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THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

NIGHT AND MORNING

Book II

CHAPTER I.

"Incubo. Look to the cavalier. What ails he?

.....

Hostess. And in such good clothes, too!"

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *Love's Pilgrimage*.

"Theod. I have a brother—there my last hope!.

Thus as you find me, without fear or wisdom,

I now am only child of Hope and Danger."—Ibid.

The time employed by Mr. Beaufort in reaching his home was haunted by gloomy and confused terrors. He felt inexplicably as if the denunciations of Philip were to visit less himself than his son. He trembled at the thought of Arthur meeting this strange, wild, exasperated scatterling—perhaps on the morrow—in the very height of his passions. And yet, after the scene between Arthur and himself, he saw cause to fear that he might not be able to exercise a sufficient authority over his son, however naturally facile and obedient, to prevent his return to the house of death. In this dilemma he resolved, as is usual with cleverer men, even when yoked to yet feebler helpmates, to hear if his wife had anything comforting or sensible to say upon the subject. Accordingly, on reaching Berkeley Square, he went straight to Mrs. Beaufort; and having relieved her mind as to Arthur's safety, related the scene in which he had been so unwilling an actor. With that more lively susceptibility which belongs to most women, however comparatively unfeeling, Mrs. Beaufort made greater allowance than her husband for the excitement Philip had betrayed. Still Beaufort's description of the dark menaces, the fierce countenance, the brigand-like form, of the bereaved son, gave her very considerable apprehensions for Arthur, should the young men meet; and she willingly coincided with her husband in the propriety of using all means of parental persuasion or command to guard against such an encounter. But, in the meanwhile, Arthur returned not, and new fears seized the anxious parents. He had gone forth alone, in a remote suburb of the metropolis, at a late hour, himself under strong excitement. He might have returned to the house, or have lost his way amidst some dark haunts of violence and crime; they knew not where to send, or what to suggest. Day already began to dawn, and still he came not. A length, towards five o'clock, a loud rap was heard at the door, and Mr. Beaufort, hearing some bustle in the hall, descended. He saw his son borne into the hall from a hackney-coach by two strangers, pale, bleeding, and apparently insensible. His first thought was that he had been murdered by Philip. He uttered a feeble cry, and sank down beside his son.

"Don't be darnted, sir," said one of the strangers, who seemed an artisan; "I don't think he be much hurt. You sees he was crossing the street, and the coach ran against him; but it did not go over his head; it be only the stones that makes him bleed so: and that's a mercy."

"A providence, sir," said the other man; "but Providence watches over us all, night and day, sleep or wake. Hem! We were passing at the time from the meeting—the Odd Fellows, sir—and so we took him, and got him a coach; for we found his card in his pocket. He could not speak just then; but the rattling of the coach did him a deal of good, for he groaned—my eyes! how he groaned! did he not, Burrows?"

"It did one's heart good to hear him."

"Run for Astley Cooper—you—go to Brodie. Good Heavens! he is dying. Be quick—quick!" cried Mr. Beaufort to his servants, while Mrs. Beaufort, who had now gained the spot, with greater presence of mind had Arthur conveyed into a room.

"It is a judgment upon me," groaned Beaufort, rooted to the stone of his hall, and left alone with the strangers. "No, sir, it is not a judgment, it is a providence," said the more sanctimonious and better dressed of the two men "for, put the question, if it had been a judgment, the wheel would have gone over him—but it didn't; and, whether he dies or not, I shall always say that if that's not a providence, I don't know what is. We have come a long way, sir; and Burrows is a poor man, though I'm well to do."

This hint for money restored Beaufort to his recollection; he put his purse into the nearest hand outstretched to clutch it, and muttered forth something like thanks.

"Sir, may the Lord bless you! and I hope the young gentleman will do well. I am sure you have cause to be thankful that he was within an inch of the wheel; was he not, Burrows? Well, it's enough to convert a heathen. But the ways of Providence are mysterious, and that's the truth of it. Good night, sir."

Certainly it did seem as if the curse of Philip was already at its work. An accident almost similar to that which, in the adventure of the blind man, had led Arthur to the clue of Catherine, within twenty-four hours stretched Arthur himself upon his bed. The sorrow Mr. Beaufort had not relieved was now at his own hearth. But there were parents and nurses, and great physicians, and skilful surgeons, and all the army that combine against Death, and there were ease, and luxury, and kind eyes, and pitying looks, and all that can take the sting from pain. And thus, the very night on which Catherine had died, broken down, and worn out, upon a strange breast, with a feeless doctor, and by the ray of a single candle, the heir to the fortunes once destined to her son wrestled also with the grim Tyrant, who seemed, however, scared from his prey by the arts and luxuries which the world of rich men raises up in defiance of the grave.

Arthur, was, indeed, very seriously injured; one of his ribs was broken, and he had received two severe contusions on the head. To insensibility succeeded fever, followed by delirium. He was in

imminent danger for several days. If anything could console his parents for such an affliction, it was the thought that, at least, he was saved from the chance of meeting Philip.

Mr. Beaufort, in the instinct of that capricious and fluctuating conscience which belongs to weak minds, which remains still, and drooping, and lifeless, as a flag on a masthead during the calm of prosperity, but flutters, and flaps, and tosses when the wind blows and the wave heaves, thought very acutely and remorsefully of the condition of the Mortons, during the danger of his own son. So far, indeed, from his anxiety for Arthur monopolising all his care, it only sharpened his charity towards the orphans; for many a man becomes devout and good when he fancies he has an Immediate interest in appeasing Providence. The morning after Arthur's accident, he sent for Mr. Blackwell. He commissioned him to see that Catherine's funeral rites were performed with all due care and attention; he bade him obtain an interview with Philip, and assure the youth of Mr. Beaufort's good and friendly disposition towards him, and to offer to forward his views in any course of education he might prefer, or any profession he might adopt; and he earnestly counselled the lawyer to employ all his tact and delicacy in conferring with one of so proud and fiery a temper. Mr. Blackwell, however, had no tact or delicacy to employ: he went to the house of mourning, forced his way to Philip, and the very exordium of his harangue, which was devoted to praises of the extraordinary generosity and benevolence of his employer, mingled with condescending admonitions towards gratitude from Philip, so exasperated the boy, that Mr. Blackwell was extremely glad to get out of the house with a whole skin. He, however, did not neglect the more formal part of his mission; but communicated immediately with a fashionable undertaker, and gave orders for a very genteel funeral. He thought after the funeral that Philip would be in a less excited state of mind, and more likely to hear reason; he, therefore, deferred a second interview with the orphan till after that event; and, in the meanwhile, despatched a letter to Mr. Beaufort, stating that he had attended to his instructions; that the orders for the funeral were given; but that at present Mr. Philip Morton's mind was a little disordered, and that he could not calmly discuss the plans for the future suggested by Mr. Beaufort. He did not doubt, however, that in another interview all would be arranged according to the wishes his client had so nobly conveyed to him. Mr. Beaufort's conscience on this point was therefore set at rest. It was a dull, close, oppressive morning, upon which the remains of Catherine Morton were consigned to the grave. With the preparations for the funeral Philip did not interfere; he did not inquire by whose orders all that solemnity of mutes, and coaches, and black plumes, and crape bands, was appointed. If his vague and undeveloped conjecture ascribed this last and vain attention to Robert Beaufort, it neither lessened the sullen resentment he felt against his uncle, nor, on the other hand, did he conceive that he had a right to forbid respect to the dead, though he might reject service for the survivor. Since Mr. Blackwell's visit, he had remained in a sort of apathy or torpor, which seemed to the people of the house to partake rather of indifference than woe.

The funeral was over, and Philip had returned to the apartments occupied by the deceased; and now, for the first time, he set himself to examine what papers, &c., she had left behind. In an old escritoire, he found, first, various packets of letters in his father's handwriting, the characters in many of them faded by time. He opened a few; they were the earliest love-letters. He did not dare to read above a few lines; so much did their living tenderness, and breathing, frank, hearty passion, contrast with the fate of the adored one. In those letters, the very heart of the writer seemed to beat! Now both hearts alike were stilled! And GHOST called vainly unto GHOST!

He came, at length, to a letter in his mother's hand, addressed to himself, and dated two days before her death. He went to the window and gasped in the mists of the sultry air for breath. Below were heard the noises of London; the shrill cries of itinerant vendors, the rolling carts, the whoop of boys returned for a while from school. Amidst all these rose one loud, merry peal of laughter, which drew his attention mechanically to the spot whence it came; it was at the threshold of a public-house, before which stood the hearse that had conveyed his mother's coffin, and the gay undertakers, halting there to refresh themselves. He closed the window with a groan, retired to the farthest corner of the room, and read as follows:

"MY DEAREST PHILIP,—When you read this, I shall be no more. You and poor Sidney will have neither father nor mother, nor fortune, nor name. Heaven is more just than man, and in Heaven is my hope for you. You, Philip, are already past childhood; your nature is one formed, I think, to wrestle successfully with the world. Guard against your own passions, and you may bid defiance to the obstacles that will beset your path in life. And lately, in our reverses, Philip, you have so subdued those passions, so schooled the pride and impetuosity of your childhood, that I have contemplated your prospects with less fear than I used to do, even when they seemed so brilliant. Forgive me, my dear child, if I have concealed from you my state of health, and if my death be a sudden and unlooked-for shock. Do not grieve for me too long. For myself, my release is indeed escape from the prison-house and the chain—from bodily pain and mental torture, which may, I fondly hope, prove some expiation for the errors of a happier time. For I did err, when, even from the least selfish motives, I suffered my

union with your father to remain concealed, and thus ruined the hopes of those who had rights upon me equal even to his. But, O Philip! beware of the first false steps into deceit; beware, too, of the passions, which do not betray their fruit till years and years after the leaves that look so green and the blossoms that seem so fair.

"I repeat my solemn injunction—Do not grieve for me; but strengthen your mind and heart to receive the charge that I now confide to you—my Sidney, my child, your brother! He is so soft, so gentle, he has been so dependent for very life upon me, and we are parted now for the first and last time. He is with strangers; and—and—O Philip, Philip! watch over him for the love you bear, not only to him, but to me! Be to him a father as well as a brother. Put your stout heart against the world, so that you may screen him, the weak child, from its malice. He has not your talents nor strength of character; without you he is nothing. Live, toil, rise for his sake not less than your own. If you knew how this heart beats as I write to you, if you could conceive what comfort I take for *him* from my confidence in you, you would feel a new spirit—my spirit—my mother-spirit of love, and forethought, and vigilance, enter into you while you read. See him when I am gone—comfort and soothe him. Happily he is too young yet to know all his loss; and do not let him think unkindly of me in the days to come, for he is a child now, and they may poison his mind against me more easily than they can yours. Think, if he is unhappy hereafter, he may forget how I loved him, he may curse those who gave him birth. Forgive me all this, Philip, my son, and heed it well.

"And now, where you find this letter, you will see a key; it opens a well in the bureau in which I have hoarded my little savings. You will see that I have not died in poverty. Take what there is; young as you are, you may want it more now than hereafter. But hold it in trust for your brother as well as yourself. If he is harshly treated (and you will go and see him, and you will remember that he would writhe under what you might scarcely feel), or if they overtask him (he is so young to work), yet it may find him a home near you. God watch over and guard you both! You are orphans now. But HE has told even the orphans to call him 'Father!'"

When he had read this letter, Philip Morton fell upon his knees, and prayed.

CHAPTER II.

"His curse! Dost comprehend what that word means?
Shot from a father's angry breath."
JAMES SHIRLEY: *The Brothers*.

"This term is fatal, and affrights me."—Ibid.

"Those fond philosophers that magnify
Our human nature
Conversed but little with the world—they knew not
The fierce vexation of community!"—Ibid.

After he had recovered his self-possession, Philip opened the well of the bureau, and was astonished and affected to find that Catherine had saved more than L100. Alas! how much must she have pinched herself to have hoarded this little treasure! After burning his father's love-letters, and some other papers, which he deemed useless, he made up a little bundle of those trifling effects belonging to the deceased, which he valued as memorials and relies of her, quitted the apartment, and descended to the parlour behind the shop. On the way he met with the kind servant, and recalling the grief that she had manifested for his mother since he had been in the house, he placed two sovereigns in her hand. "And now," said he, as the servant wept while he spoke, "now I can bear to ask you what I have not before done. How did my poor mother die? Did she suffer much?—or—or—"

"She went off like a lamb, sir," said the girl, drying her eyes. "You see the gentleman had been with her all the day, and she was much more easy and comfortable in her mind after he came."

"The gentleman! Not the gentleman I found here?"

"Oh, dear no! Not the pale middle-aged gentleman nurse and I saw go down as the clock struck two. But the young, soft-spoken gentleman who came in the morning, and said as how he was a relation. He stayed with her till she slept; and, when she woke, she smiled in his face—I shall never forget that smile—for I was standing on the other side, as it might be here, and the doctor was by the window, pouring

out the doctor's stuff in the glass; and so she looked on the young gentleman, and then looked round at us all, and shook her head very gently, but did not speak. And the gentleman asked her how she felt, and she took both his hands and kissed them; and then he put his arms round and raised her up to take the physic like, and she said then, 'You will never forget them?' and he said, 'Never.' I don't know what that meant, sir!"

"Well, well—go on."

"And her head fell back on his buzzom, and she looked so happy; and, when the doctor came to the bedside, she was quite gone."

"And the stranger had my post! No matter; God bless him—God bless him. Who was he? what was his name?"

"I don't know, sir; he did not say. He stayed after the doctor went, and cried very bitterly; he took on more than you did, sir."

"And the other gentleman came just as he was a-going, and they did not seem to like each other; for I heard him through the wall, as nurse and I were in the next room, speak as if he was scolding; but he did not stay long."

"And has never been seen since?"

"No, sir. Perhaps missus can tell you more about him. But won't you take something, sir? Do—you look so pale."

Philip, without speaking, pushed her gently aside, and went slowly down the stairs. He entered the parlour, where two or three children were seated, playing at dominoes; he despatched one for their mother, the mistress of the shop, who came in, and dropped him a courtesy, with a very grave, sad face, as was proper.

"I am going to leave your house, ma'am; and I wish to settle any little arrears of rent, &c."

"O sir! don't mention it," said the landlady; and, as she spoke, she took a piece of paper from her bosom, very neatly folded, and laid it on the table. "And here, sir," she added, taking from the same depository a card,— "here is the card left by the gentleman who saw to the funeral. He called half an hour ago, and bade me say, with his compliments, that he would wait on you to-morrow at eleven o'clock. So I hope you won't go yet: for I think he means to settle everything for you; he said as much, sir."

Philip glanced over the card, and read, "Mr. George Blackwell, Lincoln's Inn." His brow grew dark—he let the card fall on the ground, put his foot on it with a quiet scorn, and muttered to himself, "The lawyer shall not bribe me out of my curse!" He turned to the total of the bill—not heavy, for poor Catherine had regularly defrayed the expense of her scanty maintenance and humble lodging—paid the money, and, as the landlady wrote the receipt, he asked, "Who was the gentleman—the younger gentleman—who called in the morning of the day my mother died?"

"Oh, sir! I am so sorry I did not get his name. Mr. Perkins said that he was some relation. Very odd he has never been since. But he'll be sure to call again, sir; you had much better stay here."

"No: it does not signify. All that he could do is done. But stay, give him this note, if she should call."

Philip, taking the pen from the landlady's hand, hastily wrote (while Mrs. Lacy went to bring him sealing-wax and a light) these words:

"I cannot guess who you are: they say that you call yourself a relation; that must be some mistake. I knew not that my poor mother had relations so kind. But, whoever you be, you soothed her last hours—she died in your arms; and if ever—years, long years hence—we should chance to meet, and I can do anything to aid another, my blood, and my life, and my heart, and my soul, all are slaves to your will. If you be really of her kindred, I commend to you my brother: he is at —, with Mr. Morton. If you can serve him, my mother's soul will watch over you as a guardian angel. As for me, I ask no help from any one: I go into the world and will carve out my own way. So much do I shrink from the thought of charity from others, that I do not believe I could bless you as I do now if your kindness to me did not close with the stone upon my mother's grave. PHILIP."

He sealed this letter, and gave it to the woman.

"Oh, by the by," said she, "I had forgot; the Doctor said that if you would send for him, he would be most happy to call on you, and give you any advice."

"Very well."

"And what shall I say to Mr. Blackwell?"

"That he may tell his employer to remember our last interview."

