bail; and the day you lodge him in the King's Bench--if it can be done--you receive a draft for a thousand pounds.--They must be crushed, Mr. Tims," he continued, grasping him tight by the arm; "they must be crushed--ground down into the earth--till their very name be forgotten;--but mark me," he added, speaking through his set teeth--"mark me--if you let them escape, my whole agency and business goes to another for ever."

"Oh! no fear, my lord, no fear!" replied Mr. Tims, in a sharp, secure tone, rubbing his little, fat, red hands, with some degree of glee. "No fear, if your lordship will consent to leave it to my guidance.--But I will send for a bill stamp, and we will draw up the bill directly, send it to Messrs. Steelyard and Wilkinson, and then I will give due notice to Mr. Beauchamp that the money is paid--which, indeed, it may be said to be, when your lordship has given your bill for it--you know."

"I care not, sir!" exclaimed Lord Ashborough, vehemently, "whether it may be said to be so or not. My nephew must be saved from this cursed entanglement, by any means or all means. I will do my part--see that you do yours. Crush these mean-spirited vipers, somehow or another, and that as soon as may be;--but mind," he added more quietly, "mind, you are to do nothing beyond the law!"

"I will take care to do nothing that the law can take hold of," replied the lawyer. "But you cannot think, my lord, how many things may be done lawfully when they are done cautiously, which might treat one with a sight of New South Wales, if they were to be undertaken without due consideration--but I will send for the bill, my lord."

The bill was accordingly sent for, drawn, and signed by Lord Ashborough; and the attorney, after having despatched it to Mr. Beauchamp's solicitor, wrote to that gentleman himself a letter, upon the business to which he had referred, while speaking to Lord Ashborough; and in a postscript, mentioned that he had handed over to his agents a note for ten thousand pounds, on behalf of Lord Ashborough. That nobleman stood by while all this proceeding was taking place, and marked, with a well pleased smile, the double language of the lawyer, and the quiet and careless manner in which he contrived to offer a false impression in regard to the payment of the money. When all was concluded, he paced slowly to the vacant park, calmed his disturbed feelings by a quiet ride round its dusty roads, and then returned with renewed self-command, to shower upon William Delaware civilities, in proportion to his increased detestation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Oh, if people would but take as much pains to do good as they take to do evil--if even the well-disposed were as zealous in beneficence, as the wicked are energetic in wrong--what a pleasant little clod this earth of ours would be, for us human crickets to go chirping about from morning till night!

The Right Honourable the Earl of Ashborough could think of but one thing; and what between the active working of his own brain, and the unceasing exertion of the pineal gland of Peter Tims, Esq., following keenly the plans and purposes which we have seen them communicating to each other, the scheme for ruining the family at Emberton was brought to that degree of perfection which rendered its success almost certain. Mr. Tims, indeed, did wonder that the noble earl had forgotten to propose to him any plan for detaining Sir Sidney Delaware in prison after his arrest, and for consummating the persecution so happily begun. He concluded that it had slipped his lordship's memory; but, as he foresaw that, of course, Mr. Beauchamp would immediately come forward to liberate the baronet, and clear him of his embarrassments, Mr. Tims revolved a thousand schemes for entangling him still more deeply, in order to be found prepared as soon as his noble patron should apply to him for assistance on this new occasion.

In truth, however, Lord Ashborough had calculated all; and from what he had formerly known of Sir Sidney Delaware, as well as from what he had lately heard of his impaired constitution, he felt assured that even three or four days of imprisonment for debt would terminate either life or reason, and thus leave his vengeance and his hatred sated to the full.

It must not be always supposed that the motives and the feelings which are here stated, in what is vulgarly called black and white, appeared in their original nakedness before the minds of the various actors in this my little drama. On the contrary, they came before their master's eyes, like poor players on the stage, robed in gorgeous apparel that little belonged to them. Revenge flaunted away before the eyes of Lord Ashborough, clothed in princely purple, and calling itself noble indignation. Mortified vanity, and mean delight in wealth, tricked out in silks and satins, called themselves honest scorn for deceivers, and careful consideration for his nephew's interest, "and so they played their part;" while deadly enmity, which would have acted murder, had it dared, now mocked the Deity, and impiously assumed the name of retributive justice.