With that Philip took up his bundle and strode from the house. He went first to the churchyard, where his mother's remains had been that day interred. It was near at hand, a quiet, almost a rural, spot. The gate stood ajar, for there was a public path through the churchyard, and Philip entered with a noiseless tread. It was then near evening; the sun had broken out from the mists of the earlier day, and the wistering rays shone bright and holy upon the solemn place.

"Mother! mother!" sobbed the orphan, as he fell prostrate before that fresh green mound: "here—here I have come to repeat my oath, to swear again that I will be faithful to the charge you have entrusted to your wretched son! And at this hour I dare ask if there be on this earth one more miserable and forlorn?"

As words to this effect struggled from his lips, a loud, shrill voice—the cracked, painful voice of weak age wrestling with strong passion, rose close at hand.

"Away, reprobate! thou art accursed!"

Philip started, and shuddered as if the words were addressed to himself, and from the grave. But, as he rose on his knee, and tossing the wild hair from his eyes, looked confusedly round, he saw, at a short distance, and in the shadow of the wall, two forms; the one, an old man with grey hair, who was seated on a crumbling wooden tomb, facing the setting sun; the other, a man apparently yet in the vigour of life, who appeared bent as in humble supplication. The old man's hands were outstretched over the head of the younger, as if suiting terrible action to the terrible words, and, after a moment's pause—a moment, but it seemed far longer to Philip—there was heard a deep, wild, ghastly howl from a dog that cowered at the old man's feet; a howl, perhaps of fear at the passion of his master, which the animal might associate with danger.

"Father! father!" said the suppliant reproachfully, "your very dog rebukes your curse."

"Be dumb! My dog! What hast thou left me on earth but him? Thou hast made me loathe the sight of friends, for thou hast made me loathe mine own name. Thou hast covered it with disgrace,—thou hast turned mine old age into a by-word,—thy crimes leave me solitary in the midst of my shame!"

"It is many years since we met, father; we may never meet again—shall we part thus?"

"Thus, aha!" said the old man in a tone of withering sarcasm! "I comprehend,—you are come for money!"

At this taunt the son started as if stung by a serpent; raised his head to its full height, folded his arms, and replied:

"Sir, you wrong me: for more than twenty years I have maintained myself—no matter how, but without taxing you;—and now, I felt remorse for having suffered you to discard me,—now, when you are old and helpless, and, I heard, blind: and you might want aid, even from your poor good-for-nothing son. But I have done. Forget,—not my sins, but this interview. Repeal your curse, father; I have enough on my head without yours; and so—let the son at least bless the father who curses him. Farewell!"

The speaker turned as he thus said, with a voice that trembled at the close, and brushed rapidly by Philip, whom he did not, however, appear to perceive; but Philip, by the last red beam of the sun, saw again that marked storm-beaten face which it was difficult, once seen, to forget, and recognised the stranger on whose breast he had slept the night of his fatal visit to R—.

The old man's imperfect vision did not detect the departure of his son, but his face changed and softened as the latter strode silently through the rank grass.

"William!" he said at last, gently; "William!" and the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; "my son!" but that son was gone—the old man listened for reply—none came. "He has left me—poor William!—we shall never meet again;" and he sank once more on the old tombstone, dumb, rigid, motionless—an image of Time himself in his own domain of Graves. The dog crept closer to his master, and licked his hand. Philip stood for a moment in thoughtful silence: his exclamation of despair had been answered as by his better angel. There was a being more miserable than himself; and the Accursed would have envied the Bereaved!

The twilight had closed in; the earliest star—the star of Memory and Love, the Hesperus hymned by

every poet since the world began—was fair in the arch of heaven, as Philip quitted the spot, with a spirit more reconciled to the future, more softened, chastened, attuned to gentle and pious thoughts than perhaps ever yet had made his soul dominant over the deep and dark tide of his gloomy passions. He went thence to a neighbouring sculptor, and paid beforehand for a plain tablet to be placed above the grave he had left. He had just quitted that shop, in the same street, not many doors removed from the house in which his mother had breathed her last. He was pausing by a crossing, irresolute whether to repair at once to the home assigned to Sidney, or to seek some shelter in town for that night, when three men who were on the opposite side of the way suddenly caught sight of him.

"There he is—there he is! Stop, sir!—stop!"

Philip heard these words, looked up, and recognised the voice and the person of Mr. Plaskwith; the bookseller was accompanied by Mr. Plimmins, and a sturdy, ill-favoured stranger.

A nameless feeling of fear, rage, and disgust seized the unhappy boy, and at the same moment a ragged vagabond whispered to him, "Stump it, my cove; that's a Bow Street runner."

Then there shot through Philip's mind the recollection of the money he had seized, though but to dash away; was he now—he, still to his own conviction, the heir of an ancient and spotless name—to be hunted as a thief; or, at the best, what right over his person and his liberty had he given to his taskmaster? Ignorant of the law—the law only seemed to him, as it ever does to the ignorant and the friendless—a Foe. Quicker than lightning these thoughts, which it takes so many words to describe, flashed through the storm and darkness of his breast; and at the very instant that Mr. Plimmins had laid hands on his shoulder his resolution was formed. The instinct of self beat loud at his heart. With a bound—a spring that sent Mr. Plimmins sprawling in the kennel, he darted across the road, and fled down an opposite lane.

"Stop him! stop!" cried the bookseller, and the officer rushed after him with almost equal speed. Lane after lane, alley after alley, fled Philip; dodging, winding, breathless, panting; and lane after lane, and alley after alley, thickened at his heels the crowd that pursued. The idle and the curious, and the officious,—ragged boys, ragged men, from stall and from cellar, from corner and from crossing, joined in that delicious chase, which runs down young Error till it sinks, too often, at the door of the gaol or the foot of the gallows. But Philip slackened not his pace; he began to distance his pursuers. He was now in a street which they had not yet entered—a quiet street, with few, if any, shops. Before the threshold of a better kind of public-house, or rather tavern, to judge by its appearance, lounged two men; and while Philip flew on, the cry of "Stop him!" had changed as the shout passed to new voices, into "Stop the thief!"—that cry yet howled in the distance. One of the loungers seized him: Philip, desperate and ferocious, struck at him with all his force; but the blow was scarcely felt by that Herculean frame.

"Pish!" said the man, scornfully; "I am no spy; if you run from justice, I would help you to a sign-post."

Struck by the voice, Philip looked hard at the speaker. It was the voice of the Accursed Son.

"Save me! you remember me?" said the orphan, faintly. "Ah! I think I do; poor lad! Follow me—this way!" The stranger turned within the tavern, passed the hall through a sort of corridor that led into a back yard which opened upon a nest of courts or passages.

"You are safe for the present; I will take you where you can tell me all at your ease—See!" As he spoke they emerged into an open street, and the guide pointed to a row of hackney coaches. "Be quick—get in. Coachman, drive fast to —"

Philip did not hear the rest of the direction.

Our story returns to Sidney.

CHAPTER III.

"Nous vous mettrons a couvert,
Repondit le pot de fer
Si quelque matiere dure

Vous menace d'aventure,
Entre deux je passerai,
Et du coup vous sauverai.

.....
Le pot de terre en souffre!"—LA FONTAINE.

["We, replied the Iron Pot, will shield you: should any hard substance menace you with danger, I'll intervene, and save you from the shock.

..... The Earthen Pot was the sufferer!]

"SIDNEY, come here, sir! What have you been at? you have torn your frill into tatters! How did you do this? Come sir, no lies."

"Indeed, ma'am, it was not my fault. I just put my head out of the window to see the coach go by, and a nail caught me here."

"Why, you little plague! you have scratched yourself—you are always in mischief. What business had you to look after the coach?"

"I don't know," said Sidney, hanging his head ruefully. "La, mother!" cried the youngest of the cousins, a square-built, ruddy, coarse-featured urchin, about Sidney's age, "La, mother, he never see a coach in the street when we are at play but he runs arter it."

"After, not arter," said Mr. Roger Morton, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"Why do you go after the coaches, Sidney?" said Mrs. Morton; "it is very naughty; you will be run over some day."

"Yes, ma'am," said Sidney, who during the whole colloquy had been trembling from head to foot.

"Yes ma'am," and "no, ma'am:" you have no more manners than a cobbler's boy."

"Don't tease the child, my dear; he is crying," said Mr. Morton, more authoritatively than usual. "Come here, my man!" and the worthy uncle took him in his lap and held his glass of brandy-and-water to his lips; Sidney, too frightened to refuse, sipped hurriedly, keeping his large eyes fixed on his aunt, as children do when they fear a cuff.

"You spoil the boy more than do your own flesh and blood," said Mrs. Morton, greatly displeased.

Here Tom, the youngest-born before described, put his mouth to his mother's ear, and whispered loud enough to be heard by all: "He runs arter the coach 'cause he thinks his ma may be in it. Who's home-sick, I should like to know? Ba! Baa!"

The boy pointed his finger over his mother's shoulder, and the other children burst into a loud giggle.

"Leave the room, all of you,—leave the room!" said Mr. Morton, rising angrily and stamping his foot.

The children, who were in great awe of their father, huddled and hustled each other to the door; but Tom, who went last, bold in his mother's favour, popped his head through the doorway, and cried, "Good-bye, little home-sick!"

A sudden slap in the face from his father changed his chuckle into a very different kind of music, and a loud indignant sob was heard without for some moments after the door was closed.

"If that's the way you behave to your children, Mr. Morton, I vow you sha'n't have any more if I can help it. Don't come near me—don't touch me!" and Mrs. Morton assumed the resentful air of offended beauty.

"Pshaw!" growled the spouse, and he reseated himself and resumed his pipe. There was a dead silence. Sidney crouched near his uncle, looking very pale. Mrs. Morton, who was knitting, knitted away with the excited energy of nervous irritation.

"Ring the bell, Sidney," said Mr. Morton. The boy obeyed—the parlour- maid entered. "Take Master Sidney to his room; keep the boys away from him, and give him a large slice of bread and jam, Martha."

"Jam, indeed!—treacle," said Mrs. Morton.

"Jam, Martha," repeated the uncle, authoritatively. "Treacle!" reiterated the aunt.

"Jam, I say!"

"Treacle, you hear: and for that matter, Martha has no jam to give!"

The husband had nothing more to say.

"Good night, Sidney; there's a good boy, go and kiss your aunt and make your bow; and I say, my lad, don't mind those plagues. I'll talk to them to-morrow, that I will; no one shall be unkind to you in my house."

Sidney muttered something, and went timidly up to Mrs. Morton. His look so gentle and subdued; his eyes full of tears; his pretty mouth which, though silent, pleaded so eloquently; his willingness to forgive, and his wish to be forgiven, might have melted many a heart harder, perhaps, than Mrs. Morton's. But there reigned what are worse than hardness,—prejudice and wounded vanity—maternal vanity. His contrast to her own rough, coarse children grated on her, and set the teeth of her mind on edge.

"There, child, don't tread on my gown: you are so awkward: say your prayers, and don't throw off the counterpane! I don't like slovenly boys."

Sidney put his finger in his mouth, drooped, and vanished.

"Now, Mrs. M.," said Mr. Morton, abruptly, and knocking out the ashes of his pipe; "now Mrs. M., one word for all: I have told you that I promised poor Catherine to be a father to that child, and it goes to my heart to see him so snubbed. Why you dislike him I can't guess for the life of me. I never saw a sweeter-tempered child."

"Go on, sir, go on: make your personal reflections on your own lawful wife. They don't hurt me—oh no, not at all! Sweet-tempered, indeed; I suppose your own children are not sweet-tempered?"

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Morton: "my own children are such as God made them, and I am very well satisfied."

"Indeed you may be proud of such a family; and to think of the pains I have taken with them, and how I have saved you in nurses, and the bad times I have had; and now, to find their noses put out of joint by that little mischief-making interloper—it is too bad of you, Mr. Morton; you will break my heart—that you will!"

Mrs. Morton put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed. The husband was moved: he got up and attempted to take her hand. "Indeed, Margaret, I did not mean to vex you."

"And I who have been such a fa—fai—faithful wi—wi—wife, and brought you such a deal of mon—mon—money, and always stud—stud—studied your interests; many's the time when you have been fast asleep that I have sat up half the night—men—men—mending the house linen; and you have not been the same man, Roger, since that boy came!"

"Well, well" said the good man, quite overcome, and fairly taking her round the waist and kissing her; "no words between us; it makes life quite unpleasant. If it pains you to have Sidney here, I will put him to some school in the town, where they'll be kind to him. Only, if you would, Margaret, for my sake—old girl! come, now! there's a darling!—just be more tender with him. You see he frets so after his mother. Think how little Tom would fret if he was away from you! Poor little Tom!"

"La! Mr. Morton, you are such a man!—there's no resisting your ways! You know how to come over me, don't you?"

And Mrs. Morton smiled benignly, as she escaped from his conjugal arms and smoothed her cap.

Peace thus restored, Mr. Morton refilled his pipe, and the good lady, after a pause, resumed, in a very mild, conciliatory tone:

"I'll tell you what it is, Roger, that vexes me with that there child. He is so deceitful, and he does tell such fibs!"

"Fibs! that is a very bad fault," said Mr. Morton, gravely. "That must be corrected."

"It was but the other day that I saw him break a pane of glass in the shop; and when I taxed him with it, he denied it;—and with such a face! I can't abide storytelling."

"Let me know the next story he tells; I'll cure him," said Mr. Morton, sternly. "You now how I broke Tom of it. Spare the rod, and spoil the child. And where I promised to be kind to the boy, of course I did

not mean that I was not to take care of his morals, and see that he grew up an honest man. Tell truth and shame the devil—that's my motto."

"Spoke like yourself, Roger," said Mrs. Morton, with great animation. "But you see he has not had the advantage of such a father as you. I wonder your sister don't write to you. Some people make a great fuss about their feelings; but out of sight out of mind."

"I hope she is not ill. Poor Catherine! she looked in a very bad way when she was here," said Morton; and he turned uneasily to the fireplace and sighed.

Here the servant entered with the supper-tray, and the conversation fell upon other topics.

Mrs. Roger Morton's charge against Sidney was, alas! too true. He had acquired, under that roof, a terrible habit of telling stories. He had never incurred that vice with his mother, because then and there he had nothing to fear; now, he had everything to fear;—the grim aunt—even the quiet, kind, cold, austere uncle—the apprentices—the strange servants— and, oh! more than all, those hardeyed, loud-laughing tormentors, the boys of his own age! Naturally timid, severity made him actually a coward; and when the nerves tremble, a lie sounds as surely as, when I vibrate that wire, the bell at the end of it will ring. Beware of the man who has been roughly treated as a child.

The day after the conference just narrated, Mr. Morton, who was subject to erysipelas, had taken a little cooling medicine. He breakfasted, therefore, later than usual—after the rest of the family; and at this meal *pour lui soulager* he ordered the luxury of a muffin. Now it so chanced that he had only finished half the muffin, and drunk one cup of tea, when he was called into the shop by a customer of great importance— a prosy old lady, who always gave her orders with remarkable precision, and who valued herself on a character for affability, which she maintained by never buying a penny riband without asking the shopman how all his family were, and talking news about every other family in the place. At the time Mr. Morton left the parlour, Sidney and Master Tom were therein, seated on two stools, and casting up division sums on their respective slates—a point of education to which Mr. Morton attended with great care. As soon as his father's back was turned, Master Tom's eyes wandered from the slate to the muffin, as it leered at him from the slop- basin. Never did Pythian sibyl, seated above the bubbling spring, utter more oracular eloquence to her priest, than did that muffin—at least the parts of it yet extant—utter to the fascinated senses of Master Tom. First he sighed; then he moved round on his stool; then he got up; then he peered at the muffin from a respectful distance; then he gradually approached, and walked round, and round, and round it—his eyes getting bigger and bigger; then he peeped through the glass-door into the shop, and saw his father busily engaged with the old lady; then he began to calculate and philosophise, perhaps his father had done breakfast; perhaps he would not come back at all; if he came back, he would not miss one corner of the muffin; and if he did miss it, why should Tom be supposed to have taken it? As he thus communed with himself, he drew nearer into the fatal vortex, and at last with a desperate plunge, he seized the triangular temptation,—

"And ere a man had power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of Thomas had devoured it up."

Sidney, disturbed from his studies by the agitation of his companion, witnessed this proceeding with great and conscientious alarm. "O Tom!" said he, "what will your papa say?"

"Look at that!" said Tom, putting his fist under Sidney's reluctant nose. "If father misses it, you'll say the cat took it. If you don't— my eye, what a wapping I'll give you!"

Here Mr. Morton's voice was heard wishing the lady "Good morning!" and Master Tom, thinking it better to leave the credit of the invention solely to Sidney, whispered, "Say I'm gone up stairs for my pocket- hanker," and hastily absconded.

Mr. Morton, already in a very bad humour, partly at the effects of the cooling medicine, partly at the suspension of his breakfast, stalked into the parlour. His tea—the second cup already poured out, was cold. He turned towards the muffin, and missed the lost piece at a glance.

"Who has been at my muffin?" said he, in a voice that seemed to Sidney like the voice he had always supposed an ogre to possess. "Have you, Master Sidney?"

"N—n—no, sir; indeed, sir!"

"Then Tom has. Where is he?"

"Gone up stairs for his handkerchief, sir."

"Did he take my muffin? Speak the truth!"

"No, sir; it was the—it was the—the cat, sir!"

"O you wicked, wicked boy!" cried Mrs. Morton, who had followed her husband into the parlour; "the cat kittened last night, and is locked up in the coal-cellar!"

"Come here, Master Sidney! No! first go down, Margaret, and see if the cat is in the cellar: it might have got out, Mrs. M.," said Mr. Morton, just even in his wrath.

Mrs. Morton went, and there was a dead silence, except indeed in Sidney's heart, which beat louder than a clock ticks. Mr. Morton, meanwhile, went to a little cupboard;—while still there, Mrs. Morton returned: the cat was in the cellar—the key turned on her—in no mood to eat muffins, poor thing!—she would not even lap her milk! like her mistress, she had had a very bad time!

"Now come here, sir," said Mr. Morton, withdrawing himself from the cupboard, with a small horsewhip in his hand, "I will teach you how to speak the truth in future! Confess that you have told a lie!"

"Yes, sir, it was a lie! Pray—pray forgive me: but Tom made me!"

"What! when poor Tom is up-stairs? worse and worse!" said Mrs. Morton, lifting up her hands and eyes. "What a viper!"

"For shame, boy,—for shame! Take that—and that—and that—"

Writhing—shrinking, still more terrified than hurt, the poor child cowered beneath the lash.

"Mamma! mamma!" he cried at last, "Oh, why—why did you leave me?"

At these words Mr. Morton stayed his hand, the whip fell to the ground.

"Yet it is all for the boy's good," he muttered. "There, child, I hope this is the last time. There, you are not much hurt. Zounds, don't cry so!"

"He will alarm the whole street," said Mrs. Morton; "I never see such a child! Here, take this parcel to Mrs. Birnie's—you know the house—only next street, and dry your eyes before you get there. Don't go through the shop; this way out."

She pushed the child, still sobbing with a vehemence that she could not comprehend, through the private passage into the street, and returned to her husband.

"You are convinced now, Mr. M.?"

"Pshaw! ma'am; don't talk. But, to be sure, that's how I cured Tom of fibbing.—The tea's as cold as a stone!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Le bien nous le faisons: le mal c'est la Fortune.
On a toujours raison, le Destin toujours tort."—LA FONTAINE.

[The Good, we effect ourselves; the Evil is the handiwork of Fortune. Mortals are always in the right, Destiny always in the wrong.]

Upon the early morning of the day commemorated by the historical events of our last chapter, two men were deposited by a branch coach at the inn of a hamlet about ten miles distant from the town in which Mr. Roger Morton resided. Though the hamlet was small, the inn was large, for it was placed close by a huge finger-post that pointed to three great roads: one led to the town before mentioned; another to the heart of a manufacturing district; and a third to a populous seaport. The weather was fine, and the two travellers ordered breakfast to be taken into an arbour in the garden, as well as the basins and towels necessary for ablution. The elder of the travellers appeared to be unequivocally foreign; you would have guessed him at once for a German. He wore, what was then very uncommon in this country, a loose, brown linen *blouse*, buttoned to the chin, with a leathern belt, into which were stuck a German meerschaum and a tobacco-pouch. He had very long flaxen hair, false or real, that

streamed half-way down his back, large light mustaches, and a rough, sunburnt complexion, which made the fairness of the hair more remarkable. He wore an enormous pair of green spectacles, and complained much in broken English of the weakness of his eyes. All about him, even to the smallest minutiae, indicated the German; not only the large muscular frame, the broad feet, and vast though well-shaped hands, but the brooch—evidently purchased of a Jew in some great fair— stuck ostentatiously and superfluously into his stock; the quaint, droll- looking carpet-bag, which he refused to trust to the boots; and the great, massive, dingy ring which he wore on his forefinger. The other was a slender, remarkably upright and sinewy youth, in a blue frock, over which was thrown a large cloak, a travelling cap, with a shade that concealed all of the upper part of his face, except a dark quick eye of uncommon fire; and a shawl handkerchief, which was equally useful in concealing the lower part of the countenance. On descending from the coach, the German with some difficulty made the ostler understand that he wanted a post-chaise in a quarter of an hour; and then, without entering the house, he and his friend strolled to the arbour. While the maid- servant was covering the table with bread, butter, tea, eggs, and a huge round of beef, the German was busy in washing his hands, and talking in his national tongue to the young man, who returned no answer. But as soon as the servant had completed her operations the foreigner turned round, and observing her eyes fixed on his brooch with much female admiration, he made one stride to her.

"Der Teufel, my goot Madchen—but you are von var pretty—vat you call it?" and he gave her, as he spoke, so hearty a smack that the girl was more flustered than flattered by the courtesy.

"Keep yourself to yourself, sir!" said she, very tartly, for chambermaids never like to be kissed by a middle-aged gentleman when a younger one is by: whereupon the German replied by a pinch,—it is immaterial to state the exact spot to which that delicate caress was directed. But this last offence was so inexpiable, that the "Madchen" bounced off with a face of scarlet, and a "Sir, you are no gentleman—that's what you arn't!" The German thrust his head out of the arbour, and followed her with a loud laugh; then drawing himself in again, he said in quite another accent, and in excellent English, "There, Master Philip, we have got rid of the girl for the rest of the morning, and that's exactly what I wanted to do—women's wits are confoundedly sharp. Well, did I not tell you right, we have baffled all the bloodhounds!"

"And here, then, Gawtrety, we are to part," said Philip, mournfully.

"I wish you would think better of it, my boy," returned Mr. Gawtrety, breaking an egg; "how can you shift for yourself—no kith nor kin, not even that important machine for giving advice called a friend—no, not a friend, when I am gone? I foresee how it must end. [D— it, salt butter, by Jove!]"

"If I were alone in the world, as I have told you again and again, perhaps I might pin my fate to yours. But my brother!"

"There it is, always wrong when we act from our feelings. My whole life, which some day or other I will tell you, proves that. Your brother—bah! is he not very well off with his own uncle and aunt?—plenty to eat and drink, I dare say. Come, man, you must be as hungry as a hawk—a slice of the beef? Let well alone, and shift for yourself. What good can you do your brother?"

"I don't know, but I must see him; I have sworn it."

"Well, go and see him, and then strike across the country to me. I will wait a day for you,—there now!"

"But tell me first," said Philip, very earnestly, and fixing his dark eyes on his companion,— "tell me—yes, I must speak frankly—tell me, you who would link my fortunes with your own,—tell me, what and who are you?"

Gawtrety looked up.

"What do you suppose?" said he, dryly.

"I fear to suppose anything, lest I wrong you; but the strange place to which you took me the evening on which you saved me from pursuit, the persons I met there—"

"Well-dressed, and very civil to you?"

"True! but with a certain wild looseness in their talk that—But I have no right to judge others by mere appearance. Nor is it this that has made me anxious, and, if you will, suspicious."

"What then?"

"Your dress—your disguise."

"Disguised yourself!—ha! ha! Behold the world's charity! You fly from some danger, some pursuit, disguised—you, who hold yourself guiltless—I do the same, and you hold me criminal—a robber, perhaps—a murderer it may be! I will tell you what I am: I am a son of Fortune, an adventurer; I live by my wits—so do poets and lawyers, and all the charlatans of the world; I am a charlatan—a chameleon. 'Each man in his time plays many parts:' I play any part in which Money, the Arch-Manager, promises me a livelihood. Are you satisfied?"

"Perhaps," answered the boy, sadly, "when I know more of the world, I shall understand you better. Strange—strange, that you, out of all men, should have been kind to me in distress!"

"Not at all strange. Ask the beggar whom he gets the most pence from—the fine lady in her carriage—the beau smelling of eau de Cologne? Pish! the people nearest to being beggars themselves keep the beggar alive. You were friendless, and the man who has all earth for a foe befriends you. It is the way of the world, sir,—the way of the world. Come, eat while you can; this time next year you may have no beef to your bread."

Thus masticating and moralising at the same time, Mr. Gawtrety at last finished a breakfast that would have astonished the whole Corporation of London; and then taking out a large old watch, with an enamelled back—doubtless more German than its master—he said, as he lifted up his carpet-bag, "I must be off—tempus fugit, and I must arrive just in time to nick the vessels. Shall get to Ostend, or Rotterdam, safe and snug; thence to Paris. How my pretty Fan will have grown! Ah, you don't know Fan—make you a nice little wife one of these days! Cheer up, man, we shall meet again. Be sure of it; and hark ye, that strange place, as you call it, where I took you,—you can find it again?"

"Not I."

"Here, then, is the address. Whenever you want me, go there, ask to see Mr. Gregg—old fellow with one eye, you recollect—shake him by the hand just so—you catch the trick—practise it again. No, the forefinger thus, that's right. Say 'blater,' no more—'blater;'—stay, I will write it down for you; and then ask for William Gawtrety's direction. He will give it you at once, without questions—these signs understood; and if you want money for your passage, he will give you that also, with advice into the bargain. Always a warm welcome with me. And so take care of yourself, and good-bye. I see my chaise is at the door."

As he spoke, Gawtrety shook the young man's hand with cordial vigour, and strode off to his chaise, muttering, "Money well laid out—fee money; I shall have him, and, Gad, I like him,—poor devil!"

CHAPTER V.

"He is a cunning coachman that can turn well in a narrow room."
Old Play: from Lamb's *Specimens*.

"Here are two pilgrims,
And neither knows one footstep of the way."
HEYWOOD's Duchess of Suffolk, *Ibid*.

The chaise had scarce driven from the inn-door when a coach stopped to change horses on its last stage to the town to which Philip was, bound. The name of the destination, in gilt letters on the coach-door, caught his eye, as he walked from the arbour towards the road, and in a few moments he was seated as the fourth passenger in the "Nelson Slow and Sure." From under the shade of his cap, he darted that quick, quiet glance, which a man who hunts, or is hunted,—in other words, who observes, or shuns,—soon acquires. At his left hand sat a young woman in a cloak lined with yellow; she had taken off her bonnet and pinned it to the roof of the coach, and looked fresh and pretty in a silk handkerchief, which she had tied round her head, probably to serve as a nightcap during the drowsy length of the journey. Opposite to her was a middle-aged man of pale complexion, and a grave, pensive, studious expression of face; and vis-a-vis to Philip sat an overdressed, showy, very good-looking man of about two or three and forty. This gentleman wore auburn whiskers, which met at the chin; a foraging cap, with a gold tassel; a velvet waistcoat, across which, in various folds, hung a golden chain, at the end of which dangled an eye-glass, that from time to time he screwed, as it were, into his right eye; he wore, also, a blue silk stock, with a frill much crumpled, dirty kid gloves, and over his lap lay a cloak lined with red silk. As Philip glanced towards this personage, the latter fixed his glass also at him, with a scrutinising stare, which drew fire from Philip's dark eyes. The man dropped his glass, and said in a

half provincial, half haw-haw tone, like the stage exquisite of a minor theatre, "Pawdon me, and split legs!" therewith stretching himself between Philip's limbs in the approved fashion of inside passengers. A young man in a white great-coat now came to the door with a glass of warm sherry and water.

"You must take this—you must now; it will keep the cold out," (the day was broiling,) said he to the young woman.

"Gracious me!" was the answer, "but I never drink wine of a morning, James; it will get into my head."

"To oblige me!" said the young man, sentimentally; whereupon the young lady took the glass, and looking very kindly at her Ganymede, said, "Your health!" and sipped, and made a wry face—then she looked at the passengers, tittered, and said, "I can't bear wine!" and so, very slowly and daintily, sipped up the rest. A silent and expressive squeeze of the hand, on returning the glass, rewarded the young man, and proved the salutary effect of his prescription.

"All right!" cried the coachman: the ostler twitched the cloths from the leaders, and away went the "Nelson Slow and Sure," with as much pretension as if it had meant to do the ten miles in an hour. The pale gentleman took from his waistcoat pocket a little box containing gum-arabic, and having inserted a couple of morsels between his lips, he next drew forth a little thin volume, which from the manner the lines were printed was evidently devoted to poetry.

The smart gentleman, who since the episode of the sherry and water had kept his glass fixed upon the young lady, now said, with a genteel smirk:

"That young gentleman seems very attentive, miss!"

"He is a very good young man, sir, and takes great care of me."

"Not your brother, miss,—eh?"

"La, sir—why not?"

"No family likeness—noice-looking fellow enough! But your oiyes and mouth—ah, miss!"

Miss turned away her head, and uttered with pert vivacity: "I never likes compliments, sir! But the young man is not my brother."

"A sweetheart,—eh? Oh fie, miss! Haw! haw!" and the auburn-whiskered Adonis poked Philip in the knee with one hand, and the pale gentleman in the ribs with the other. The latter looked up, and reproachfully; the former drew in his legs, and uttered an angry ejaculation.

"Well, sir, there is no harm in a sweetheart, is there?" "None in the least, ma'am; I advise you to double the dose. We often hear of two strings to a bow. Daun't you think it would be noicer to have two beaux to your string?" As he thus wittily expressed himself, the gentleman took off his cap, and thrust his fingers through a very curling and comely head of hair; the young lady looked at him with evident coquetry, and said, "How you do run on, you gentlemen!"

"I may well run on, miss, as long as I run aufter you," was the gallant reply.

Here the pale gentleman, evidently annoyed by being talked across, shut his book up, and looked round. His eye rested on Philip, who, whether from the heat of the day or from the forgetfulness of thought, had pushed his cap from his brows; and the gentleman, after staring at him for a few moments with great earnestness, sighed so heavily that it attracted the notice of all the passengers.

"Are you unwell, sir?" asked the young lady, compassionately.

"A little pain in my side, nothing more!"

"Change places with me, sir," cried the Lothario, officiously. "Now do!" The pale gentleman, after a short hesitation, and a bashful excuse, accepted the proposal. In a few moments the young lady and the beau were in deep and whispered conversation, their heads turned towards the window. The pale gentleman continued to gaze at Philip, till the latter, perceiving the notice he excited, coloured, and replaced his cap over his face.

"Are you going to N——? asked the gentleman, in a gentle, timid voice.

"Yes!"

"Is it the first time you have ever been there?"

"Sir!" returned Philip, in a voice that spoke surprise and distaste at his neighbour's curiosity.

"Forgive me," said the gentleman, shrinking back; "but you remind me of—of—a family I once knew in the town. Do you know—the—the Mortons?"

One in Philip's situation, with, as he supposed, the officers of justice in his track (for Gawtreay, for reasons of his own, rather encouraged than allayed his fears), might well be suspicious. He replied therefore shortly, "I am quite a stranger to the town," and ensconced himself in the corner, as if to take a nap. Alas! that answer was one of the many obstacles he was doomed to build up between himself and a fairer fate.

The gentleman sighed again, and never spoke more to the end of the journey. When the coach halted at the inn,—the same inn which had before given its shelter to poor Catherine,—the young man in the white coat opened the door, and offered his arm to the young lady.

"Do you make any stay here, sir?" said she to the beau, as she unpinned her bonnet from the roof.

"Perhaps so; I am waiting for my phe-a-ton, which my faellow is to bring down,—tauking a little tour."

"We shall be very happy to see you, sir!" said the young lady, on whom the phe-a-ton completed the effect produced by the gentleman's previous gallantries; and with that she dropped into his hand a very neat card, on which was printed, "Wavers and Snow, Staymakers, High Street."

The beau put the card gracefully into his pocket—leaped from the coach—nudged aside his rival of the white coat, and offered his arm to the lady, who leaned on it affectionately as she descended.

"This gentleman has been so perlite to me, James," said she. James touched his hat; the beau clapped him on the shoulder,—*"Ah! you are not a hauppy man,—are you? Oh no, not at all a hauppy man!—Good day to you! Guard, that hat-box is mine!"*

While Philip was paying the coachman, the beau passed, and whispered him—

"Recollect old Gregg—anything on the lay here—don't spoil my sport if we meet!" and bustled off into the inn, whistling "God save the king!"