Nevertheless, there was in the bosom of Lord Ashborough at least so much consciousness that all this was but a pageant, that he found it necessary to redouble the careful guard he had put upon his feelings towards Captain Delaware; and though he came back to dinner meditating the destruction of his race and family, he showered on the young sailors head civilities which might have raised doubts had he dealt with one of the suspicious. Captain Delaware, however, was not one of the suspicious. He had not acquired the quality of suspiciousness in any of the three ways by which it reaches the human heart--neither by the consciousness of evil designs in his own breast, by experience of the world's baseness, or by the exhortations of others. He was susceptible indeed, and easily perceived when a slight was intended, or when the least approach to scorn was felt towards him or his; but deeper and blacker feelings escaped his observation, if covered by even a slight disguise. In the present instance he was completely deceived. His drive out with his fair cousin in the morning had proved so delightful, that he began to doubt the efficacy of the water of the prior's fountain, and to feel that many such drives might make him either very happy, or very much the contrary. But the kind attention of Lord Ashborough, his changed demeanour, and the hopes to which it gave rise, were all sources of unmixed pleasure. The evening passed away in delight; and when, on visiting Mr. Tims next morning, he found that he was prepared to concede every thing that he desired, on the simple formality of his father giving a bill at a few days' date for the money, his satisfaction was complete. Nor was it the less so, that the necessity of awaiting an answer to his letter, communicating these tidings, and of obtaining his father's signature to the bill, obliged him, whether he would or not, to enjoy the society of Maria Beauchamp for at least two days longer.

On the part of that young lady herself, no dislike was felt to her cousin's society--every one else was out of town--she had no one with whom she could dance, or flirt, or talk, and still less any one to whom she could communicate any of the deeper and better feelings which formed the warp of her character, and across which the threads of a sparkling sort of levity were intimately woven. With Captain Delaware she did all but the first, and probably she would have danced too, had minuets still been in vogue. She laughed, she talked, she jested; and there was a sort of simple candour about his nature, together with fine feelings and gentlemanly habits, preserved, fresh and unadulterated, by a life spent either on the green waters or in the green fields--which altogether wooed forth those points in her own character, which as things most estimable, lay hid in the deeper casket of her heart.

In short, the two days that followed were two very pleasant days indeed; and it was almost with a sigh that Captain Delaware opened his father's letter, which arrived at the end of them, and found the bills duly signed. Mr. Tims had before told him, that he had made the money payable at Emberton, in order to save him or his father the trouble of coming or sending again to London. That excuse, therefore, for either prolonging his stay or returning, was not to be had; and, even if it had still been ready, the lawyer also informed him gratuitously, that Lord Ashborough's motive for settling the matter in the manner proposed, was in order to spare himself all correspondence in the country, to which he was immediately about to retire for the remainder of the year. The simple fact was, that Mr. Tims--with the same over anxiety of which he had accused Lord Ashborough to remove all suspicion of a latent motive--had assigned these causes for his noble patron's conduct, simply to account reasonably for his having demanded a bill for the money, payable at Emberton, instead of following the usual legal routine in such cases, accepting the redemption money when ready, and then cancelling the deed. But Captain Delaware, with constitutional susceptibility, instantly concluded that the whole was intended as a hint to him, that any farther intimacy was not desired.

He could not feel indignant, because he felt that he had no right to demand a continuance of the communication which had been accidentally created between himself and the family of his wealthy cousin; but he determined at once to show that there was no necessity for such warnings; and, after having pleaded other engagements, in order to absent himself from his cousin's house during the rest of his stay in London, he took his place in the identical stage which had whirled him down to Emberton on the preceding occasion. He did not, however, in that sort of burning at the heart which people feel on such occasions, neglect to take all those steps which, to the best of his judgment, were necessary to secure his father, and to conclude the business on which he had come to London. On the contrary, he demanded and received, by the hands of Mr. Tims, an acknowledgement, on the part of Lord Ashborough, that a promissory-note had been given by Sir Sidney Delaware for the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds, which, when duly taken up, would be received as a full and due redemption of the annuity chargeable upon the Emberton estate.

When all this was concluded, and he had eaten in melancholy wise of the dinner which the people of the pseudo hotel at which he lodged, set before him, in that den of congregated discomforts, a public coffee-room--when he had done this, and taken an idle walk round the black thing that spits water by table-spoonfuls nearly opposite to Devonshire House, for the purpose of digesting his dinner and his vexation, he could not refrain; but returning home--or rather to the place of his dwelling for the time--he dressed and walked to Grosvenor Square.

Lord Ashborough was in his library; Miss Beauchamp was alone--somewhat in low spirits, too, and looking none the worse for being so. She was in one of those moods in which a man may make a great deal of a woman in a short time--if he knows how--but, unhappily, Captain Delaware did not know how. He talked sentimentally, and she talked sentimentally; and they made tea between them, and poured it out and drank it--but it all came to nothing--otherwise Maria Beauchamp might, perhaps, have been William Delaware's wife before the end of the volume. Never did a man who was bred and born a sailor miss stays so completely as Captain Delaware did; and just when, towards the close of the evening, he was making up his mind to say something sensible and pertinent, in came Lord Ashborough, and the whole went to the--budget.