Philip started, then tried to bring to mind the faces which he had seen at the "strange place," and thought he recalled the features of his fellow-traveller. However, he did not seek to renew the acquaintance, but inquired the way to Mr. Morton's house, and thither he now proceeded.

He was directed, as a short cut, down one of those narrow passages at the entrance of which posts are placed as an indication that they are appropriated solely to foot-passengers. A dead white wall, which screened the garden of the physician of the place, ran on one side; a high fence to a nursery-ground was on the other; the passage was lonely, for it was now the hour when few persons walk either for business or pleasure in a provincial town, and no sound was heard save the fall of his own step on the broad flagstones. At the end of the passage in the main street to which it led, he saw already the large, smart, showy shop, with the hot sun shining full on the gilt letters that conveyed to the eyes of the customer the respectable name of "Morton,"—when suddenly the silence was broken by choked and painful sobs. He turned, and beneath a *compo portico*, jutting from the wall, which adorned the physician's door, he saw a child seated on the stone steps weeping bitterly—a thrill shot through Philip's heart! Did he recognise, disguised as it was by pain and sorrow, that voice? He paused, and laid his hand on the child's shoulder: "Oh, don't—don't—pray don't—I am going, I am indeed:" cried the child, quailing, and still keeping his hands clasped before his face.

"Sidney!" said Philip. The boy started to his feet, uttered a cry of rapturous joy, and fell upon his brother's breast.

"O Philip!—dear, dear Philip! you are come to take me away back to my own—own mamma; I will be so good, I will never tease her again,—never, never! I have been so wretched!"

"Sit down, and tell me what they have done to you," said Philip, checking the rising heart that heaved at his mother's name.

So, there they sat, on the cold stone under the stranger's porch, these two orphans: Philip's arms round his brother's waist, Sidney leaning on his shoulder, and imparting to him—perhaps with pardonable exaggeration, all the sufferings he had gone through; and, when he came to that morning's chastisement, and showed the wale across the little hands which he had vainly held up in supplication, Philip's passion shook him from limb to limb. His impulse was to march straight into Mr. Morton's shop and gripe him by the throat; and the indignation he betrayed encouraged Sidney to colour yet more highly the tale of his wrongs and pain.

When he had done, and clinging tightly to his brother's broad chest, said—

"But never mind, Philip; now we will go home to mamma."

Philip replied—

"Listen to me, my dear brother. We cannot go back to our mother. I will tell you why, later. We are alone in the world—we two! If you will come with me—God help you!—for you will have many hardships: we shall have to work and drudge, and you may be cold and hungry, and tired, very often, Sidney,—very, very often! But you know that, long ago, when I was so passionate, I never was wilfully unkind to you; and I declare now, that I would bite out my tongue rather than it should say a harsh word to you. That is all I can promise. Think well. Will you never miss all the comforts you have now?"

"Comforts!" repeated Sidney, ruefully, and looking at the wale over his hands. "Oh! let—let—let me go with you, I shall die if I stay here. I shall indeed—indeed!"

"Hush!" said Philip; for at that moment a step was heard, and the pale gentleman walked slowly down the passage, and started, and turned his head wistfully as he looked at the boys.

When he was gone. Philip rose.

"It is settled, then," said he, firmly. "Come with me at once. You shall return to their roof no more. Come, quick: we shall have many miles to go to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

"He comes—

Yet careless what he brings; his one concern

Is to conduct it to the destined inn;

And having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on——

To him indifferent whether grief or joy."

COWPER: Description of the Postman.

The pale gentleman entered Mr. Morton's shop; and, looking round him, spied the worthy trader showing shawls to a young lady just married. He seated himself on a stool, and said to the bowing foreman—

"I will wait till Mr. Morton is disengaged."

The young lady having closely examined seven shawls, and declared they were beautiful, said, "she would think of it," and walked away. Mr. Morton now approached the stranger.

"Mr. Morton," said the pale gentleman; "you are very little altered. You do not recollect me?"

"Bless me, Mr. Spencer! is it really you? Well, what a time since we met! I am very glad to see you. And what brings you to N——? Business?"

"Yes, business. Let us go within?"

Mr. Morton led the way to the parlour, where Master Tom, reperched on the stool, was rapidly digesting the plundered muffin. Mr. Morton dismissed him to play, and the pale gentleman took a chair.

"Mr. Morton," said he, glancing over his dress, "you see I am in mourning. It is for your sister. I never got the better of that early attachment—never."

"My sister! Good Heavens!" said Mr. Morton, turning very pale; "is she dead? Poor Catherine!—and I not know of it! When did she die?"

"Not many days since; and—and—" said Mr. Spencer, greatly affected, "I fear in want. I had been abroad for some months; on my return last week, looking over the newspapers (for I always order them to be filed), I read the short account of her lawsuit against Mr. Beaufort, some time back. I resolved to find her out. I did so through the solicitor she employed: it was too late; I arrived at her lodgings two days after her—her burial. I then determined to visit poor Catherine's brother, and learn if anything could be done for the children she had left behind."

"She left but two. Philip, the elder, is very comfortably placed at R—; the younger has his home with me; and Mrs. Morton is a moth—that is to say, she takes great pains with him. Ehem! And my poor—poor sister!"

"Is he like his mother?"

"Very much, when she was young—poor dear Catherine!"

"What age is he?"

"About ten, perhaps; I don't know exactly; much younger than the other. And so she's dead!"

"Mr. Morton, I am an old bachelor" (here a sickly smile crossed Mr. Spencer's face); "a small portion of my fortune is settled, it is true, on my relations; but the rest is mine, and I live within my income. The elder of these boys is probably old enough to begin to take care of himself. But, the younger—perhaps you have a family of your own, and can spare him!"

Mr. Morton hesitated, and twitched up his trousers. "Why," said he, "this is very kind in you. I don't know—we'll see. The boy is out now; come and dine with us at two—pot-luck. Well, so she is no more! Heigho! Meanwhile, I'll talk it over with Mrs. M."

"I will be with you," said Mr. Spencer, rising.

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Morton, "if Catherine had but married you she would have been a happy woman."

"I would have tried to make her so," said Mr. Spencer, as he turned away his face and took his departure.

Two o'clock came; but no Sidney. They had sent to the place whither he had been despatched; he had never arrived there. Mr. Morton grew alarmed; and, when Mr. Spencer came to dinner, his host was gone in search of the truant. He did not return till three. Doomed that day to be belated both at breakfast and dinner, this decided him to part with Sidney whenever he should be found. Mrs. Morton was persuaded that the child only sulked, and would come back fast enough when he was hungry. Mr. Spencer tried to believe her, and ate his mutton, which was burnt to a cinder; but when five, six, seven o'clock came, and the boy was still missing,—even Mrs. Morton agreed that it was high time to institute a regular search. The whole family set off different ways. It was ten o'clock before they were reunited; and then all the news picked up was, that a boy, answering Sidney's description, had been seen with a young man in three several parts of the town; the last time at the outskirts, on the high road towards the manufacturing districts. These tidings so far relieved Mr. Morton's mind that he dismissed the chilling fear that had crept there,—that Sidney might have drowned himself. Boys will drown themselves sometimes! The description of the young man coincided so remarkably with the fellow-passenger of Mr. Spencer, that he did not doubt it was the same; the more so when he recollected having seen him with a fair-haired child under the portico; and yet more, when he recalled the likeness to Catherine that had struck him in the coach, and caused the inquiry that had roused Philip's suspicion. The mystery was thus made clear—Sidney had fled with his brother. Nothing more, however, could be done that night. The next morning, active measures should be devised; and when the morning came, the mail brought to Mr. Morton the two following letters. The first was from Arthur Beaufort.

"SIR,—I have been prevented by severe illness from writing to you before. I can now scarcely hold a pen; but the instant my health is recovered I shall be with you at N —, on her deathbed, the mother of the boy under your charge, Sidney Morton, committed him solemnly to me. I make his fortunes my care, and shall hasten to claim him at your kindly hands. But the elder son,—this poor Philip, who has suffered so unjustly,—for our lawyer has seen Mr. Plaskwith, and heard the whole story—what has become of him? All our inquiries have failed to track him. Alas, I was too ill to institute them myself while it was yet time. Perhaps he may have sought shelter, with you, his uncle; if so, assure him that he is in no danger from the pursuit of the law,—that his innocence is fully recognised; and that my father and myself implore him to accept our affection. I can write no more now; but in a few days I shall hope to see you. "I am, sir, &c., "ARTHUR BEAUFORT. "Berkely Square. "

The second letter was from Mr. Plaskwith, and ran thus:

"DEAR MORTON,—Something very awkward has happened,—not my fault, and very unpleasant for me. Your relation, Philip, as I wrote you word, was a painstaking lad, though odd and bad mannered,—for want, perhaps, poor boy! of being taught better, and Mrs. P. is, you know, a very genteel woman—women go too much by manners—so she never took much to him. However, to the point, as the French emperor used to say: one evening he asked me for money for his mother, who, he said, was ill, in a very

insolent way: I may say threatening. It was in my own shop, and before Plimmins and Mrs. P.; I was forced to answer with dignified rebuke, and left the shop. When I returned, he was gone, and some shillings- fourteen, I think, and three sovereigns—evidently from the till, scattered on the floor. Mrs. P. and Mr. Plimmins were very much frightened; thought it was clear I was robbed, and that we were to be murdered. Plimmins slept below that night, and we borrowed butcher Johnson's dog. Nothing happened. I did not think I was robbed; because the money, when we came to calculate, was all right. I know human nature. He had thought to take it, but repented—quite clear. However, I was naturally very angry, thought he'd comeback again—meant to reprove him properly—waited several days—heard nothing of him—grew uneasy— would not attend longer to Mrs. P.; for, as Napoleon Buonaparte observed, 'women are well in their way, not in our ours.' Made Plimmins go with me to town—hired a Bow Street runner to track him out—cost me L1. 1s, and two glasses of brandy and water. Poor Mrs. Morton was just buried—quite shocked! Suddenly saw the boy in the streets. Plimmins rushed forward in the kindest way—was knocked down—hurt his arm—paid 2s. 6d. for lotion. Philip ran off, we ran after him—could not find him. Forced to return home. Next day, a lawyer from a Mr. Beaufort—Mr. George Blackwell, a gentlemanlike man called. Mr. Beaufort will do anything for him in reason. Is there anything more I can do? I really am very uneasy about the lad, and Mrs. P. and I have a tiff about it: but that's nothing—thought I had best write to you for instructions. "Yours truly, "C. PLASHWITH.

"P. S.—Just open my letter to say, Bow Street officer just been here— has found out that the boy has been seen with a very suspicious character: they think he has left London. Bow Street officer wants to go after him—very expensive: so now you can decide."

Mr. Spencer scarcely listened to Mr. Plaskwith's letter, but of Arthur's he felt jealous. He would fain have been the only protector to Catherine's children; but he was the last man fitted to head the search, now so necessary to prosecute with equal tact and energy.

A soft-hearted, soft-headed man, a confirmed valitudinarian, a day- dreamer, who had wasted away his life in dawdling and maundering over Simple Poetry, and sighing over his unhappy attachment; no child, no babe, was more thoroughly helpless than Mr. Spencer.

The task of investigation devolved, therefore, on Mr. Morton, and he went about it in a regular, plain, straightforward way. Hand-bills were circulated, constables employed, and a lawyer, accompanied by Mr. Spencer, despatched to the manufacturing districts: towards which the orphans had been seen to direct their path.

CHAPTER VII.

"Give the gentle South
Yet leave to court these sails."
BEAUMONT AND FLLTCHER: Beggar's Bush.

"Cut your cloth, sir,
According to your calling."—Ibid.

Meanwhile the brothers were far away, and He who feeds the young ravens made their paths pleasant to their feet. Philip had broken to Sidney the sad news of their mother's death, and Sidney had wept with bitter passion. But children,—what can they know of death? Their tears over graves dry sooner than the dews. It is melancholy to compare the depth, the endurance, the far-sighted, anxious, prayerful love of a parent, with the inconsiderate, frail, and evanescent affection of the infant, whose eyes the hues of the butterfly yet dazzle with delight. It was the night of their flight, and in the open air, when Philip (his arms round Sidney's waist) told his brother-orphan that they were motherless. And the air was balmy, the skies filled with the effulgent presence of the August moon; the cornfields stretched round them wide and far, and not a leaf trembled on the beech-tree beneath which they had sought shelter. It seemed as if Nature herself smiled pityingly on their young sorrow, and said to them, "Grieve not for the dead: I, who live for ever, I will be your mother!"

They crept, as the night deepened, into the warmer sleeping-place afforded by stacks of hay, mown that summer and still fragrant. And the next morning the birds woke them betimes, to feel that Liberty, at least, was with them, and to wander with her at will.

Who in his boyhood has not felt the delight of freedom and adventure? to have the world of woods

and sword before him—to escape restriction—to lean, for the first time, on his own resources—to rejoice in the wild but manly luxury of independence—to act the Crusoe—and to fancy a Friday in every footprint—an island of his own in every field? Yes, in spite of their desolation, their loss, of the melancholy past, of the friendless future, the orphans were happy—happy in their youth—their freedom—their love—their wanderings in the delicious air of the glorious August. Sometimes they came upon knots of reapers lingering in the shade of the hedge-rows over their noonday meal; and, grown sociable by travel, and bold by safety, they joined and partook of the rude fare with the zest of fatigue and youth. Sometimes, too, at night, they saw, gleam afar and red by the woodside, the fires of gipsy tents. But these, with the superstition derived from old nursery-tales, they scrupulously shunned, eying them with a mysterious awe! What heavenly twilights belong to that golden month!—the air so lucidly serene, as the purple of the clouds fades gradually away, and up soars, broad, round, intense, and luminous, the full moon which belongs to the joyous season! The fields then are greener than in the heats of July and June,—they have got back the luxury of a second spring. And still, beside the paths of the travellers, lingered on the hedges the clustering honeysuckle—the convolvulus glittered in the tangles of the brake—the hardy heathflower smiled on the green waste.

And ever, at evening, they came, field after field, upon those circles which recall to children so many charmed legends, and are fresh and frequent in that month—the Fairy Rings! They thought, poor boys! that it was a good omen, and half fancied that the Fairies protected them, as in the old time they had often protected the desolate and outcast.

They avoided the main roads, and all towns, with suspicious care. But sometimes they paused, for food and rest, at the obscure hostel of some scattered hamlet: though, more often, they loved to spread the simple food they purchased by the way under some thick, tree, or beside a stream through whose limpid waters they could watch the trout glide and play. And they often preferred the chance shelter of a haystack, or a shed, to the less romantic repose offered by the small inns they alone dared to enter. They went in this much by the face and voice of the host or hostess. Once only Philip had entered a town, on the second day of their flight, and that solely for the purchase of ruder clothes, and a change of linen for Sidney, with some articles and implements of use necessary in their present course of shift and welcome hardship. A wise precaution; for, thus clad, they escaped suspicion.

So journeying, they consumed several days; and, having taken a direction quite opposite to that which led to the manufacturing districts, whither pursuit had been directed, they were now in the centre of another county—in the neighbourhood of one of the most considerable towns of England; and here Philip began to think their wanderings ought to cease, and it was time to settle on some definite course of life. He had carefully hoarded about his person, and most thriftily managed, the little fortune bequeathed by his mother. But Philip looked on this capital as a deposit sacred to Sidney; it was not to be spent, but kept and augmented—the nucleus for future wealth. Within the last few weeks his character was greatly ripened, and his powers of thought enlarged. He was no more a boy,—he was a man: he had another life to take care of. He resolved, then, to enter the town they were approaching, and to seek for some situation by which he might maintain both. Sidney was very loath to abandon their present roving life; but he allowed that the warm weather could not always last, and that in winter the fields would be less pleasant. He, therefore, with a sigh, yielded to his brother's reasonings.

They entered the fair and busy town of one day at noon; and, after finding a small lodging, at which he deposited Sidney, who was fatigued with their day's walk, Philip sallied forth alone.

After his long rambling, Philip was pleased and struck with the broad bustling streets, the gay shops—the evidences of opulence and trade. He thought it hard if he could not find there a market for the health and heart of sixteen. He strolled slowly and alone along the streets, till his attention was caught by a small corner shop, in the window of which was placed a board, bearing this inscription:

"OFFICE FOR EMPLOYMENT.—RECIPROCAL ADVANTAGE.

"Mr. John Clump's bureau open every day, from ten till four. Clerks, servants, labourers, &c., provided with suitable situations. Terms moderate. N.B.—The oldest established office in the town.

"Wanted, a good cook. An under gardener."

What he sought was here! Philip entered, and saw a short fat man with spectacles, seated before a desk, poring upon the well-filled leaves of a long register.

"Sir," said Philip, "I wish for a situation. I don't care what."

"Half-a-crown for entry, if you please. That's right. Now for particulars. Hum!—you don't look like a servant!"

"No; I wish for any place where my education can be of use. I can read and write; I know Latin and French; I can draw; I know arithmetic and summing."

"Very well; very genteel young man—prepossessing appearance (that's a fudge!), highly educated; usher in a school, eh?"

"What you like."

"References?"

"I have none."

"Eh!—none?" and Mr. Clump fixed his spectacles full upon Philip.

Philip was prepared for the question, and had the sense to perceive that a frank reply was his best policy. "The fact is," said he boldly, "I was well brought up; my father died; I was to be bound apprentice to a trade I disliked; I left it, and have now no friends."

"If I can help you, I will," said Mr. Clump, coldly. "Can't promise much. If you were a labourer, character might not matter; but educated young men must have a character. Hands always more useful than head. Education no avail nowadays; common, quite common. Call again on Monday."

Somewhat disappointed and chilled, Philip turned from the bureau; but he had a strong confidence in his own resources, and recovered his spirits as he mingled with the throng. He passed, at length, by a livery-stable, and paused, from old associations, as he saw a groom in the mews attempting to manage a young, hot horse, evidently unbroken. The master of the stables, in a green short jacket and top-boots, with a long whip in his hand, was standing by, with one or two men who looked like horsedealers.

"Come off, clumsy! you can't manage that I ere fine hanimal," cried the liveryman. "Ah! he's a lamb, sir, if he were backed properly. But I has not a man in the yard as can ride since Will died. Come off, I say, lubber!"

But to come off, without being thrown off, was more easily said than done. The horse was now plunging as if Juno had sent her gadfly to him; and Philip, interested and excited, came nearer and nearer, till he stood by the side of the horse-dealers. The other ostlers ran to the help of their comrade, who at last, with white lips and shaking knees, found himself on terra firma; while the horse, snorting hard, and rubbing his head against the breast and arms of the ostler, who held him tightly by the rein, seemed to ask, in his own way, "Are there any more of you?"

A suspicion that the horse was an old acquaintance crossed Philip's mind; he went up to him, and a white spot over the left eye confirmed his doubts. It had been a foal reserved and reared for his own riding! one that, in his prosperous days, had ate bread from his hand, and followed him round the paddock like a dog; one that he had mounted in sport, without saddle, when his father's back was turned; a friend, in short, of the happy Lang syne;—nay, the very friend to whom he had boasted his affection, when, standing with Arthur Beaufort under the summer sky, the whole world seemed to him full of friends. He put his hand on the horse's neck, and whispered, "Soho! So, Billy!" and the horse turned sharp round with a quick joyous neigh.

"If you please, sir," said Philip, appealing to the liveryman, "I will undertake to ride this horse, and take him over yon leaping-bar. Just let me try him."

"There's a fine-spirited lad for you!" said the liveryman, much pleased at the offer. "Now, gentlemen, did I not tell you that 'ere hanimal had no vice if he was properly managed?"

The horse-dealers shook their heads.

"May I give him some bread first?" asked Philip; and the ostler was despatched to the house. Meanwhile the animal evinced various signs of pleasure and recognition, as Philip stroked and talked to him; and, finally, when he ate the bread from the young man's hand, the whole yard seemed in as much delight and surprise as if they had witnessed one of Monsieur Van Amburgh's exploits.

And now, Philip, still caressing the horse, slowly and cautiously mounted; the animal made one bound half-across the yard—a bound which sent all the horse-dealers into a corner—and then went through his paces, one after the other, with as much ease and calm as if he had been broken in at Mr. Fozard's to carry a young lady. And when he crowned all by going thrice over the leaping-bar, and Philip, dismounting, threw the reins to the ostler, and turned triumphantly to the horse-dealer, that gentleman slapped him on the back, and said, emphatically, "Sir, you are a man! and I am proud to see you here."

Meanwhile the horse-dealers gathered round the animal; looked at his hoofs, felt his legs, examined his windpipe, and concluded the bargain, which, but for Philip, would have been very abruptly broken off. When the horse was led out of the yard, the liveryman, Mr. Stubmore, turned to Philip, who, leaning against the wall, followed the poor animal with mournful eyes.

"My good sir, you have sold that horse for me—that you have! Anything as I can do for you? One good turn de serves another. Here's a brace of shiners."

"Thank you, sir! I want no money, but I do want some employment. I can be of use to you, perhaps, in your establishment. I have been brought up among horses all my life."

"Saw it, sir! that's very clear. I say, that 'ere horse knows you!" and the dealer put his finger to his nose.

"Quite right to be mum! He was bred by an old customer of mine—famous rider!—Mr. Beaufort. Aha! that's where you knew him, I s'pose. Were you in his stables?"

"Hem—I knew Mr. Beaufort well."

"Did you? You could not know a better man. Well, I shall be very glad to engage you, though you seem by your hands to be a bit of a gentleman- eh? Never mind; don't want you to groom!—but superintend things. D'ye know accounts, eh?"

"Yes."

"Character?"

Philip repeated to Mr. Stubmore the story he had imparted to Mr. Clump. Somehow or other, men who live much with horses are always more lax in their notions than the rest of mankind. Mr. Stubmore did not seem to grow more distant at Philip's narration.

"Understand you perfectly, my man. Brought up with them 'ere fine creturs, how could you nail your nose to a desk? I'll take you without more palaver. What's your name?"

"Philips."

"Come to-morrow, and we'll settle about wages. Sleep here?"

"No. I have a brother whom I must lodge with, and for whose sake I wish to work. I should not like him to be at the stables—he is too young. But I can come early every day, and go home late."

"Well, just as you like, my man. Good day."

And thus, not from any mental accomplishment—not from the result of his intellectual education, but from the mere physical capacity and brute habit of sticking fast on his saddle, did Philip Morton, in this great, intelligent, gifted, civilised, enlightened community of Great Britain, find the means of earning his bread without stealing it.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Don Salluste (souriunt). Je paire Que vous ne pensiez pas a moi?"—Ruy Blas.

"Don Salluste. Cousin!

Don Cesar. De vos bienfaits je n'aurai nulle envie,

Tant que je trouverai vivant ma libre vie."—Ibid.

Don Sallust (smiling). I'll lay a wager you won't think of me?

Don Sallust. Cousin!

Don Caesar. I covet not your favours, so but I lead an independent life.

Phillip's situation was agreeable to his habits. His great courage and skill in horsemanship were not the only qualifications useful to Mr. Stubmore: his education answered a useful purpose in accounts,

and his manners and appearance were highly to the credit of the yard. The customers and loungers soon grew to like Gentleman Philips, as he was styled in the establishment. Mr. Stubmore conceived a real affection for him. So passed several weeks; and Philip, in this humble capacity, might have worked out his destinies in peace and comfort, but for a new cause of vexation that arose in Sidney. This boy was all in all to his brother. For him he had resisted the hearty and joyous invitations of Gawtrety (whose gay manner and high spirits had, it must be owned, captivated his fancy, despite the equivocal mystery of the man's avocations and condition); for him he now worked and toiled, cheerful and contented; and him he sought to save from all to which he subjected himself. He could not bear that that soft and delicate child should ever be exposed to the low and menial associations that now made up his own life—to the obscene slang of grooms and ostlers—to their coarse manners and rough contact. He kept him, therefore, apart and aloof in their little lodging, and hoped in time to lay by, so that Sidney might ultimately be restored, if not to his bright original sphere, at least to a higher grade than that to which Philip was himself condemned. But poor Sidney could not bear to be thus left alone—to lose sight of his brother from daybreak till bed-time—to have no one to amuse him; he fretted and pined away: all the little inconsiderate selfishness, uneradicated from his breast by his sufferings, broke out the more, the more he felt that he was the first object on earth to Philip. Philip, thinking he might be more cheerful at a day-school, tried the experiment of placing him at one where the boys were much of his own age. But Sidney, on the third day, came back with a black eye, and he would return no more. Philip several times thought of changing their lodging for one where there were young people. But Sidney had taken a fancy to the kind old widow who was their landlady, and cried at the thought of removal. Unfortunately, the old woman was deaf and rheumatic; and though she bore teasing *ad libitum*, she could not entertain the child long on a stretch. Too young to be reasonable, Sidney could not, or would not, comprehend why his brother was so long away from him; and once he said, peevishly,—

"If I had thought I was to be moped up so, I would not have left Mrs. Morton. Tom was a bad boy, but still it was somebody to play with. I wish I had not gone away with you!"

This speech cut Philip to the heart. What, then, he had taken from the child a respectable and safe shelter—the sure provision of a life—and the child now reproached him! When this was said to him, the tears gushed from his eyes. "God forgive me, Sidney," said he, and turned away.

But then Sidney, who had the most endearing ways with him, seeing his brother so vexed, ran up and kissed him, and scolded himself for being naughty. Still the words were spoken, and their meaning rankled deep. Philip himself, too, was morbid in his excessive tenderness for this boy. There is a certain age, before the love for the sex commences, when the feeling of friendship is almost a passion. You see it constantly in girls and boys at school. It is the first vague craving of the heart after the master food of human life—Love. It has its jealousies, and humours, and caprices, like love itself. Philip was painfully acute to Sidney's affection, was jealous of every particle of it. He dreaded lest his brother should ever be torn from him.

He would start from his sleep at night, and go to Sidney's bed to see that he was there. He left him in the morning with forebodings—he returned in the dark with fear. Meanwhile the character of this young man, so sweet and tender to Sidney, was gradually becoming more hard and stern to others. He had now climbed to the post of command in that rude establishment; and premature command in any sphere tends to make men unsocial and imperious.

One day Mr. Stubmore called him into his own countinghouse, where stood a gentleman, with one hand in his coatpocket, the other tapping his whip against his boot.

"Philips, show this gentleman the brown mare. She is a beauty in harness, is she not? This gentleman wants a match for his pheaton."

"She must step very hoigh," said the gentleman, turning round: and Philip recognised the beau in the stage-coach. The recognition was simultaneous. The beau nodded, then whistled, and winked.

"Come, my man, I am at your service," said he.

Philip, with many misgivings, followed him across the yard. The gentleman then beckoned him to approach.

"You, sir,—moind, I never peach—setting up here in the honest line? Dull work, honesty,—eh?"

"Sir, I really don't know you."

"Daun't you recollect old Greggs, the evening you came there with jolly Bill Gawtrety? Recollect that, eh?" Philip was mute.

"I was among the gentlemen in the back parlour who shook you by the hand. Bill's off to France, then. I am taulking the provinces. I want a good horse—the best in the yard, moind! Cutting such a swell here! My name is Captain de Burgh Smith—never moind yours, my fine faellow. Now, then, out with your rattlers, and keep your tongue in your mouth."

Philip mechanically ordered out the brown mare, which Captain Smith did not seem much to approve of; and, after glancing round the stables with great disdain of the collection, he sauntered out of the yard without saying more to Philip, though he stopped and spoke a few sentences to Mr. Stubmore. Philip hoped he had no design of purchasing, and that he was rid, for the present, of so awkward a customer. Mr. Stubmore approached Philip.

"Drive over the greys to Sir John," said he. "My lady wants a pair to job. A very pleasant man, that Captain Smith. I did not know you had been in a yard before—says you were the pet at Elmore's in London. Served him many a day. Pleasant, gentlemanlike man!"

"Y-e-s!" said Philip, hardly knowing what he said, and hurrying back into the stables to order out the greys. The place to which he was bound was some miles distant, and it was sunset when he returned. As he drove into the main street, two men observed him closely.

"That is he! I am almost sure it is," said one. "Oh! then it's all smooth sailing," replied the other.

"But, bless my eyes! you must be mistaken! See whom he's talking to now!"

At that moment Captain de Burgh Smith, mounted on the brown mare, stopped Philip.

"Well, you see, I've bought her,—hope she'll turn out well. What do you really think she's worth? Not to buy, but to sell?"

"Sixty guineas."

"Well, that's a good day's work; and I owe it to you. The old faellow would not have trusted me if you had not served me at Elmore's—ha! ha! If he gets scent and looks shy at you, my lad, come to me. I'm at the Star Hotel for the next few days. I want a tight faellow like you, and you shall have a fair percentage. I'm none of your stingy ones. I say, I hope this devil is quiet? She cocks up her ears dawnsably!"

"Look you, sir!" said Philip, very gravely, and rising up in his break; "I know very little of you, and that little is not much to your credit. I give you fair warning that I shall caution my employer against you."

"Will you, my fine faellow? then take care of yourself."

"Stay, and if you dare utter a word against me," said Philip, with that frown to which his swarthy complexion and flashing eyes gave an expression of fierce power beyond his years, "you will find that, as I am the last to care for a threat, so I am the first to resent an injury!"

Thus saying, he drove on. Captain Smith affected a cough, and put his brown mare into a canter. The two men followed Philip as he drove into the yard.

"What do you know against the person he spoke to?" said one of them.

"Merely that he is one of the cunningest swells on this side the Bay," returned the other. "It looks bad for your young friend."

The first speaker shook his head and made no reply.

On gaining the yard, Philip found that Mr. Stubmore had gone out, and was not expected home till the next day. He had some relations who were farmers, whom he often visited; to them he was probably gone.

Philip, therefore, deferring his intended caution against the gay captain till the morrow, and musing how the caution might be most discreetly given, walked homeward. He had just entered the lane that led to his lodgings, when he saw the two men I have spoken of on the other side of the street. The taller and better-dressed of the two left his comrade; and crossing over to Philip, bowed, and thus accosted him,—

"Fine evening, Mr. Philip Morton. I am rejoiced to see you at last. You remember me—Mr. Blackwell, Lincoln's Inn."

"What is your business?" said Philip, halting, and speaking short and fiercely.

"Now don't be in a passion, my dear sir,—now don't. I am here on behalf of my clients, Messrs. Beaufort, sen. and jun. I have had such work to find you! Dear, dear! but you are a sly one! Ha! ha! Well, you see we have settled that little affair of Plaskwith's for you (might have been ugly), and now I hope you will—"

"To your business, sir! What do you want with me?"

"Why, now, don't be so quick! 'Tis not the way to do business. Suppose you step to my hotel. A glass of wine now, Mr. Philip! We shall soon understand each other."

"Out of my path, or speak plainly!"

Thus put to it, the lawyer, casting a glance at his stout companion, who appeared to be contemplating the sunset on the other side of the way, came at once to the marrow of his subject.

"Well, then,—well, my say is soon said. Mr. Arthur Beaufort takes a most lively interest in you; it is he who has directed this inquiry. He bids me say that he shall be most happy—yes, most happy—to serve you in anything; and if you will but see him, he is in the town, I am sure you will be charmed with him—most amiable young man!"

"Look you, sir," said Philip, drawing himself up "neither from father, nor from son, nor from one of that family, on whose heads rest the mother's death and the orphans' curse, will I ever accept boon or benefit—with them, voluntarily, I will hold no communion; if they force themselves in my path, let them beware! I am earning my bread in the way I desire—I am independent—I want them not. Begone!"

With that, Philip pushed aside the lawyer and strode on rapidly. Mr. Blackwell, abashed and perplexed, returned to his companion.

Philip regained his home, and found Sidney stationed at the window alone, and with wistful eyes noting the flight of the grey moths as they darted to and fro, across the dull shrubs that, variegated with lines for washing, adorned the plot of ground which the landlady called a garden. The elder brother had returned at an earlier hour than usual, and Sidney did not at first perceive him enter. When he did he clapped his hands, and ran to him.

"This is so good in you, Philip. I have been so dull; you will come and play now?"

"With all my heart—where shall we play?" said Philip, with a cheerful smile.

"Oh, in the garden!—it's such a nice time for hide and seek."

"But is it not chill and damp for you?" said Philip.

"There now; you are always making excuses. I see you don't like it. I have no heart to play now."

Sidney seated himself and pouted.

"Poor Sidney! you must be dull without me. Yes, let us play; but put on this handkerchief;" and Philip took off his own cravat and tied it round his brother's neck, and kissed him.

Sidney, whose anger seldom lasted long, was reconciled; and they went into the garden to play. It was a little spot, screened by an old moss-grown paling, from the neighbouring garden on the one side and a lane on the other. They played with great glee till the night grew darker and the dews heavier.