Within half an hour after, William Delaware was on his way to his hotel, and in the yellow of the next morning, he was once more rolling away, to join the coach for Emberton. His journey was as dull as it well could be. Two quaker ladies occupied one seat, and a deaf man shared the other. Therefore--as it is a very laudable object to wind up all sorts of matters here, in such a manner as to enable the courteous reader to have done with the book at the end of this volume, and to imagine, if he like, that the story is finished, when in fact it is not begun--we shall give one paragraph to Mr. Tims, while Captain Delaware rolls on.

The worthy and beneficent lawyer, full of zeal in the service of his patron, set boldly to work to accomplish the object in view, and added so many thoughtful means and contrivances to support those which we have already seen him propose, that, at the end of eight days, there was hardly a human possibility of his prey escaping him. As, in some instances, he thought fit to prepare engines which went a little beyond the clear limit of the law, he took good care to add a safety valve for himself, by cautiously mingling Lord Ashborough's name with all those particular matters which were most delicate and dangerous, and thus insuring the whole power and influence of that nobleman's rank and fortune to shield him, even if the blame itself did not fall solely on the earl. He wrote, too, to his uncle, Mr. Tims, at Ryebury, directing him on no account to advance money to the gentleman calling himself Mr. Burrel, who was, in fact, Lord Ashborough's nephew; and he added many a hint and caution, calculated to make the miser of Ryebury throw every impediment in the way of a liquidation of the debts on Sir Sidney Delaware's estate. At the same time, a vague threat of Lord Ashborough's displeasure, in case of recusancy, was held out; and by the end of the week, Mr. Tims, as we have said, sat down perfectly certain of having drawn those spider toils round the family of Emberton, which it would be impossible for them to evade.

In the mean time, William Delaware arrived at Emberton Park, and found every thing precisely as he had left it. Burrel's visits were still continuing daily. Indeed--during his son's absence, which occasioned a sort of gap in the things to which Sir Sidney Delaware was accustomed--the baronet had more than ever sought the presence of Mr. Burrel to supply the want.

The affection of Burrel for Blanche Delaware, seemed exactly the same--if any thing, there was perhaps an additional shade of tenderness in his manner, towards her, which for a moment caused Captain Delaware to believe, that his sister had been made acquainted with her lover's feelings. But it was not so. On the contrary, during her brother's stay in London, Blanche had lost many of those pleasant hours which she had before spent in Burrel's society. Her long rambles with him through the park and the neighbouring country, were of course at an end for the time; and, although Mrs. Darlington took a house in the immediate vicinity, and pressed Miss Delaware to join her there for a few days--though Blanche, perhaps, might feel that there she could, with propriety, hold freer intercourse with one who had obtained so strong a hold of her affection, yet filial duty overcame even the wish, and she refused to leave her father during her brother's absence.

Captain Delaware's return, therefore, was a matter of joy and delight to every one; and immediately after having heard all those *viva voce* particulars, which a letter could not convey, Sir Sidney Delaware visited Mr. Tims, who assured him that the money would be ready full twenty-four hours before the stipulated time, and instantly began to prepare the mortgage which was to secure the sum to the lender. The tidings were, of course, communicated to Blanche, whose young heart beat high, to think of even a part of the dark cloud which had so long overshadowed her dear father's fate, being blown away for ever. If, too, a thought crossed her mind, in regard to her own situation, and the improvement of her relative position towards him by whom she was beloved, who shall say a word of blame? It was but nature; and perhaps that thought might take away the only thorn that she saw encumbering the fate before her. All eyes sparkled--all hearts beat high at Emberton. The news insensibly was spread abroad--The prospects of the Ruined Family seemed brightening--Those to whom they had been kind, even in their adversity, blessed the day that saw their changing fortune--and those who had despised their poverty, began to bow down and worship, now that the storms no longer hung above them.

Sir Sidney Delaware walked with a firmer step. His son felt that one-half of the load of life was gone, and Blanche raised her eyes timidly to meet those of Burrel, as if there had been some secret voice which told her, that--how, or why, she knew not--all the happiness that was growing up around them, was of his planting.

Oh, deceitful Fortune! why wilt thou often smile so sweetly, while opening thy store of evils to pour upon the devoted head!

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

EDINBURGH:

M. AITKEN, 1, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DELAWARE; OR, THE RUINED FAMILY. VOL.
1 ***

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