"This must be the last time," cried Philip. "It is my turn to hide."

"Very well! Now, then."

Philip secreted himself behind a poplar; and as Sidney searched for him, and Philip stole round and round the tree, the latter, happening to look across the paling, saw the dim outline of a man's figure in the lane, who appeared watching them. A thrill shot across his breast. These Beauforts, associated in his thoughts with every evil omen and augury, had they set a spy upon his movements? He remained erect and gazing at the form, when Sidney discovered, and ran up to him, with his noisy laugh.

As the child clung to him, shouting with gladness, Philip, unheeding his playmate, called aloud and imperiously to the stranger—

"What are you gaping at? Why do you stand watching us?"

The man muttered something, moved on, and disappeared. "I hope there are no thieves here! I am so

much afraid of thieves," said Sidney, tremulously.

The fear grated on Philip's heart. Had he not himself, perhaps, been judged and treated as a thief? He said nothing, but drew his brother within; and there, in their little room, by the one poor candle, it was touching and beautiful to see these boys—the tender patience of the elder lending itself to every whim of the younger—now building houses with cards—now telling stories of fairy and knight-errant—the sprightliest he could remember or invent. At length, as all was over, and Sidney was undressing for the night, Philip, standing apart, said to him, in a mournful voice:—

"Are you sad now, Sidney?"

"No! not when you are with me—but that is so seldom."

"Do you read none of the story-books I bought for you?"

"Sometimes! but one can't read all day."

"Ah! Sidney, if ever we should part, perhaps you will love me no longer!"

"Don't say so," said Sidney. "But we sha'n't part, Philip?"

Philip sighed, and turned away as his brother leaped into bed. Something whispered to him that danger was near; and as it was, could Sidney grow up, neglected and uneducated; was it thus that he was to fulfil his trust?

CHAPTER IX.

"But oh, what storm was in that mind!"—CRABBE. *Ruth*

While Philip mused, and his brother fell into the happy sleep of childhood, in a room in the principal hotel of the town sat three persons, Arthur Beaufort, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Blackwell.

"And so," said the first, "he rejected every overture from the Beauforts?"

"With a scorn I cannot convey to you!" replied the lawyer. "But the fact is, that he is evidently a lad of low habits; to think of his being a sort of helper to a horse dealer! I suppose, sir, he was always in the stables in his father's time. Bad company depraves the taste very soon; but that is not the worst. Sharp declares that the man he was talking with, as I told you, is a common swindler. Depend on it, Mr. Arthur, he is incorrigible; all we can do is to save the brother."

"It is too dreadful to contemplate!" said Arthur, who, still ill and languid, reclined on a sofa.

"It is, indeed," said Mr. Spencer; "I am sure I should not know what to do with such a character; but the other poor child, it would be a mercy to get hold of him."

"Where is Mr. Sharp?" asked Arthur.

"Why," said the lawyer, "he has followed Philip at a distance to find out his lodgings, and learn if his brother is with him. Oh! here he is!" and Blackwell's companion in the earlier part of the evening entered.

"I have found him out, sir," said Mr. Sharp, wiping his forehead. "What a fierce 'un he is! I thought he would have had a stone at my head; but we officers are used to it; we do our duty, and Providence makes our heads unkimmon hard!"

"Is the child with him?" asked Mr. Spencer.

"Yes, sir."

"A little, quiet, subdued boy?" asked the melancholy inhabitant of the Lakes.

"Quiet! Lord love you! never heard a noisier little urchin! There they were, romping and romping in the garden, like a couple of gaol birds."

"You see," groaned Mr. Spencer, "he will make that poor child as bad as himself."

"What shall us do, Mr. Blackwell?" asked Sharp, who longed for his brandy and water.

"Why, I was thinking you might go to the horse-dealer the first thing in the morning; find out whether Philip is really thick with the swindler; and, perhaps, Mr. Stubmore may have some influence with him, if, without saying who he is—"

"Yes," interrupted Arthur, "do not expose his name."

"You could still hint that he ought to be induced to listen to his friends and go with them. Mr. Stubmore may be a respectable man, and—"

"I understand," said Sharp; "I have no doubt as how I can settle it. We learns to know human natur in our profession;—'cause why? we gets at its blind side. Good night, gentlemen!"

"You seem very pale, Mr. Arthur; you had better go to bed; you promised your father, you know."

"Yes, I am not well; I will go to bed;" and Arthur rose, lighted his candle, and sought his room.

"I will see Philip to-morrow," he said to himself; "he will listen to me."

The conduct of Arthur Beaufort in executing the charge he had undertaken had brought into full light all the most amiable and generous part of his character. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he had expressed so much anxiety as to the fate of the orphans, that to quiet him his father was forced to send for Mr. Blackwell. The lawyer had ascertained, through Dr. —, the name of Philip's employer at R ——. At Arthur's request he went down to Mr. Plaskwith; and arriving there the day after the return of the bookseller, learned those particulars with which Mr. Plaskwith's letter to Roger Morton has already made the reader acquainted. The lawyer then sent for Mr. Sharp, the officer before employed, and commissioned him to track the young man's whereabouts. That shrewd functionary soon reported that a youth every way answering to Philip's description had been introduced the night of the escape by a man celebrated, not indeed for robberies, or larcenies, or crimes of the coarser kind, but for address in all that more large and complex character which comes under the denomination of living upon one's wits, to a polite rendezvous frequented by persons of a similar profession. Since then, however, all clue of Philip was lost. But though Mr. Blackwell, in the way of his profession, was thus publicly benevolent towards the fugitive, he did not the less privately represent to his patrons, senior and junior, the very equivocal character that Philip must be allowed to bear. Like most lawyers, hard upon all who wander from the formal tracks, he unaffectedly regarded Philip's flight and absence as proofs of a reprobate disposition; and this conduct was greatly aggravated in his eyes by Mr. Sharp's report, by which it appeared that after his escape Philip had so suddenly, and, as it were, so naturally, taken to such equivocal companionship. Mr. Robert Beaufort, already prejudiced against Philip, viewed matters in the same light as the lawyer; and the story of his supposed predilections reached Arthur's ears in so distorted a shape, that even he was staggered and revolted:—still Philip was so young—Arthur's oath to the orphans' mother so recent—and if thus early inclined to wrong courses, should not every effort be made to lure him back to the straight path? With these views and reasonings, as soon as he was able, Arthur himself visited Mrs. Lacy, and the note from Philip, which the good lady put into his hands, affected him deeply, and confirmed all his previous resolutions. Mrs. Lacy was very anxious to get at his name; but Arthur, having heard that Philip had refused all aid from his father and Mr. Blackwell, thought that the young man's pride might work equally against himself, and therefore evaded the landlady's curiosity. He wrote the next day the letter we have seen, to Mr. Roger Morton, whose address Catherine had given to him; and by return of post came a letter from the linendraper narrating the flight of Sidney, as it was supposed with his brother. This news so excited Arthur that he insisted on going down to N— at once, and joining in the search. His father, alarmed for his health, positively refused; and the consequence was an increase of fever, a consultation with the doctors, and a declaration that Mr. Arthur was in that state that it would be dangerous not to let him have his own way, Mr. Beaufort was forced to yield, and with Blackwell and Mr. Sharp accompanied his son to N—. The inquiries, hitherto fruitless, then assumed a more regular and business-like character. By little and little they came, through the aid of Mr. Sharp, upon the right clue, up to a certain point. But here there was a double scent: two youths answering the description, had been seen at a small village; then there came those who asserted that they had seen the same youths at a seaport in one direction; others, who deposed to their having taken the road to an inland town in the other. This had induced Arthur and his father to part company. Mr. Beaufort, accompanied by Roger Morton, went to the seaport; and Arthur, with Mr. Spencer and Mr. Sharp, more fortunate, tracked the fugitives to their retreat. As for Mr. Beaufort, senior, now that his mind was more at ease about his son, he was thoroughly sick of the whole thing; greatly bored by the society of Mr. Morton; very much ashamed that he, so respectable and great a man, should be employed on such an errand; more afraid of, than pleased with, any chance of discovering the fierce Philip; and secretly resolved upon slinking back to London at the first

reasonable excuse.

The next morning Mr. Sharp entered betimes Mr. Stubmore's counting-house. In the yard he caught a glimpse of Philip, and managed to keep himself unseen by that young gentleman.

"Mr. Stubmore, I think?"

"At your service, sir."

Mr. Sharp shut the glass door mysteriously, and lifting up the corner of a green curtain that covered the panes, beckoned to the startled Stubmore to approach.

"You see that 'ere young man in the velveteen jacket? you employs him?"

"I do, sir; he's my right hand."

"Well, now, don't be frightened, but his friends are arter him. He has got into bad ways, and we want you to give him a little good advice."

"Pooh! I know he has run away, like a fine-spirited lad as he is; and as long as he likes to stay with me, they as comes after him may get a ducking in the horse-trough!"

"Be you a father? a father of a family, Mr. Stubmore?" said Sharp, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets, swelling out his stomach, and pursing up his lips with great solemnity.

"Nonsense! no gammon with me! Take your chaff to the goslings. I tells you I can't do without that 'ere lad. Every man to himself."

"Oho!" thought Sharp, "I must change the tack."

"Mr. Stubmore," said he, taking a stool, "you speaks like a sensible man. No one can reasonably go for to ask a gentleman to go for to inconvenience hisself. But what do you know of that 'ere youngster. Had you a carakter with him?"

"What's that to you?"

"Why, it's more to yourself, Mr. Stubmore; he is but a lad, and if he goes back to his friends they may take care of him, but he got into a bad set afore he come here. Do you know a good-looking chap with whiskers, who talks of his pheaton, and was riding last night on a brown mare?"

"Y—e—s!" said Mr. Stubmore, growing rather pale, "and I knows the mare, too. Why, sir, I sold him that mare!"

"Did he pay you for her?"

"Why, to be sure, he gave me a cheque on Coutts."

"And you took it! My eyes! what a flat!" Here Mr. Sharp closed the orbs he had invoked, and whistled with that self-hugging delight which men invariably feel when another man is taken in.

Mr. Stubmore became evidently nervous.

"Why, what now;—you don't think I'm done? I did not let him have the mare till I went to the hotel,—found he was cutting a great dash there, a groom, a pheaton, and a fine horse, and as extravagant as the devil!"

"O Lord!—O Lord! what a world this is! What does he call his-self?"

"Why, here's the cheque—George Frederick de—de Burgh Smith."

"Put it in your pipe, my man,—put it in your pipe—not worth a d—!"

"And who the deuce are you, sir?" bawled out Mr. Stubmore, in an equal rage both with himself and his guest.

"I, sir," said the visitor, rising with great dignity,— "I, sir, am of the great Bow Street Office, and my name is John Sharp!"

Mr. Stubmore nearly fell off his stool, his eyes rolled in his head, and his teeth chattered. Mr. Sharp perceived the advantage he had gained, and continued,—

"Yes, sir; and I could have much to say against that chap, who is nothing more or less than Dashing

Jerry, as has ruined more girls and more tradesmen than any lord in the land. And so I called to give you a bit of caution; for, says I to myself, 'Mr. Stubmore is a respectable man.'"

"I hope I am, sir," said the crestfallen horse-dealer; "that was always my character."

"And the father of a family?"

"Three boys and a babe at the buzzom," said Mr. Stubmore pathetically.

"And he sha'n't be taken in if I can help it! That 'ere young man as I am arter, you see, knows Captain Smith—ha! ha!—smell a rat now—eh?"

"Captain Smith said he knew him—the wiper—and that's what made me so green."

"Well, we must not be hard on the youngster: 'cause why? he has friends as is gemmen. But you tell him to go back to his poor dear relations, and all shall be forgiven; and say as how you won't keep him; and if he don't go back, he'll have to get his livelihood without a carakter; and use your influence with him like a man and a Christian, and what's more, like the father of a family—Mr. Stub more—with three boys and a babe at the buzzom. You won't keep him now?"

"Keep him! I have had a precious escape. I'd better go and see after the mare."

"I doubt if you'll find her: the Captain caught a sight of me this morning. Why, he lodges at our hotel. He's off by this time!"

"And why the devil did you let him go?"

"'Cause I had no writ agin him!" said the Bow Street officer; and he walked straight out of the counting-office, satisfied that he had "done the job."

To snatch his hat—to run to the hotel—to find that Captain Smith had indeed gone off in his phaeton, bag and baggage, the same as he came, except that he had now two horses to the phaeton instead of one—having left with the landlord the amount of his bill in another cheque upon Coutts—was the work of five minutes with Mr. Stubmore. He returned home, panting and purple with indignation and wounded feeling.

"To think that chap, whom I took into my yard like a son, should have connived at this! 'Tain't the money'tis the willany that 'flicts me!" muttered Mr. Stubmore, as he re-entered the mews.

Here he came plump upon Philip, who said—

"Sir, I wished to see you, to say that you had better take care of Captain Smith."

"Oh, you did, did you, now he's gone? 'sconded off to America, I dare say, by this time. Now look ye, young man; your friends are after you, I won't say anything agin you; but you go back to them—I wash my hands of you. Quite too much for me. There's your week, and never let me catch you in my yard agin, that's all!"

Philip dropped the money which Stubmore had put into his hand. "My friends!—friends have been with you, have they? I thought so—I thank them. And so you part with me? Well, you have been very kind, very kind; let us part kindly;" and he held out his hand.

Mr. Stubmore was softened—he touched the hand held out to him, and looked doubtful a moment; but Captain de Burgh Smith's cheque for eighty guineas suddenly rose before his eyes. He turned on his heel abruptly, and said, over his shoulder:

"Don't go after Captain Smith (he'll come to the gallows); mend your ways, and be ruled by your poor dear relatives, whose hearts you are breaking."

"Captain Smith! Did my relations tell you?"

"Yes—yes—they told me all—that is, they sent to tell me; so you see I'm d—d soft not to lay hold of you. But, perhaps, if they be gemmen, they'll act as sich, and cash me this here cheque!"

But the last words were said to air. Philip had rushed from the yard.

With a heaving breast, and every nerve in his body quivering with wrath, the proud, unhappy boy strode through the gay streets. They had betrayed him then, these accursed Beauforts! they circled his steps with schemes to drive him like a deer into the snare of their loathsome charity! The roof was to

be taken from his head—the bread from his lips—so that he might fawn at their knees for bounty. "But they shall not break my spirit, nor steal away my curse. No, my dead mother, never!"

As he thus muttered, he passed through a patch of waste land that led to the row of houses in which his lodging was placed. And here a voice called to him, and a hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned, and Arthur Beaufort, who had followed him from the street, stood behind him. Philip did not, at the first glance, recognise his cousin; illness had so altered him, and his dress was so different from that in which he had first and last beheld him. The contrast between the two young men was remarkable. Philip was clad in a rough garb suited to his late calling— a jacket of black velveteen, ill-fitting and ill-fashioned, loose fustian trousers, coarse shoes, his hat set deep over his pent eyebrows, his raven hair long and neglected. He was just at that age when one with strong features and robust frame is at the worst in point of appearance —the sinewy proportions not yet sufficiently fleshed, and seeming inharmonious and undeveloped; precisely in proportion, perhaps, to the symmetry towards which they insensibly mature: the contour of the face sharpened from the roundness of boyhood, and losing its bloom without yet acquiring that relief and shadow which make the expression and dignity of the masculine countenance. Thus accoutred, thus gaunt, and uncouth, stood Morton. Arthur Beaufort, always refined in his appearance, seemed yet more so from the almost feminine delicacy which ill-health threw over his pale complexion and graceful figure; that sort of unconscious elegance which belongs to the dress of the rich when they are young—seen most in minutiae—not observable, perhaps, by themselves—marked forcibly and painfully the distinction of rank between the two. That distinction Beaufort did not feel; but at a glance it was visible to Philip.

The past rushed back on him. The sunny lawn—the gun offered and rejected—the pride of old, much less haughty than the pride of to-day.

"Philip," said Beaufort, feebly, "they tell me you will not accept any kindness from me or mine. Ah! if you knew how we have sought you!"

"Knew!" cried Philip, savagely, for that unlucky sentence recalled to him his late interview with his employer, and his present destitution. "Knew! And why have you dared to hunt me out, and halloo me down?—why must this insolent tyranny, that assumes the right over these limbs and this free will, betray and expose me and my wretchedness wherever I turn?"

"Your poor mother—" began Beaufort.

"Name her not with your lips—name her not!" cried Philip, growing livid with his emotions. "Talk not of the mercy—the forethought—a Beaufort could show to leer and her offspring! I accept it not—I believe it not. Oh, yes! you follow me now with your false kindness; and why? Because your father—your vain, hollow, heartless father—"

"Hold!" said Beaufort, in a tone of such reproach, that it startled the wild heart on which it fell; "it is my father you speak of. Let the son respect the son."

"No—no—no! I will respect none of your race. I tell you your father fears me. I tell you that my last words to him ring in his ears! My wrongs! Arthur Beaufort, when you are absent I seek to forget them; in your abhorred presence they revive—they—"

He stopped, almost choked with his passion; but continued instantly, with equal intensity of fervour:

Were you tree the gibbet, and to touch your hand could alone save me from it, I would scorn your aid. Aid! The very thought fires my blood and nerves my hand. Aid! Will a Beaufort give me back my birthright— restore my dead mother's fair name? Minion!—sleek, dainty, luxurious minion!—out of my path! You have my fortune, my station, my rights; I have but poverty, and hate, and disdain. I swear, again and again, that you shall not purchase these from me."

"But, Philip—Philip," cried Beaufort, catching his arm; "hear one—hear one who stood by your—"

The sentence that would have saved the outcast from the demons that were darkening and swooping round his soul, died upon the young Protector's lips. Blinded, maddened, excited, and exasperated, almost out of humanity itself, Philip fiercely—brutally—swung aside the enfeebled form that sought to cling to him, and Beaufort fell at his feet. Morton stopped—glared at him with clenched hands and a smiling lip, sprung over his prostrate form, and bounded to his home.

He slackened his pace as he neared the house, and looked behind; but Beaufort had not followed him. He entered the house, and found Sidney in the room, with a countenance so much more gay than that he had lately worn, that, absorbed as he was in thought and passion, it yet did not fail to strike him.

"What has pleased you, Sidney?" The child smiled.

"Ah! it is a secret—I was not to tell you. But I'm sure you are not the naughty boy lie says you are."

"He!—who?"

"Don't look so angry, Philip: you frighten me!"

"And you torture me. Who could malign one brother to the other?"

"Oh! it was all meant very kindly—there's been such a nice, dear, good gentleman here, and he cried when he saw me, and said he knew dear mamma. Well, and he has promised to take me home with him and give me a pretty pony—as pretty—as pretty—oh, as pretty as it can be got! And he is to call again and tell me more: I think he is a fairy, Philip."

"Did he say that he was to take me, too, Sidney?" said Morton, seating himself, and looking very pale. At that question Sidney hung his head.

"No, brother—he says you won't go, and that you are a bad boy—and that you associate with wicked people—and that you want to keep me shut up here and not let any one be good to me. But I told him I did not believe that—yes, indeed, I told him so."

And Sidney endeavoured caressingly to withdraw the hands that his brother placed before his face.

Morton started up, and walked hastily to and fro the room. "This," thought he, "is another emissary of the Beauforts'—perhaps the lawyer: they will take him from me—the last thing left to love and hope for. I will foil them."

"Sidney," he said aloud, "we must go hence today, this very hour—nay, instantly."

"What! away from this nice, good gentleman?"

"Curse him! yes, away from him. Do not cry—it is of no use—you must go."

This was said more harshly than Philip had ever yet spoken to Sidney; and when he had said it, he left the room to settle with the landlady, and to pack up their scanty effects. In another hour, the brothers had turned their backs on the town.

CHAPTER X.

"I'll carry thee
In sorrow's arms to welcome Misery."

HEYWOOD's Duchess of Suffolk.

"Who's here besides foul weather?"
SHAKSPEARE Lear.

The sun was as bright and the sky as calm during the journey of the orphans as in the last. They avoided, as before, the main roads, and their way lay through landscapes that might have charmed a Gainsborough's eye. Autumn scattered its last hues of gold over the various foliage, and the poppy glowed from the hedges, and the wild convolvuli, here and there, still gleamed on the wayside with a parting smile.

At times, over the sloping stubbles, broke the sound of the sportsman's gun; and ever and anon, by stream and sedge, they startled the shy wild fowl, just come from the far lands, nor yet settled in the new haunts too soon to be invaded.

But there was no longer in the travellers the same hearts that had made light of hardship and fatigue. Sidney was no longer flying from a harsh master, and his step was not elastic with the energy of fear that looked behind, and of hope that smiled before. He was going a toilsome, weary journey, he knew not why nor whither; just, too, when he had made a friend, whose soothing words haunted his childish fancy. He was displeased with Philip, and in sullen and silent thoughtfulness slowly plodded behind him; and Morton himself was gloomy, and knew not where in the world to seek a future.

They arrived at dusk at a small inn, not so far distant from the town they had left as Morton could

have wished; but the days were shorter than in their first flight.

They were shown into a small sanded parlour, which Sidney eyed with great disgust; nor did he seem more pleased with the hacked and jagged leg of cold mutton, which was all that the hostess set before them for supper. Philip in vain endeavoured to cheer him up, and ate to set him the example. He felt relieved when, under the auspices of a good-looking, good-natured chambermaid, Sidney retired to rest, and he was left in the parlour to his own meditations. Hitherto it had been a happy thing for Morton that he had had some one dependent on him; that feeling had given him perseverance, patience, fortitude, and hope. But now, dispirited and sad, he felt rather the horror of being responsible for a human life, without seeing the means to discharge the trust. It was clear, even to his experience, that he was not likely to find another employer as facile as Mr. Stubmore; and wherever he went, he felt as if his Destiny stalked at his back. He took out his little fortune and spread it on the table, counting it over and over; it had remained pretty stationary since his service with Mr. Stubmore, for Sidney had swallowed up the wages of his hire. While thus employed, the door opened, and the chambermaid, showing in a gentleman, said, "We have no other room, sir."

"Very well, then,—I'm not particular; a tumbler of brandy and water, stiffish, cold without, the newspaper—and a cigar. You'll excuse smoking, sir?"

Philip looked up from his hoard, and Captain de Burgh Smith stood before him.

"Ah!" said the latter, "well met!" And closing the door, he took off his great-coat, seated himself near Philip, and bent both his eyes with considerable wistfulness on the neat rows into which Philip's bank-notes, sovereigns, and shillings were arrayed.

"Pretty little sum for pocket money; cash in hand goes a great way, properly invested. You must have been very lucky. Well, so I suppose you are surprised to see me here without my pheasant?"

"I wish I had never seen you at all," replied Philip, uncourteously, and restoring his money to his pocket; "your fraud upon Mr. Stubmore, and your assurance that you knew me, have sent me adrift upon the world."

"What's one man's meat is another man's poison," said the captain, philosophically; "no use fretting, care killed a cat. I am as badly off as you; for, hang me, if there was not a Bow Street runner in the town. I caught his eye fixed on me like a gimlet: so I bolted—went to N—, left my pheasant and groom there for the present, and have doubled back, to baffle pursuit, and cut across the country. You recollect that voice girl we saw in the coach; 'gad, I served her spouse that is to be a pretty trick! Borrowed his money under pretence of investing it in the New Grand Anti-Dry-Rot Company; cool hundred—it's only just gone, sir."

Here the chambermaid entered with the brandy and water, the newspaper, and cigar,—the captain lighted the last, took a deep sup from the beverage, and said, gaily:

"Well, now, let us join fortunes; we are both, as you say, 'adrift.' Best way to stand the breeze is to unite the caubles."

Philip shook his head, and, displeased with his companion, sought his pillow. He took care to put his money under his head, and to lock his door.

The brothers started at daybreak; Sidney was even more discontented than on the previous day. The weather was hot and oppressive; they rested for some hours at noon, and in the cool of the evening renewed their way. Philip had made up his mind to steer for a town in the thick of a hunting district, where he hoped his equestrian capacities might again befriend him; and their path now lay through a chain of vast dreary commons, which gave them at least the advantage to skirt the road-side unobserved. But, somehow or other, either Philip had been misinformed as to an inn where he had proposed to pass the night, or he had missed it; for the clouds darkened, and the sun went down, and no vestige of human habitation was discernible.

Sidney, footsore and querulous, began to weep, and declare that he could stir no further; and while Philip, whose iron frame defied fatigue, compassionately paused to rest his brother, a low roll of thunder broke upon the gloomy air. "There will be a storm," said he, anxiously. "Come on—pray, Sidney, come on."

"It is so cruel in you, brother Philip," replied Sidney, sobbing. "I wish I had never—never gone with you."

A flash of lightning, that illuminated the whole heavens, lingered round Sidney's pale face as he spoke; and Philip threw himself instinctively on the child, as if to protect him even from the wrath of

the unshelterable flame. Sidney, hushed and terrified, clung to his brother's breast; after a pause, he silently consented to resume their journey. But now the storm came nearer and nearer to the wanderers. The darkness grew rapidly more intense, save when the lightning lit up heaven and earth alike with intolerable lustre. And when at length the rain began to fall in merciless and drenching torrents, even Philip's brave heart failed him. How could he ask Sidney to proceed, when they could scarcely see an inch before them?—all that could now be done was to gain the high-road, and hope for some passing conveyance. With fits and starts, and by the glare of the lightning, they obtained their object; and stood at last on the great broad thoroughfare, along which, since the day when the Roman carved it from the waste, Misery hath plodded, and Luxury rolled, their common way.

Philip had stripped handkerchief, coat, vest, all to shelter Sidney; and he felt a kind of strange pleasure through the dark, even to hear Sidney's voice wail and moan. But that voice grew more languid and faint—it ceased—Sidney's weight hung heavy—heavier on the fostering arm.

"For Heaven's sake, speak!—speak, Sidney!—only one word—I will carry you in my arms!"

"I think I am dying," replied Sidney, in a low murmur; "I am so tired and worn out I can go no further—I must lie here." And he sank at once upon the reeking grass beside the road. At this time the rain gradually relaxed, the clouds broke away—a grey light succeeded to the darkness—the lightning was more distant; and the thunder rolled onward in its awful path. Kneeling on the ground, Philip supported his brother in his arms, and cast his pleading eyes upward to the softening terrors of the sky. A star, a solitary star—broke out for one moment, as if to smile comfort upon him, and then vanished. But lo! in the distance there suddenly gleamed a red, steady light, like that in some solitary window; it was no will-o'-the-wisp, it was too stationary—human shelter was then nearer than he had thought for. He pointed to the light, and whispered, "Rouse yourself, one struggle more—it cannot be far off."

"It is impossible—I cannot stir," answered Sidney: and a sudden flash of lightning showed his countenance, ghastly, as if with the damps of Death. What could the brother do?—stay there, and see the boy perish before his eyes? leave him on the road and fly to the friendly light? The last plan was the sole one left, yet he shrank from it in greater terror than the first. Was that a step that he heard across the road? He held his breath to listen—a form became dimly visible—it approached.

Philip shouted aloud.

"What now?" answered the voice, and it seemed familiar to Morton's ear. He sprang forward; and putting his face close to the wayfarer, thought to recognise the features of Captain de Burgh Smith. The Captain, whose eyes were yet more accustomed to the dark, made the first overture.

"Why, my lad, is it you then? 'Gad, you frightened me!"

Odious as this man had hitherto been to Philip, he was as welcome to him as daylight now; he grasped his hand,—“My brother—a child—is here, dying, I fear, with cold and fatigue; he cannot stir. Will you stay with him—support him—but for a few moments, while I make to yon light? See, I have money—plenty of money!"

"My good lad, it is very ugly work staying here at this hour: still— where's the choild?"

"Here, here! make haste, raise him! that's right! God bless you! I shall be back ere you think me gone."

He sprang from the road, and plunged through the heath, the furze, the rank glistening pools, straight towards the light—as the swimmer towards the shore.

The captain, though a rogue, was human; and when life—an innocent life—is at stake, even a rogue's heart rises up from its weedy bed. He muttered a few oaths, it is true, but he held the child in his arms; and, taking out a little tin case, poured some brandy down Sidney's throat and then, by way of company, down his own. The cordial revived the boy; he opened his eyes, and said, "I think I can go on now, Philip."

.....

We must return to Arthur Beaufort. He was naturally, though gentle, a person of high spirit and not without pride. He rose from the ground with bitter, resentful feelings and a blushing cheek, and went his way to the hotel. Here he found Mr. Spencer just returned from his visit to Sidney. Enchanted with the soft and endearing manners of his lost Catherine's son, and deeply affected with the resemblance the child bore to the mother as he had seen her last at the gay and rosy age of fair sixteen, his description of the younger brother drew Beaufort's indignant thoughts from the elder. He cordially concurred with Mr. Spencer in the wish to save one so gentle from the domination of one so fierce; and

this, after all, was the child Catherine had most strongly commended to him. She had said little of the elder; perhaps she had been aware of his ungracious and untractable nature, and, as it seemed to Arthur Beaufort, his predilections for a coarse and low career.

"Yes," said he, "this boy, then, shall console me for the perverse brutality of the other. He shall indeed drink of my cup, and eat of my bread, and be to me as a brother."

"What!" said Mr. Spencer, changing countenance, "you do not intend to take Sidney to live with you. I meant him for my son—my adopted son."

"No; generous as you are," said Arthur, pressing his hand, "this charge devolves on me—it is my right. I am the orphan's relation—his mother consigned him to me. But he shall be taught to love you not the less."

Mr. Spencer was silent. He could not bear the thought of losing Sidney as an inmate of his cheerless home, a tender relic of his early love. From that moment he began to contemplate the possibility of securing Sidney to himself, unknown to Beaufort.

The plans both of Arthur and Spencer were interrupted by the sudden retreat of the brothers. They determined to depart different ways in search of them. Spencer, as the more helpless of the two, obtained the aid of Mr. Sharp; Beaufort departed with the lawyer.

Two travellers, in a hired barouche, were slowly dragged by a pair of jaded posters along the commons I have just described.

"I think," said one, "that the storm is very much abated; heigho! what an unpleasant night!"

"Unkimmon ugly, sir," answered the other; "and an awful long stage, eighteen miles. These here remote places are quite behind the age, sir—quite. However, I think we shall kitch them now."

"I am very much afraid of that eldest boy, Sharp. He seems a dreadful vagabond."

"You see, sir, quite hand in glove with Dashing Jerry; met in the same inn last night—preconcerted, you may be quite shure. It would be the best day's job I have done this many a day to save that 'ere little fellow from being corrupted. You sees he is just of a size to be useful to these bad karakters. If they took to burglary, he would be a treasure to them—slip him through a pane of glass like a ferret, sir."

"Don't talk of it, Sharp," said Mr. Spencer, with a groan; "and recollect, if we get hold of him, that you are not to say a word to Mr. Beaufort."

"I understand, sir; and I always goes with the gemman who behaves most like a gemman."

Here a loud halloo was heard close by the horses' heads. "Good Heavens, if that is a footpad!" said Mr. Spencer, shaking violently.

"Lord, sir, I have my barkers with me. Who's there?" The barouche stopped—a man came to the window. "Excuse me, sir," said the stranger; "but there is a poor boy here so tired and ill that I fear he will never reach the next town, unless you will koinly give him a lift."

"A poor boy!" said Mr. Spencer, poking his head over the head of Mr. Sharp. "Where?"

"If you would just drop him at the King's Awrms it would be a chaurity," said the man.

Sharp pinched Mr. Spencer in his shoulder. "That's Dashing Jerry; I'll get out." So saying, he opened the door, jumped into the road, and presently reappeared with the lost and welcome Sidney in his arms. "Ben't this the boy?" he whispered to Mr. Spencer; and, taking the lamp from the carriage, he raised it to the child's face.

"It is! it is! God be thanked!" exclaimed the worthy man.

"Will you leave him at the King's Awrms?—we shall be there in an hour or two," cried the Captain.

"We! Who's we?" said Sharp, gruffly. "Why, myself and the choild's brother."

"Oh!" said Sharp, raising the lantern to his own face; "you knows me, I think, Master Jerry? Let me kitch you again, that's all. And give my compliments to your 'sociate, and say, if he prosecutes this here hurchin any more, we'll settle his bizness for him; and so take a hint and make yourself scarce, old

boy!"

With that Mr. Sharp jumped into the barouche, and bade the postboy drive on as fast as he could.

Ten minutes after this abduction, Philip, followed by two labourers, with a barrow, a lantern, and two blankets, returned from the hospitable farm to which the light had conducted him. The spot where he had left Sidney, and which he knew by a neighbouring milestone, was vacant; he shouted an alarm, and the Captain answered from the distance of some threescore yards. Philip came to him. "Where is my brother?"

"Gone away in a barouche and pair. Devil take me if I understand it."
And the Captain proceeded to give a confused account of what had passed.

"My brother! my brother! they have torn thee from me, then;" cried Philip, and he fell to the earth insensible.

CHAPTER XI.

"Vous me rendrez mon frere!"

CASIMER DELAVIGNE: *Les Enfants d'Edouard.*

[You shall restore me my brother!]

One evening, a week after this event, a wild, tattered, haggard youth knocked at the door of Mr. Robert Beaufort. The porter slowly presented himself.

"Is your master at home? I must see him instantly." "That's more than you can, my man; my master does not see the like of you at this time of night," replied the porter, eying the ragged apparition before him with great disdain.

"See me he must and shall," replied the young man; and as the porter blocked up the entrance, he grasped his collar with a hand of iron, swung him, huge as he was, aside, and strode into the spacious hall.

"Stop! stop!" cried the porter, recovering himself. "James! John! here's ago!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort had been back in town several days. Mrs. Beaufort, who was waiting his return from his club, was in the dining-room. Hearing a noise in the hall, she opened the door, and saw the strange grim figure I have described, advancing towards her. "Who are you?" said she; "and what do you want?"

"I am Philip Morton. Who are you?"

"My husband," said Mrs. Beaufort, shrinking into the parlour, while Morton followed her and closed the door, "my husband, Mr. Beaufort, is not at home."

"You are Mrs. Beaufort, then! Well, you can understand me. I want my brother. He has been basely reft from me. Tell me where he is, and I will forgive all. Restore him to me, and I will bless you and yours." And Philip fell on his knees and grasped the train of her gown. "I know nothing of your brother, Mr. Morton," cried Mrs. Beaufort, surprised and alarmed. "Arthur, whom we expect every day, writes us word that all search for him has been in vain."

"Ha! you admit the search?" cried Morton, rising and clenching his hands. "And who else but you or yours would have parted brother and brother? Answer me where he is. No subterfuge, madam: I am desperate!"

Mrs. Beaufort, though a woman of that worldly coldness and indifference which, on ordinary occasions, supply the place of courage, was extremely terrified by the tone and mien of her rude guest. She laid her hand on the bell; but Morton seized her arm, and, holding it sternly, said, while his dark eyes shot fire through the glimmering room, "I will not stir hence till you have told me. Will you reject my gratitude, my blessing? Beware! Again, where have you hid my brother?"

At that instant the door opened, and Mr. Robert Beaufort entered. The lady, with a shriek of joy, wrenched herself from Philip's grasp, and flew to her husband.

"Save me from this ruffian!" she said, with an hysterical sob.

Mr. Beaufort, who had heard from Blackwell strange accounts of Philip's obdurate perverseness, vile associates, and unredeemable character, was roused from his usual timidity by the appeal of his wife.

"Insolent reprobate!" he said, advancing to Philip; "after all the absurd goodness of my son and myself; after rejecting all our offers, and persisting in your miserable and vicious conduct, how dare you presume to force yourself into this house? Begone, or I will send for the constables to remove YOU!"

"Man, man," cried Philip, restraining the fury that shook him from head to foot, "I care not for your threats—I scarcely hear your abuse—your son, or yourself, has stolen away my brother: tell me only where he is; let me see him once more. Do not drive me hence, without one word of justice, of pity. I implore you—on my knees I implore you—yes, I,—I implore you, Robert Beaufort, to have mercy on your brother's son. Where is Sidney?" Like all mean and cowardly men, Robert Beaufort was rather encouraged than softened by Philip's abrupt humility.

"I know nothing of your brother; and if this is not all some villainous trick—which it may be—I am heartily rejoiced that he, poor child! is rescued from the contamination of such a companion," answered Beaufort.

"I am at your feet still; again, for the last time, clinging to you a suppliant: I pray you to tell me the truth."

Mr. Beaufort, more and more exasperated by Morton's forbearance, raised his hand as if to strike; when, at that moment, one hitherto unobserved— one who, terrified by the scene she had witnessed but could not comprehend, had slunk into a dark corner of the room,—now came from her retreat. And a child's soft voice was heard, saying:

"Do not strike him, papa!—let him have his brother!" Mr. Beaufort's arm fell to his side: kneeling before him, and by the outcast's side, was his own young daughter; she had crept into the room unobserved, when her father entered. Through the dim shadows, relieved only by the red and fitful gleam of the fire, he saw her fair meek face looking up wistfully at his own, with tears of excitement, and perhaps of pity—for children have a quick insight into the reality of grief in those not far removed from their own years—glistening in her soft eyes. Philip looked round bewildered, and he saw that face which seemed to him, at such a time, like the face of an angel.

"Hear her!" he murmured: "Oh, hear her! For her sake, do not sever one orphan from the other!"

"Take away that child, Mrs. Beaufort," cried Robert, angrily. "Will you let her disgrace herself thus? And you, sir, begone from this roof; and when you can approach me with due respect, I will give you, as I said I would, the means to get an honest living."

Philip rose; Mrs. Beaufort had already led away her daughter, and she took that opportunity of sending in the servants: their forms filled up the doorway.

"Will you go?" continued Mr. Beaufort, more and more emboldened, as he saw the menials at hand, "or shall they expel you?"

"It is enough, sir," said Philip, with a sudden calm and dignity that surprised and almost awed his uncle. "My father, if the dead yet watch over the living, has seen and heard you. There will come a day for justice. Out of my path, hirelings!"

He waved his arm, and the menials shrank back at his tread, stalked across the inhospitable hall, and vanished. When he had gained the street, he turned and looked up at the house. His dark and hollow eyes, gleaming through the long and raven hair that fell profusely over his face, had in them an expression of menace almost preternatural, from its settled calmness; the wild and untutored majesty which, though rags and squalor, never deserted his form, as it never does the forms of men in whom the will is strong and the sense of injustice deep; the outstretched arm the haggard, but noble features; the bloomless and scathed youth, all gave to his features and his stature an aspect awful in its sinister and voiceless wrath. There he stood a moment, like one to whom woe and wrong have given a Prophet's power, guiding the eye of the unforgetful Fate to the roof of the Oppressor. Then slowly, and with a half smile, he turned away, and strode through the streets till he arrived at one of the narrow lanes that intersect the more equivocal quarters of the huge city. He stopped at the private entrance of a small pawnbroker's shop; the door was opened by a slipshod boy; he ascended the dingy stairs till he came to the second floor; and there, in a small back room, he found Captain de Burgh Smith, seated before a table with a couple of candles on it, smoking a cigar, and playing at cards by himself.

"Well, what news of your brother, Bully Phil?"

"None: they will reveal nothing."

"Do you give him up?"

"Never! My hope now is in you."

"Well, I thought you would be driven to come to me, and I will do something for you that I should not loike to do for myself. I told you that I knew the Bow Street runner who was in the barouche. I will find him out—Heaven knows that is easily done; and, if you can pay well, you will get your news."

"You shall have all I possess, if you restore my brother. See what it is, one hundred pounds—it was his fortune. It is useless to me without him. There, take fifty now, and if—"

Philip stopped, for his voice trembled too much to allow him farther speech. Captain Smith thrust the notes into his pocket, and said—

"We'll consider it settled."

Captain Smith fulfilled his promise. He saw the Bow Street officer. Mr. Sharp had been bribed too high by the opposite party to tell tales, and he willingly encouraged the suspicion that Sidney was under the care of the Beauforts. He promised, however, for the sake of ten guineas, to procure Philip a letter from Sidney himself. This was all he would undertake.

Philip was satisfied. At the end of another week, Mr. Sharp transmitted to the Captain a letter, which he, in his turn, gave to Philip. It ran thus, in Sidney's own sprawling hand:

"DEAR BROTHER PHILIP,—I am told you wish to know how I am, and therefore take up my pen, and assure you that I write all out of my own head. I am very Comfortable and happy—much more so than I have been since poor deir mama died; so I beg you won't vex yourself about me: and pray don't try and Find me out, For I would not go with you again for the world. I am so much better Off here. I wish you would be a good boy, and leave off your Bad ways; for I am sure, as every one says, I don't know what would have become of me if I had staid with you. Mr. [the Mr. half scratched out] the gentleman I am with, says if you turn out Properly, he will be a friend to you, Too; but he advises you to go, like a Good boy, to Arthur Beaufort, and ask his pardon for the past, and then Arthur will be very kind to you. I send you a great Big sum of L20., and the gentleman says he would send more, only it might make you naughty, and set up. I go to church now every Sunday, and read good books, and always pray that God may open your eyes. I have such a Nice Pony, with such a long tale. So no more at present from your affectionate brother, SIDNEY MORTON."

Oct. 8, 18—

"Pray, pray don't come after me Any more. You know I neerly died of it, but for this deir good gentleman I am with."

So this, then, was the crowning reward of all his sufferings and all his love! There was the letter, evidently undictated, with its errors of orthography, and in the child's rough scrawl; the serpent's tooth pierced to the heart, and left there its most lasting venom.

"I have done with him for ever," said Philip, brushing away the bitter tears. "I will molest him no farther; I care no more to pierce this mystery. Better for him as it is—he is happy! Well, well, and I—I will never care for a human being again."

He bowed his head over his hands; and when he rose, his heart felt to him like stone. It seemed as if Conscience herself had fled from his soul on the wings of departed Love.

CHAPTER XII.

"But you have found the mountain's top—there sit
On the calm flourishing head of it;
And whilst with wearied steps we upward go,
See us and clouds below."—COWLEY.

It was true that Sidney was happy in his new home, and thither we must now trace him.

On reaching the town where the travellers in the barouche had been requested to leave Sidney, "The King's Arms" was precisely the inn eschewed by Mr. Spencer. While the horses were being changed, he summoned the surgeon of the town to examine the child, who had already much recovered; and by stripping his clothes, wrapping him in warm blankets, and administering cordials, he was permitted to reach another stage, so as to baffle pursuit that night; and in three days Mr. Spencer had placed his new charge with his maiden sisters, a hundred and fifty miles from the spot where he had been found. He would not take him to his own home yet. He feared the claims of Arthur Beaufort. He artfully wrote to that gentleman, stating that he had abandoned the chase of Sidney in despair, and desiring to know if he had discovered him; and a bribe of L300. to Mr. Sharp with a candid exposition of his reasons for secreting Sidney—reasons in which the worthy officer professed to sympathise—secured the discretion of his ally. But he would not deny himself the pleasure of being in the same house with Sidney, and was therefore for some months the guest of his sisters. At length he heard that young Beaufort had been ordered abroad for his health, and he then deemed it safe to transfer his new idol to his *Lares* by the lakes. During this interval the current of the younger Morton's life had indeed flowed through flowers. At his age the cares of females were almost a want as well as a luxury, and the sisters spoiled and petted him as much as any elderly nymphs in Cytherea ever petted Cupid. They were good, excellent, high-nosed, flat-bosomed spinsters, sentimentally fond of their brother, whom they called "the poet," and dotingly attached to children. The cleanness, the quiet, the good cheer of their neat abode, all tended to revive and invigorate the spirits of their young guest, and every one there seemed to vie which should love him the most. Still his especial favourite was Mr. Spencer: for Spencer never went out without bringing back cakes and toys; and Spencer gave him his pony; and Spencer rode a little crop-eared nag by his side; and Spencer, in short, was associated with his every comfort and caprice. He told them his little history; and when he said how Philip had left him alone for long hours together, and how Philip had forced him to his last and nearly fatal journey, the old maids groaned, and the old bachelor sighed, and they all cried in a breath, that "Philip was a very wicked boy." It was not only their obvious policy to detach him from his brother, but it was their sincere conviction that they did right to do so. Sidney began, it is true, by taking Philip's part; but his mind was ductile, and he still looked back with a shudder to the hardships he had gone through: and so by little and little he learned to forget all the endearing and fostering love Philip had evinced to him; to connect his name with dark and mysterious fears; to repeat thanksgivings to Providence that he was saved from him; and to hope that they might never meet again. In fact, when Mr. Spencer learned from Sharp that it was through Captain Smith, the swindler, that application had been made by Philip for news of his brother, and having also learned before, from the same person, that Philip had been implicated in the sale of a horse, swindled, if not stolen, he saw every additional reason to widen the stream that flowed between the wolf and the lamb. The older Sidney grew, the better he comprehended and appreciated the motives of his protector—for he was brought up in a formal school of propriety and ethics, and his mind naturally revolted from all images of violence or fraud. Mr. Spencer changed both the Christian and the surname of his protegee, in order to elude the search whether of Philip, the Mortons, or the Beauforts, and Sidney passed for his nephew by a younger brother who had died in India.

So there, by the calm banks of the placid lake, amidst the fairest landscapes of the Island Garden, the youngest born of Catherine passed his tranquil days. The monotony of the retreat did not fatigue a spirit which, as he grew up, found occupation in books, music, poetry, and the elegances of the cultivated, if quiet, life within his reach. To the rough past he looked back as to an evil dream, in which the image of Philip stood dark and threatening. His brother's name as he grew older he rarely mentioned; and if he did volunteer it to Mr. Spencer, the bloom on his cheek grew paler. The sweetness of his manners, his fair face and winning smile, still continued to secure him love, and to screen from the common eye whatever of selfishness yet lurked in his nature. And, indeed, that fault in so serene a career, and with friends so attached, was seldom called into action. So thus was he severed from both the protectors, Arthur and Philip, to whom poor Catherine had bequeathed him.

By a perverse and strange mystery, they, to whom the charge was most intrusted were the very persons who were forbidden to redeem it. On our death-beds when we think we have provided for those we leave behind— should we lose the last smile that gilds the solemn agony, if we could look one year into the Future?

Arthur Beaufort, after an ineffectual search for Sidney, heard, on returning to his home, no unexaggerated narrative of Philip's visit, and listened, with deep resentment, to his mother's distorted account of the language addressed to her. It is not to be surprised that, with all his romantic generosity, he felt sickened and revolted at violence that seemed to him without excuse. Though not a revengeful character, he had not that meekness which never resents. He looked upon Philip Morton as upon one rendered incorrigible by bad passions and evil company. Still Catherine's last request, and Philip's note to him, the Unknown Comforter, often recurred to him, and he would have willingly yet aided him had Philip been thrown in his way. But as it was, when he looked around, and saw the examples of that charity that begins at home, in which the world abounds, he felt as if he had done his

duty; and prosperity having, though it could not harden his heart, still sapped the habits of perseverance, so by little and little the image of the dying Catherine, and the thought of her sons, faded from his remembrance. And for this there was the more excuse after the receipt of an anonymous letter, which relieved all his apprehensions on behalf of Sidney. The letter was short, and stated simply that Sidney Morton had found a friend who would protect him throughout life; but who would not scruple to apply to Beaufort if ever he needed his assistance. So one son, and that the youngest and the best loved, was safe. And the other, had he not chosen his own career? Alas, poor Catherine! when you fancied that Philip was the one sure to force his way into fortune, and Sidney the one most helpless, how ill did you judge of the human heart! It was that very strength of Philip's nature which tempted the winds that scattered the blossoms, and shook the stem to its roots; while the lighter and frailer nature bent to the gale, and bore transplanting to a happier soil. If a parent read these pages, let him pause and think well on the characters of his children; let him at once fear and hope the most for the one whose passions and whose temper lead to a struggle with the world. That same world is a tough wrestler, and has a bear's gripe.

Meanwhile, Arthur Beaufort's own complaints, which grew serious and menaced consumption, recalled his thoughts more and more every day to himself. He was compelled to abandon his career at the University, and to seek for health in the softer breezes of the South. His parents accompanied him to Nice; and when, at the end of a few months, he was restored to health, the desire of travel seized the mind and attracted the fancy of the young heir. His father and mother, satisfied with his recovery, and not unwilling that he should acquire the polish of Continental intercourse, returned to England; and young Beaufort, with gay companions and munificent income, already courted, spoiled, and flattered, commenced his tour with the fair climes of Italy.

So, O dark mystery of the Moral World!—so, unlike the order of the External Universe, glide together, side by side, the shadowy steeds of NIGHT AND MORNING. Examine life in its own world; confound not that world, the inner one, the practical one, with the more visible, yet airier and less substantial system, doing homage to the sun, to whose throne, afar in the infinite space, the human heart has no wings to flee. In life, the mind and the circumstance give the true seasons, and regulate the darkness and the light. Of two men standing on the same foot of earth, the one revels in the joyous noon, the other shudders in the solitude of night. For Hope and Fortune, the day-star is ever shining. For Care and Penury, Night changes not with the ticking of the clock, nor with the shadow on the dial. Morning for the heir, night for the houseless, and God's eye over both.

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